

The Mission and Activities of the NRF

The purpose of the Northern Research Forum (NRF) is to promote intensive dialogue among members of the research community and a wide range of other northern stakeholders. This dialogue addresses the critical issues, problems, and opportunities facing circumpolar peoples in the context of social and environmental changes and economic globalization. The Forum provides a setting for policy-relevant discussion on the role of research in addressing issues of sustainable development, community viability, peace and security, social and environmental policy, and the impacts of global change. Developing the capacity to address these issues is central to the mandate of the University of the Arctic which has incorporated the Forum as one of its key programmatic activities.

The NRF convenes a conference every second year, rotating among the different northern countries in order to address sub-regional and local concerns as well as region-wide issues. Participants at each session of the NRF include researchers, educators, politicians, business leaders, civil servants, community leaders, NGO representatives, resource users, and managers. The Forum encourages participation by younger people and those with new and unconventional approaches. Building on the experience of the entire circumpolar world, the NRF promotes an integrated view of the north, its peoples and issues. Through exchanges of ideas and perspectives and discussions of the findings of multidisciplinary

research, the Forum explores connections between northern neighbors, nurtures a sense of the North as a shared region, and stimulates the growth of a circumpolar community. In this way, the NRF enhances sustainable communities, democratic processes, and stability in the northern regions.

Dr. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, the President of Iceland, launched the idea of the NRF in September 1998 on the occasion of his speech commemorating the official opening of the twentieth academic year of the University of Lapland in northern Finland. Subsequently, the University of Lapland prepared a feasibility study regarding this initiative (University of the Arctic Process Publications No. 8). The NRF began its work in Iceland in October 1999 with the formation of a Steering Committee and a secretariat in Akureyri.

North Meets North - the 1st NRF in Akureyri, Iceland, 2000

In selecting the main theme for the first Northern Research Forum, the NRF Steering Committee chose to examine the broad concept "*North meets North*," as an alternative to the familiar method of viewing and addressing issues of global concern in a South-North format. South-North relationships may, or may not, provide culturally, socially and environmentally rele-

vant solutions to northern issues. Thus, in the North, by the North, for the North became the initial topic for the NRF.

As a precursor to the meeting in Akureyri, the NRF secretariat released 19 essays, or “position papers,” written specifically for the event by people prominent in Northern issues from a variety of backgrounds. The position papers - all are included in this volume under different theme sessions - raised issues for discussion during the Forum event. Many of these papers specifically address the question, as writers were asked to do, of opportunities for, and the barriers to, research in the circumpolar north. Position paper contributors were also asked to focus in their writing on any of the following themes and sub-themes:

- 1 Relevance of history to contemporary issues of peace and security
 - Security in history; contemporary lessons
 - South to north dynamic
 - East to west dynamic in the north
 - Ethnic ways in N-Europe
 - Subsistence
- 2 Northern economies in the global economy
 - Challenges and opportunities of recent movement to global economy
 - Environmentalism and resource development; sustainability
 - Role of information technology in the north
 - Infrastructure development; capacity building
 - Tourism
- 3 Regionalism and governance
 - Emergence of culturally relevant governance systems and new political systems. How these affect regional interaction
 - Leadership(s)
 - Regional security
 - Autonomy in the era of integration
- 4 Implementation of Northern Dimension
 - What is Northern Dimension?
 - Role of regional actors in cooperation
 - Who defines and implements northern dimension?

- Opportunities for northern communities to develop connections without a national filter

5 Science and technology application in the north

- Fundamental and curiosity research; promotion and priorities
- Communication and natural dimensions
- Recognition and needs for infrastructure and capacity development
- Priorities for economic development; social/health needs governance
- Different knowledge paradigms

There were 111 people, 62 males and 49 females, who participated in the first Northern Research Forum in Akureyri, 4 - 6 November 2000. They included 17 from Russia, Finland 13, Iceland 31, Canada 20, Norway 8, USA 10, Denmark 2, UK 3, Sweden 3, Greenland 3, and Latvia 1. Participants included politicians, business leaders, civil servants, community leaders, resource managers, scientists, graduate students and educators. Twenty-three young researchers actively participated in the congress, part of whom received financial support from the NRF, while the rest received funding from The Nordic Academy for Advanced Study (NorFA).

The president of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, also Chairman of the NRF Honorary Board, opened the Forum in Akureyri with an address, which was followed by the presentations of Pekka Aikio, President of the Sámi Parliament of Finland; Amalie Jessen, Vice-Director of Greenland Department of Industry; Peter Johnson, President, Advisor on the Canadian Council of Science and Technology; and Sergey Kharuchi, Chair of the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North. The session closed with an open discussion among the panelists and other participants, chaired by the president of Iceland.

