

Yakutsk Declaration

On the occasion of the Third World Reindeer Herders' Congress

March 17 – 20, 2005

Recognise with satisfaction the positive role of INARI Declaration of the Second World Reindeer Herders' Congress, adopted June 22, 2001, which created increased international co-operation between reindeer herders.

Support that world reindeer herders have the right themselves to determine their own future, based on their own philosophy of life and understanding of the world.

Reconfirm the rights of peoples to natural resources pertaining on their lands, which they traditionally occupy, including the right of these peoples to participate in the use, management and conservation of these resources.

Underline the importance of national states of world reindeer herders to ratify and realise ILO Convention no 169 on the indigenous peoples in independent states developed to protect the environment, languages, culture and of indigenous and ethnic minorities and their rights to land.

Agree that world reindeer herders owing to their experience, ancient traditional knowledge and skills, have developed unique management strategies for protection of pastures and rational use of the natural resources, which should be the basis for future sustainable new management strategies in the Arctic.

Support the conclusions from the Reykjavik Declaration, adopted by the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council, November 24, 2004.

Acknowledge Norway for financing the project "Family-Based Reindeer Herding and Hunting Economies, the Status and Management of Wild Reindeer/Caribou Populations".

Support and develop co-operation with the Russian leadership of the Arctic Council for the next two years in their important work for sustainable development of the Arctic.

Note the necessity in the state and regional programs for support and development of reindeer husbandry.

Acknowledge Norway for financing support of Association of World Reindeer Herders (WRH) for the last 8 years.

Approve that other reindeer herders' nations now must also pay for the important work Association of World Reindeer Herders (WRH) carries out for the protection and sustainable development of the Arctic.

Recognise the important role and increased participation of indigenous peoples in the work of Arctic Council, addressing future challenges for reindeer herders in different regions and the sustainable development of the Arctic.

Acknowledge that in the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) reindeer herders' traditional knowledge was integrated on equal terms as more classical natural and social science. Arctic national states must also in future secure participation for reindeer herders and their knowledge in the Arctic Council reports like AMAP, CAFF and the new ACIA initiatives.

Support that reindeer herders should be treated as equal partners in the upcoming International Polar Year (IPY 2007/2008) when scientists focus on their society and resource use.

Recognise true partnership between reindeer herders and scientists.

Appeal to the Governments in the Arctic countries to adopt Association of World Reindeer Herders (WRH) as permanent participant of the Arctic Council.

Hereby:

Loss of grazing land:

Recognise that independent nomadic reindeer herding families in each form of common labour organisation is the basis for the future sustainable survival and economy of the reindeer herding peoples in the world, and recognise the needs to be strengthened and supported by international, national and regional authorities.

Worry that many regions of the circumpolar north previous economically and ecologically robust reindeer herding societies have unfortunately been constrained by state regulations, growing prices, taxes, predators and loss of grazing land.

Request the Russian Federation to determine reindeer pastures as specific territories of traditional land use of reindeer peoples.

Note that much grazing land in the Barents-Euroarctic region is now reduced as grazing land for reindeer because of industrial development.

Note that herders experience increasing conflicts and difficulties in natural use of pastures.

Welcome initiatives from international and governmental agencies to develop and implement steps for protecting grazing land at regional scale, which is not yet reflected in countries' policies today.

Recognise the need for new sustainable strategies to control of industrial development.

Note that national states treat each industrial development project individually and fail to recognise the cumulative of a growing network of infrastructure affecting traditional land and income of indigenous peoples.

Note that additional loss of grazing land due to climate changes makes this threat even more important.

Approve that reindeer herders should develop their own system to monitor changes of the Arctic natural resources based on traditional knowledge and modern technology.

Women's status

Appreciate the knowledge and values acquired and maintained by women, furthermore expand their rights and guarantee their equal participation in decision making in reindeer herding according to the Arctic Council report "Family-Based Reindeer Herding and Hunting Economies and the Status and Management of Wild Reindeer/Caribou Populations".

Note that particular women's knowledge and experience in reindeer breeding and herding should be recognised on all levels in society.

Approve the decision made by the Government of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) to give women, who work at home, status as reindeer herders.

