

FORUM “ARCTIC – THE TERRITORY OF DIALOGUE”

On September 24–25, 2013, Salekhard (the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District, Russia) hosted the III International Arctic Forum “Arctic – the Territory of Dialogue” held with the support of the Russian Geographical Society (RGS). The Forum is the largest political and expert platform for exchange of views on the issues relating to the Arctic region

The I International Forum “Arctic – the Territory of Dialogue” was held in September 2010, in Moscow, and marked the beginning of the Russian initiative to discuss issues of peaceful and sustainable development in the Arctic. The I Forum, dedicated to the problems of preservation of the Arctic environment, secure implementation of economic and infrastructure projects, as well as to the sustainable development of the region, was attended by more than 300 participants. The II International Arctic Forum took place in September 2011, in Arkhangelsk, and was jointly organized by the RGS and the Northern (Arctic) Federal University. The Forum brought together more than 400 delegates from Russia, the Arctic and the Arctic-region states, and more than 100 journalists. The Forum was dedicated to the formation of the Arctic transport system as the foundation for the development of the Arctic region. The Forum addressed the development of navigation, polar aviation, ports, airports, and the transport corridor of the Northern Sea Route.

The theme of the III Forum was “Environmental Security in the Arctic”. Its purpose was to unite the efforts of all stakeholders to seek consensus between governments, academia, business, and the population, inhabiting high latitudes, on

the preservation of the Arctic environment and mitigation of impacts of increasing economic activity and global climate change. The III Forum was conducted in the Cultural and Business Center of Salekhard. There were more than 700 participants, including more than 250 participants from Finland, USA, Serbia, Poland, China, Denmark, Georgia, Germany, Azerbaijan, Norway, Italy, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom. More than 100 journalists from dozens of different media sources were accredited to the Forum. The selection of Yamal was not accidental, since it is at the forefront of the implementation of the national policy of the Russian Federation on the development of the Arctic region. Also, the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District has been implementing many large-scale projects in the economic, environmental, scientific, and other sectors.

Artur Chilingarov, Hero of the Soviet Union and Russia, First Vice President of the RGS, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, opened the Forum. He stated that the main objective of the Forum is to provide a free and open dialogue on the most pressing issues in the Arctic. The Yamal Peninsula is the gateway to the Arctic. The Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District is one of the examples of the responsible and balanced environmental policy in the Arctic.

The second presenter was *Dmitry Kobylkin*, Governor of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District. In his address to the Forum participants, he stated that all activities in the region are based on three fundamental principles: the preservation of culture, customs, and traditional economic activities of indigenous peoples (the number of

indigenous northern people has increased in the last 10 years by 11%); insurance of environmental safety of the region (every tenth km of the Yamal Peninsula is a reserve); and preservation of harmony and balance between the interests of energy companies and indigenous peoples (each project of oil and gas companies must pass public hearings, where representatives of tundra communities act as experts).

At the opening session of the Forum, *Aqqaluk Linge*, Head of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, and *Alexander Aseyev*, RAS Vice-President, Chairman of the Siberian Branch of the RAS, made welcoming speeches. *Sergei Kharyuchi*, Chair of the Council of Elders Indigenous People of the North, Siberia, and the Far East, suggested making the issue of indigenous peoples the main theme of the next Forum.

The first thematic section "Environmental Safety and Health of the Arctic Population" (moderators: *Vladimir Kotlyakov*, Academician, Honorary President of the RGS, and *Susan Chatwood*, Executive and Research Director of the Institute for Circumpolar Health Research, Yellowknife, Canada) included a presentation by *Boris Revich*, Doctor of Sciences, Professor, Head of the Laboratory of the Environmental Quality and Human Population Health Forecasting, Institute of Economic Forecasting, RAS, on "Environment and Climate Change Effects on the Human Health in the Arctic". Several participants took part in the discussion, e.g., *Susan Chatwood*, *Anne Husebekk* (Rector, University of Tromsø, Norway), and *Valery Chashchin* (Professor, Director of R. Koch and I.I. Mechnikov International Center of the Public Health). *Vladimir Shepovalnikov*, Head of Polar Medicine Center, "Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute", Roshydromet, Russia, made a presentation on the impact of space and heliophysical factors on health in the Arctic region.

The second thematic session "Legal Regime for the Arctic Environmental Protection" was moderated by *Anton Vasiliev*, MFA Ambassador-at-Large, Representative

of Russia in the Arctic Council, and *Lars Kullerud*, President of UArctic, Norway. This session included presentations by *Timo Koivurova*, Research Professor of the Northern Institute for Environmental and Minority Law, Arctic Center, University of Lapland, Finland, on "The Effectiveness of Multilateral Environmental Agreements in Protection of the Arctic Environment" and by *Natalia Lukasheva*, Professor, University of Akureyri, Iceland, on "Environmental Governance and Legal Issues in the Arctic (Security, Cooperation, New Issues, the Role of Indigenous Peoples)". The presentations were followed by a lively debate on the issues. *Mikhail Slipenchouk*, Professor, Deputy Chairman of the Russian State Duma Environmental Committee, raised a question on the feasibility of entering into new agreements between the Arctic countries. In his response to the question, Ambassador *Anton Vasiliev* stated that there already exist many agreements and accords on the Arctic. In 2008, the Arctic countries have agreed not to take any actions unilaterally and to address the issues by mutual agreements between the Arctic states. *Tamara Zlotnikova*, Professor, former Chairman of the Russian State Duma Environmental Committee, suggested that the Arctic states should enter into a convention on pollution in the Arctic, by analogy with the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki, 1992).

