

# Aoluguya Declaration

**On the Occasion of the 5<sup>th</sup> World Reindeer Herders' Congress  
Aoluguya, Inner-Mongolia, China, July 25-28<sup>th</sup>, 2013**



**第五届世界驯鹿养殖者大会**  
**THE 5<sup>th</sup> WORLD REINDEER HERDERS' CONGRESS**



**Ассоциация «Оленеводы Мира»**  
**Association of World Reindeer Herders**

## ***The 5<sup>th</sup> World Reindeer Herders Congress in Aoluguya***

**Recognizing** with satisfaction that the international cooperation of world reindeer herders has grown and developed in a very positive way, through the Inari, Yakutsk and Kautokeino Declarations, as a true people-to-people collaboration and contact forum for reindeer herders based on consensus, and **welcome** Scotland as a full member region of Association of World Reindeer Herders (WRH).

**Acknowledging** the fruitful cooperation and financial support from the Governments of Norway, Russia, Finland and Inner-Mongolia, China to the people-to-people collaboration of world reindeer herders.

**Confirming** the positive effects of the Arctic Council in support of sustainable circumpolar reindeer husbandry, by involvement, action and support of National States and Permanent Participants, as well as Observers, and **acknowledge** Norway and the Russian Federation's decisions to host and fund WRH's EALÁT, EALLIN and Nomadic Herders projects in the Arctic Council.

**Reiterating** the importance of the Arctic Council initiative to establish the International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry (ICR) and the decision of Norway to host and fund it, as the international knowledge hub and professional centre for world reindeer husbandry.

**Agreeing** with the Kiruna Declaration on the occasion of the 8<sup>th</sup> Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 that the use of traditional knowledge is essential to a sustainable future in the Arctic.

**Agreeing** with the Statement adopted by the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region in Brussels, Belgium in 2010, that the Arctic states and the Arctic Council should strengthen the cooperation of the circumpolar reindeer herders network, including

the IPY legacy UArctic EALÁT Institute, as reindeer as a species and their grazing land have a special significance for human life and the economy in the Arctic.

**Confirming** the positive support and important contributions of University of the Arctic (UArctic) in addressing the knowledge challenges of world reindeer herders.

***Hereby:***

## **TAIGA REINDEER HUSBANDRY**

**Recognize** that low numbers of reindeer in many taiga regions is an immediate threat to the robustness of taiga reindeer husbandry on the short term, and **urge** national states and international bodies to rapidly implement legal and other measures to stop disappearance of reindeer breeds, to increase reindeer herds, and to facilitate research, and **support** establishment of concepts for development of taiga reindeer herding, to be utilized for future work and special programs to strengthen reindeer husbandry.

**Note with concern** that taiga reindeer herding is under a threat of disappearing in China, Mongolia and such regions of Russia as Irkutskaya Oblast, Sakhalinskaya Oblast, Buryatia Republic, Khabarovskiy krai, Tuva Republic, Amurskaya Oblast and others, and that the situation is still critical and needs urgent attention.

**Note** that the Evenki reindeer herders in China have asked WRH and other regions for help to increase their herds and strengthen reindeer husbandry, **support** that reindeer herders of China get new taiga reindeer of good breeding, and **note** the need for agreed systems for cross-border transportation of reindeer.

**Note** that an appropriate definition of taiga reindeer husbandry should be included in the laws and regulations of the Russian Federation, and that there is a need for special legislation for taiga reindeer husbandry in order to secure equal treatment of all forms of reindeer herding.

**Underline** that reindeer herding also includes hunting, fishing, gathering, harvesting and other forms of nature use as integrated parts of the traditional and economic foundation, which is of particular importance for taiga reindeer husbandry.

**Call** for broad cooperation between reindeer herders, their organizations, authorities, international bodies and other institutions in order to address the challenges of taiga reindeer husbandry.

**Call** for further investigations of the situation and conditions of taiga reindeer husbandry to learn more about how to improve the situation.

**Recognize** that development connected to reindeer husbandry such as tourism can be a positive opportunity to improve local reindeer herders' economy, and **underline** that this also requires sustaining and developing the traditional nomadic reindeer husbandry, and basic ethical principles and schemes for fair division of value added.