Family-based/local economy

Recognise the need for reindeer herders themselves to control their own economy, have rights to trade with indigenous products, increase the added value of their products, develop new markets and maintain the rights to sell indigenous products to a price which is decided between the reindeer herders themselves and the market.

Approve the recommendations of family economy from the International Steering Committee of the report "Family-Based Reindeer Herding and Hunting Economies and the Status and Management of Wild Reindeer/Caribou Populations".

Note that robust local economies and hope for the future is an important element to prevent development of passive local indigenous communities in a rapid changing world.

Educational systems

Agree with the Saami Council in the Honningsvåg Declaration, October 7-9, 2004, that indigenous peoples like world reindeer herders in the circumpolar north should have the rights to establish, manage and develop their own education institution at all levels of education in accordance with their own culture and tradition.

Adopt the resolution from Saami Conference in Honningsvåg that Saami University College in Kautokeino should be organised as Saami University.

Ask national states that similar international indigenous universities should be established in the Arctic with special programs on languages, philosophy, culture, history, traditional knowledge and innovation related to reindeer herding.

Acknowledge the importance of linking formal education and practical experience.

Recognise the urgent need to further develop and support of nomadic education system combining traditional knowledge with modern technology, like the establishment of nomadic primary schools in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).

Support initiatives from the Government of Sakha (Yakutia) to ask UNESCO to support the survival of languages of Arctic indigenous peoples and develop nomadic schools.

Recognise with respect the intellectual property rights of reindeer herders to protect their knowledge.

Agree to develop systems to support international exchange of young reindeer herders between the research institutions in the north.

Appreciate the work carried out by the University of the Arctic, and make sure that reindeer peoples are able to participate in the University of the Arctic in the future.

Ask national states to support participation of young reindeer herders in international indigenous networks for education and research.

Welcome the continuing contribution of indigenous peoples and traditional knowledge to research in the Arctic.

Forrest/taiga

Pay attention to the forest and taiga reindeer herding in Russia and Asia.

Ask the international society to make a special attention and take responsibility for the future survival and current problems for forest and taiga reindeer herding.

Ask the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) to establish and take responsibility for an international centre for the forest and taiga reindeer herding in close co-operation with Association of World Reindeer Herders (WRH).

Information/communication

Welcome the increased visibility of world reindeer herders' cultures; their intellectual, social and economical needs in the international arena. Knowledge about the culture of Arctic reindeer peoples should be increasingly communicated internationally.

Recognise the urgent need to develop good communication systems between reindeer herders in the circumpolar north and develop information strategies about their culture, language, traditional knowledge and history between herders and mainstream society.

Acknowledge the announcement of the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Fourth Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Reykjavik, Island in 2004 that Norway will take responsibility, establish and pay for an international information centre for world reindeer herders in Kautokeino, Norway (WRH-centre, Kautokeino) in close co-operation with Association of World Reindeer Herders (WRH). WRH support the centre to be permanent.

Approve that Norway will have the responsibility for international activities in Association of World Reindeer Herders (WRH) and support WRH in general.

Note the importance of co-operation with Association of World Reindeer Herders (WRH) in building the centre.

Welcome the opening of this centre in the spring 2005 with participation of world reindeer herders.

Note that the voice of world reindeer herders must increasingly be heard internationally.

Climate change

Welcome with appreciation the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) and the work completed in evaluating knowledge on climate variability and change in the Arctic.

Note that warming of the Arctic is going on now and much more rapid than previous expected, already affects reindeer herding.

Note that warming of the Arctic also will affect the rich Arctic natural resources, animal health and the economy of indigenous communities.

Endorse the ACIA policy recommendations for mitigation, adaptation, research and monitoring of changes in Arctic nature and secure reindeer herders' participation in the national making bodies.

Encourage the national states to effective measures to adapt to climate changes and develop new strategies for management of the Arctic, where reindeer herders' traditional knowledge is included.

Encourage relevant national and international research bodies to support multidisciplinary research related to reindeer herding, climate changes and variability, where reindeer herders' knowledge is included on equal terms as more classical science.

Note that there is an urgent need to document old reindeer herders' knowledge about reindeer, snow, pastures and climate changes in different regions before it is too late, so this knowledge is preserved for the future.

Support that reindeer herders should participate in the future assessments of the Arctic climate changes.