At the end of the first day of the Forum, *Nikolay Kasimov*, Academician, Dean of the Faculty of Geography, M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, First Vice President of the RGS, Chairman of the Public Council under the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia, and *Lars Kullerud*, President of UArctic, signed a cooperation agreement.

On the second day of the Forum, the third thematic section "Environmental Safety for the Arctic Development" took place (moderators: *Mikhail Slepetchuk*, Professor, Deputy Chairman of the Russian State Duma Environmental Committee, and *Lawson Brigham*, Professor of Geography



and Arctic Policy of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Senior Fellow of the Institute of the North, Anchorage, USA). The first speaker was *Jan Helge Skogen*, President of Statoil Russia, Norway, on the issue of “Modern Challenges of the Arctic Shelf Development”. He spoke about the latest technologies and technical means used by Statoil to produce hydrocarbons on the Arctic shelf. *Pettery Taalas*, Director General of the Finnish Meteorological Institute, talked about “The Optimal Use of Energy and Environmental Security in Northern and Arctic Areas”. He also presented a film about the activities of the Hydrometeorological Service of Finland in the Arctic. *Alexander Chuprian*, Deputy Minister of Emergency Control Ministry of Russia / Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defense, Emergencies, and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters, made a presentation on “Prevention and Management of Emergency Situations in the Arctic”. *Alexander Frolov*, Head of Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring (Roshydromet), spoke on the “Federal Monitoring of the Russian Arctic Environmental State and Pollution”. The fourth speaker was *Sergey Donskoy*, Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Russian Federation, with a presentation “Development of Resource Potential and Ensuring Ecological Safety of the Arctic”.

In the afternoon, President of Russian Federation and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the RGS *Vladimir Putin* opened the Plenary Session of the III International Arctic Forum. President of the Republic of Finland *Sauli Niinistö* and President of Iceland *Ylafur Ragnar Grimsson* (who participated in all three Forums “Arctic – the Territory of Dialogue”) also addressed the Forum. *Patrick Borbey*, Chair of the Arctic Council’s Senior Arctic Officials, President of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, spoke about the state and the existing problems in the international cooperation of the countries of the Arctic region and the activities of the Arctic Council.

The Plenary session of the second day was moderated by *Sergei Shoigu*, Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, President of the RGS. In his opening remarks, he welcomed the participants on behalf of the RGS, the driving force of the Forum, and noted that the number of the participants of the Forum has been increasing and its geography has been expanding. He stressed that the environment and biodiversity protection and climate change constitute the most sensitive topics in the region today. He also pointed out that all these issues have been historically in the focus of the RGS. To summarize the results of the Plenary Session of the III International Arctic Forum,



Sergei Shoigu gave the floor to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the RGS *Vladimir Putin*.

First Vice President of the RGS, Academician *Nikolai Kasimov* opened the fourth session on "Climate, Pollution, and Biodiversity". The first presentation was made by *Vladimir Kotlyakov*, Academician, Honorary President of the RGS. He delivered an informative and well-illustrated report on "Climate Change Scenarios in the Arctic and Environmental Effects Forecast". The report by *Lars-Otto Reiersen*, Executive Secretary, AMAP Secretariat, Norway, on "Environmental Pollution in the Arctic: Current Level, Trends, Risk Assessments" elaborated on the activities of Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), presented the latest publications on the state of the environment of the Arctic by the AMAP working groups, and talked about promising areas of activity within the AMAP. *Alexander Shestakov*, Director of the Global Arctic Program of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF, Canada), spoke on the priorities in the area of preservation of nature in the Arctic. *Vladimir Melnikov*, Academician, Director of the Institute of the Earth Cryosphere of the SB RAS, Tyumen, Russia, focused on the prospects for obtaining highly profitable eco-friendly products from the

diatom raw material – an analog of cellular glass. *Yevgeny Syroechkovsky*, Chairman of the Working Group on the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna of the Arctic Council, talked about a project on the conservation of migratory species of birds. *Boris Morgunov*, Assistant to the Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, spoke about the status of work on six projects in the Arctic under the Global Environment Facility (GEF) "Arctic Agenda 2022". *Vasily Bogoyavlensky*, Corresponding Member RAS, Deputy Director of the Institute of Oil and Gas Problems, SB RAS, focused on the status of development of hydrocarbon deposits on the continental shelf in the Arctic region.

Under the framework of the Forum, Academician *Viktor Sadovnichy*, Rector of the Lomonosov Moscow State University, and *Anne Husebekk*, Rector of University of Tromsø, Norway, signed an agreement. Academician *V. Sadovnychy* presented *A. Husebekk* a just recently printed atlas "The Arctic of the XXI Century: Natural Conditions and Development Risks" prepared by the scientists of the Faculty of Geography, Lomonosov Moscow State University, together with other scientists under the RGS grant policy.

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