**Acknowledge** WRH & ICR's GEF/ UNEP Nomadic Herders Project nested within reindeer herding societies, as a key effort to strengthen methods, skills and reindeer herders' roles in nature protection, conservation of biodiversity and reduction of pasture degradation, while also improving taiga reindeer herders' economy and long-term well-being, and **support** the work towards development of special types of protected areas where reindeer herders participate as active partners with traditional use and in administration, for instance 'Territory of Traditional Nature Use' in Russia.

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

**Support** the establishment of local reindeer herders' centers in reindeer herding communities, and **urge** the regional authorities of reindeer herding countries to support such initiatives as a way to develop reindeer herders' institutions and societies.

**Welcome** the establishment of the reindeer herding information centers in Uryung-Khaya, Anabar and in Olenjok, Sakha Republic in cooperation with ICR and with local funding, and **support** the proposed establishment of a Centre for Taiga Reindeer Husbandry in Tsaganuur, Mongolia for documentation of traditional knowledge and conservation of biodiversity, as an important contribution to Dukha reindeer husbandry, taiga reindeer husbandry and world reindeer herders, **welcome** the plans to establish an information centres for traditional reindeer herding in Yamalo-Nenetsky AO and in Scotland, and **appeal again** to the Finnish Government to secure a permanent funding mechanism for a Sámi reindeer herding information centre in Finland.

**Acknowledge** that there is a growing interest from world society concerning the traditions and ways of life of world reindeer herders, **note** that due to this development there is a challenge that these ways of life are sometimes described incorrectly or inadequately by others, and **support** the new Arctic Council initiative to increase awareness on traditional ways of life of Arctic indigenous peoples.

**Recognize** positive development of the ReindeerPortal.org as a key communication tool for world reindeer herding, including Russian language and domains, **welcome** its continued development in collaboration with WRH, and **note with satisfaction** that the Norwegian Government has secured sustained core funding for the ReindeerPortal.org to ICR.

**Welcome** development and utilization of new possibilities from information and communication technology for reindeer herding societies and youth, such as new technology for internet access, distance education, social media, web streaming and more.

**Underline** the clear need for better communication between Sámi reindeer herders and the authorities in Norway, Sweden and Finland on matters connected to reindeer husbandry.

## HEALTH OF REINDEER HERDERS

**Welcome** the increased focus and close collaboration on health in the Arctic Council, and **agree** with the Arctic Health Declaration on the occasion of the 1<sup>st</sup> Arctic Health Ministers' Meeting the 16<sup>th</sup> of February, 2011 in Nuuk, Greenland and the Kiruna Declaration on the occasion of the 8<sup>th</sup> Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 with regards to promotion of mental health and wellness in face of rapid socio-economic and environmental change, and **note** that mental health initiatives should not be merely a justification activity alongside development projects in the Arctic.

**Recognize** that human health and well-being are foundations of reindeer husbandry, but that today's societal structures are not able to reach out and to help reindeer herders' well-being in a good enough way.

**Welcome** the research done on the mental health of reindeer herders in Sweden led by University of Umeå, **encourage** other reindeer herding states and regions to support similar research programs, **note** the linkages between reindeer herders' mental health and external stress factors such as loss of pastures and loss of reindeer to predators, **underline** the need for concrete action and measures against suicide, and **welcome** the establishment of a centre for Sámi people's mental health in Jämtland in Sweden.

**Recognize** that there is a need for development work and research on reindeer herding health issues, that take into account the cultural, social and economic foundations, that are adapted to their natural environment and their livelihood needs, and that respect indigenous cultures and traditions.

**Note** that to improve the health situation of reindeer herders it is necessary to develop strategies and address topics such as disease treatment and prevention, cultural and language aspects, ethics, insurance-related challenges and medical service availability, and **underline** the need for documentation of biodiversity, food culture and reindeer herders' health using traditional knowledge.

**Acknowledge** the *Sámi Soster Searvi* (Sámi Association for Social and Health Development) in Finland, the *Red Chum Project* in Nenets Autonomous Okrug, the '*Reindriftens hverdag*'/*SANKS Project* in Norway, the health screening programs in reindeer herding communities in Sakha (Yakutia) Republic, Mongolia, and the project *Mobile Medical Units in Yamal* for their significant contributions to improve reindeer herders' physical and mental health and well-being, and **underline** the need for such programs for reindeer herders also in other regions.