Each of the five theme-specific panels was chaired by an NRF Steering Committee members and included four or five experts in different professional fields from throughout the circumpolar north.

The second theme session, *Northern Economies in the Global Economy*, was conducted at, and included an

excursion through, the premises of the Akureyri Fishing and Processing plc., one of Iceland's largest factories relying on marine resources.

A Summary Session was held at Bessastaðir, the residency of the Icelandic president, who hosted the session. NRF Steering Committee Chairman Lassi Heininen chaired this final session of the first Forum, where a representative group of young researchers presented their impressions of the former panel sessions to the entire group Forum participants. A constructive dialogue followed, when the future of the NRF was discussed and steps were taken to ensure its continuation. The decision was made to hold the second Forum in Russia or Finland in 2002.

In addition, more than twenty people of the young generation of researchers presented their commentaries on the conference themes, as well as findings from their research, during so-called Open Square Hours, held after each regular panel session. The contributions of four of these scientists are represented in this volume, under the "Voices of Young Researchers." A special workshop attended by NRF congress participants, but consisting exclusively of presentations by Ph.D. students from the circumpolar north was held immediately following the congress. Jointly organized with the Circumpolar Ph.D. Network in Arctic Environmental Studies and held at the National and University Library of Iceland, this workshop addressed the general topic of "Integration between the Industrial, Natural and Social environments, with focus on problems of the Arctic and Sub-Arctic."

The 2nd NRF - in Great Novgorod, Russia

The Northern Research Forum has received a formal invitation from the city of Great Novgorod in Northwestern Russia, to host the second NRF there 18 - 21 September 2002.

Under the Appendix in this volume you will find the NRF Steering Committee's tentative list of themes for this conference. You are kindly asked to send in your

proposal with ideas for session themes and topics for the second NRF.

The Northern Research Forum of Russia

The Northern Research Forum of Russia (NRFR, *Severnyi Issledovatel'skii Forum Rossii*) was launched with a presentation and a session on the Northern Research Forum in Salekhard, September 2000. It was established as a branch of the NRF, for promoting its overall objectives and, specifically, for aiding with the organization of the second Forum in Russia. The NRFR wishes to play an intermediary role in the cooperation among Russia's Northern researchers and to facilitate their participation in the international scientific process as well as continuing a cross-border, interdisciplinary dialogue among scholars and other actors and stakeholders of the different northern regions and peoples.

Meanwhile, the NRFR as an association of Russia's researchers will emphasize to following North-Russian needs: to involve regional research groups in an all-North-Russian circuit; to envision local issues within an interregional/national context and to use interregional/national facilities in managing local issues; to shape and to coordinate important and urgent projects of both interregional/national and local scales.

Projects and events with which the Northern Research Forum envisions involvement include: Northern Natural and National Parks (Protected Areas - issue and initiatives); Virtual Russian Arctic University, with links to the University of the Arctic; Encyclopedia of the Arctic, Oxford University Press (The NRFR to coordinate the Russian contributors' participation); Traveling Northern Film Festival, based on the Russian Anthropological Film Festival. First week of September, 2002, in Salekhard, Russia; Northern Archaeological Congress, September 9-14, 2002, in Khanty-Mansiisk, Russia; The second NRF, September 18 - 21, 2002, in Great Novgorod, Russia.

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Lennart Meri, Former President of the Republic of Estonia
 Yury Neyolov, Governor of Yamal Nenets Okrug, Russia
 Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of the Republic of Latvia

Members of the NRF Steering Committee

The day-to-day affairs of the NRF are handled by a Steering Committee whose current members are:

Lassi Heininen (Chair), Docent, University of Lapland, Finland
 Andrei Golovnev, Professor, Ural Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia
 Þorsteinn Gunnarsson, Rector, University of Akureyri, Iceland
 Amalie Jessen, Vice-Deputy Minister, Department of Industry, Greenland
 Peter G. Johnson, Professor, Department of Geography, University of Ottawa, Canada
 Edna Ahgeak MacLean, President, Ilisagvik College, USA
 Žaneta Ozoliņa, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Latvia
 Oran Young, Director, Institute of Arctic Studies, Dartmouth College, USA

NRF Secretariat

The NRF has a secretariat located in Akureyri, Iceland:

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Members of the NRF Honorary Board

The NRF also has an Honorary Board consisting of distinguished individuals who offer advice on Forum activities. Current members of the Board include:
 Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, President of Iceland (Chair)
 Martti Ahtisaari, former President of Finland
 Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada
 Thor Heyerdal, Explorer, Norway

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