**Note** that there is a need for a network between reindeer herding peoples for exchange of appropriate health management practices and research results.

**Support** initiatives to assess, adopt and implement new technology like Telemedicine in reindeer herding areas, in order to provide the highest attainable standard for health services for reindeer herders, and **urge** national states with reindeer herding to take responsibility for this.

## GLOBALISATION & INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

**Recognize** that the reindeer herding areas are now subject to increasing globalization, including climate change, development and socio-economic change, with an explosion of research, development and policy interests in the Arctic, and **note** there is an increasing focus on natural resource exploitation in the Arctic, in addition to development initiatives linked to mitigation of climate change the later years.

**Recognize** the need for active local reindeer herding societies in face of the major changes that are now happening, and **underline** the importance of making local reindeer herding peoples and societies capable of handling these changes themselves through local capacity building and ensuring that the voice of reindeer herders is heard, and **recognize** that the freedom of reindeer herders to develop their own economy and value added is a key factor to avoid vulnerability.

**Recognize** that reindeer herding represents an important voice and a corrective input from remote northern communities to the Arctic Council, offering local understanding that can complement the knowledge basis upon which decisions are made or shaped, and **underline** the key importance of continued engagement of WRH with the Arctic Council on all levels, including implementation of WRH projects on reindeer herding.

**Note** that reindeer herding is a unique legacy of humanity, representing a distinctive, pastoral, originally resilient and continuously developing human-coupled ecosystem, and based on this, **support** that reindeer herding should have UNESCO Cultural Heritage Status.

**Note** that the situation of reindeer husbandry in Northern-America is challenging, and **recognize** the need to work more closely with reindeer husbandry in these areas, to maintain and develop sustainable reindeer husbandry, including development of reindeer

herding societies, recruitment of youth and efforts through the Arctic Council, including other efforts of Sámi and Chukotka reindeer herders.

**Support** international exchange programs for Evenki reindeer herding youth from China, and **propose** to help Evenki reindeer herders of China to visit Russia in order to revitalize relationships.

**Reiterate** the statements of the Kautokeino Declaration on the occasion of the 4<sup>th</sup> World Reindeer Herders' Congress in 2009, that underline the importance of economic freedom and improvement of the economic basis of the reindeer herders by securing their access and ownership to the most profitable activities in the value chain, and **support** initiatives and active work for more profitable reindeer husbandry within production, processing and marketing, and the development of strategies for this.

**Support** initiatives for development of legal and practical standards for cooperation between authorities, industry and reindeer herders.

## **PASTURES & BIODIVERSITY**

**Underline** that reindeer herding represents a circumpolar model for sustainable management of the barren Arctic and Sub-Arctic areas, utilizing marginal natural resources which can hardly be used by others, and which historically has not displaced others.

**Note with concern** that the situation concerning loss of grazing land in Fennoscandia has become worse since the 4<sup>th</sup> World Reindeer Herders' Congress in Kautokeino in 2009, and **note with concern** that the fragmentation of grazing land from both small and larger developments in Fennoscandia is continuing and increasing, including growing impacts from non-sustainable industries such as mining, and **note with concern** that there are no holistic management plans in place for the land-based part of these regions.

**Reiterate** the statements of the Kautokeino Declaration on the occasion of the 4<sup>th</sup> World Reindeer Herders' Congress in 2009 in confirming the special rights of indigenous reindeer herding peoples to their traditional living areas, and that these rights also include the rights to land use, management, protection and natural resources, and **note** that the first priority in land use to reindeer herding and other traditional indigenous livelihoods should be recognized.

**Note** that there is a need to include the definition of reindeer pastures as a separate category of land resource in the land legislation of the Russian Federation.

**Underline** that the access to pastures and pasture resources will be even more important under climate change, in accordance with the main conclusions of the International Polar Year (IPY) EALÁT-Network Study.

**Agree** with the Tromsø Declaration on the occasion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2009, in emphasizing the important role of Arctic indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge in conservation and sustainable use of Arctic biological resources, and **underline** that reindeer herding peoples both depend on and have rich knowledge about local biodiversity.

**Take note of** the CAFF Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA) synthesis document published May 15<sup>th</sup> 2013, and **note** that reindeer herders' traditional knowledge and understanding of biodiversity and nature has not been included into the ABA reports.

**Recognize** the potential of protected nature areas for safeguarding of northern nature, biodiversity and grazing lands, as long as they are not in conflict with reindeer herders' utilization of their homelands and herding areas, and based on this **call** on the national governments to follow international treaties and other documents aimed at sustainable development and the conservation of biological diversity.

**Recognize** the work of Sami villages in Sweden in relation to the UNESCO Laponia World Heritage protected areas, and **recommend** that other reindeer herding regions learn from this process.

**Recognize** that reindeer herders are holders of traditional ecological knowledge about their areas and **urge** the need to integrate reindeer herders and peoples from other indigenous livelihoods in the process of monitoring and protecting of the environment.

**Underline** the need to integrate reindeer herders, their understanding and traditional knowledge into the regional, national and international systems of regulation of predator populations.

**Support** the policy of reindeer herding regions of the Russian Federation on necessary balancing of predator populations in reindeer herding areas, and **note** that some regions of reindeer husbandry, such as Amurskaya Oblast, Sakha Republic still have too high numbers of predators.

**Support** the policy and concrete actions of Sakha (Yakutia) Republic to regulate the predator populations the winter of 2012-2013, and **recommend** priority on predator policy development on the terms of local reindeer husbandry, and **recommend** development of solutions integrating local reindeer herders and traditional knowledge.

**Note with concern** the severe impacts from heavy losses of reindeer to predators and the predator policy and management in Norway, Sweden and Finland, and **reiterate** the clear need for better communication between Sami reindeer herders and the authorities in Norway, Sweden, and Finland on matters connected to predator management.

**Note** the challenges of wild dogs in reindeer herding areas, as well as the challenges connected to predator population management in national parks.

**Underline** the urgent need to regulate populations of wild reindeer and caribou in reindeer herding areas such as Taimyr, Chukotka, Sakha Republic and North-America, and **stress** the need to initiate measures in this regard.

## **YOUTH, KNOWLEDGE, RESEARCH & EDUCATION**

**Underline** that well-functioning reindeer herding communities is dependent on utilizing the knowledge of the people to maintain and strengthen the well-being and resilience of their own societies.

**Reiterate** the key role of women and family-based reindeer herding in the transfer of traditional knowledge between generations, as a core foundation for reindeer herding.

**Underline** the need for new concepts of education of reindeer herders based on the traditional nomadic way of learning by doing, including both traditional knowledge education in basic reindeer herding as well as knowledge about new challenges for reindeer herding societies, **recognize** the need for a system of certification of reindeer herding education, and **reiterate** the need to give attention to the concept of Nomadic Schools, to further develop this concept, and to replicate it to more regions, and **encourage**

continuation of the *Oarjehieibma* project for collaboration on joint plans for reindeer herding education in Fennoscandia and the Arctic.

**Recognize** that a major challenge is to secure that reindeer herding youth get higher education and return to their homelands, and **note** the importance of building local societies and structures in this regard, and to create good socio-economic conditions for youth.

**Note** the need to support young scientists from reindeer herding families with grants and scholarships.

**Welcome** the results of the EALÁT Project under the International Polar Year (IPY) and the Arctic Council as a cornerstone effort of ICR, WRH and IPY partners for sustainable development in face of global change.

**Recognize** the IPY & Arctic Council EALÁT legacy UArctic EALÁT Institute as a key structure for addressing the knowledge challenges for world reindeer herders, and **acknowledge** the UArctic EALÁT Institute program *Training of Future Arctic Indigenous Leaders* led by ICR as a key concept for training and research-based education of reindeer herding youth in face of global change.

**Acknowledge** the progress of WRH and ICR's Arctic Council EALLIN Project, hosted by the Russian Federation in the Arctic Council, as a major effort towards positive youth engagement, competence building and networking for sustainable reindeer husbandry.

**Urge** the Arctic Council, including Arctic States and Permanent Participants as well as Observers, to work explicitly on developing education for local Arctic indigenous peoples, given the major global changes now observed and projected in reindeer herders' homelands.

**Note with interest** the increase of researchers with an Arctic indigenous background, and **underline** the need to establish structures to unite them, to stimulate recruitment of reindeer herding youth into academia, to exploit their competence for the benefit of local reindeer herding societies, and to address ethical issues concerning research on indigenous societies and traditional knowledge.

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