

Northern Veche

**Proceedings of the
Second NRF Open meeting**

Veliky Novgorod, Russia
September 19–22, 2002

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Foreword

The 2nd Open Meeting of the Northern Research Forum was held in Veliky Novgorod, Russia, on September 19th-22nd, 2002, hosted by the Novgorod Oblast Administration, the City Administration of Veliky Novgorod and the Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University, and was organized jointly by the Northern Research Forum and the Northern Research Forum of Russia. Embracing the concept of *Northern Veche*, "General Assembly of the North", the event included 172 registered participants - heads of states and autonomous regions, politicians, business leaders, civil servants, community leaders, NGO representatives, resource managers, activists, scientists, university students and educators - from Russia, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the USA.

Northern Veche opened in the Novgorod Oblast Administration Main Auditorium, with addresses by Mikhail Prussak, Governor of Novgorod, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, President of Iceland, Yury Neyolov, Governor of Yamal Nenets Okrug, Lassi Heininen, Chairman of the Northern Research Forum, and Anatoly Gavrikov, President of Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University. The five panel sessions that followed focused respectively on: Human Capital in the North; Innovation in Northern Governance; Business Initiatives for a Joint Agenda in the North - A Round Table Discussion; and Applying the Lessons of History.

Eight workshop-sessions dealing with special projects and initiatives were held on the so-called "Day of Projects," and conducted simultaneously at

the Novgorod State University Main Campus and St. Antonov Monastery Campus. The *Veche*, or Square Hours, during which members of the young generation of researchers gave special presentations, were held on the first and last day of the 2nd Open Meeting. The meeting was concluded by a Summary Session, which included presentations by young researchers who had served as rapporteurs, and where participants discussed the outcomes of the meeting and the future of the NRF, and responded to a questionnaire in writing.

This book includes, within chapters organized by theme, articles based on numerous presentations during the opening, panel, square hour and project sessions of *Northern Veche*; an Introduction by the Chairman of the NRF; rewritten versions of thirteen position papers which were invited and released in advance of the 2nd Open Meeting; and, within the chapter "Summary Reports," special reports written by the rapporteurs of each session, and an overall participants' evaluation report, invited by a questionnaire.

The chapter "Mission and Activities of the NRF" includes information about the first two NRF Open Meetings, the NRF of Russia, and the Steering Committee, Honorary Board and Secretariat of the NRF. In the Appendix you will find the complete program of the 2nd NRF Open Meeting, a list of Position Paper authors, and the names and addresses of all registered participants of the meeting.

In its meeting in Veliky Novgorod on September 18th, 2002, the members of the NRF Steering Committee

decided to hold the next NRF Open Meeting in Canada, making further decisions as to the location, program and content of the 3rd Open Meeting at subsequent meetings in Kiruna, Sweden, in March-April of 2003, and in Yellowknife, Canada, in October-November of 2003. Under the main theme, *The Resilient North - Human Responses to Global Change*, the 3rd NRF Open Meeting will take place in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada, from the 15th to the 18th of September, in the year 2004. The event will be hosted by the Government of the Northwest Territories, the City of Yellowknife, and Aurora College, and organized by the Northern Research Forum, in cooperation with the Canadian Polar Commission. You will find information about the 3rd NRF Open Meeting at the end of this volume, along with a call for your participation.

On behalf of the NRF Steering Committee, we send sincere thanks to all those who came together for *Northern Veche* and made the 2nd Open Meeting possible, and to those who contributed to the production of this volume. We express special gratitude to the hosts of Northern Veche: the Novgorod Oblast Administration, the City Administration of Veliky Novgorod and Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University; to the members of the 2nd NRF Organizing Committee in Veliky Novgorod; and to those who contributed generous funding toward the 2nd NRF Open Meeting and the publication of these proceedings: the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, the Government of Iceland, and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Akureyri, November 2003
The Northern Research Forum Secretariat

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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 an open meeting 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 an open meeting 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, graduate students, 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.

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. The NRF began its work in Iceland in October, 1999 with the formation of an international steering committee and a secretariat located in Akureyri, Iceland.

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

In selecting the main theme for the first Northern Research Forum Open Meeting, 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 provide culturally, socially and environmentally relevant solutions to Northern issues - but then again, they may not. 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 raised issues for dis-

cussion during the Open Meeting. 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 the recent movement to a 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
- Regional security
- Autonomy in the era of integration

4 Implementation of a Northern Dimension

- What is a Northern Dimension?
- Role of regional actors in cooperation
- Who defines and implements a Northern Dimension?
- Opportunities for Northern communities to develop connections without a national filter

5 Science and technology application in the North

- Fundamental and curiosity-driven research; promotion and priorities
- Communication and natural dimensions

- Recognition of needs for infrastructure and capacity development
- Priorities for economic development; social/health needs governance
- Different paradigms of knowledge

There were 111 participants altogether, 62 male and 49 female, present at the 1st NRF Open Meeting in Akureyri, 4 - 6 November, 2000. Of these 17 were from Russia, 13 from Finland, 31 from Iceland, 20 from Canada, 8 from Norway, 10 from the USA, 2 from Denmark, 3 each from the UK, Sweden, and Greenland, and 1 from Latvia. Participants included politicians, business leaders, civil servants, community leaders, resource managers, scientists, graduate students and educators. Twenty-three young researchers actively participated in the Open Meeting, 14 of them receiving financial support from the NRF, while 9 Ph.D. students received funding from NorFA, the Nordic Academy for Advanced Study. A total of 63 individuals in all received funding from the NRF to participate in the congress.

The President of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, who is also Chairman of the NRF Honorary Board, gave the opening address at the Open Meeting in Akureyri. This was then followed by the presentations of Pekka Aikio, President of the Sámi Parliament of Finland; Amalie Jessen, Vice-Director of the Greenland Department of Industry; Peter Johnson, President, Advisor on the Canadian Council of Science and Technology; and Sergei Khairuchi, 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 member 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 Akureyri Fishing and Processing plc., one of Iceland's largest factories relying on marine resources.

A Summary Session was held at Bessastaðir, the official residence of the Icelandic president, who hosted the session. NRF Steering Committee Chairman Lassi Heininen chaired this final session of the first Open Meeting, where a representative group of young researchers presented their impressions of the earlier panel sessions to the entire group of Open Meeting participants. A constructive dialogue followed, where the future of the NRF was discussed and steps were taken to ensure its continuation. At that time, the decision was made to hold the second Open Meeting in either Northwest Russia or in Finland. The Northern Research Forum received a formal invitation from the city of Veliky Novgorod in Northwestern Russia, to host the second NRF there in the year 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 the so-called Open Square Hours held after each regular panel session. The contributions of four of these scientists are represented in the 1st proceedings, under "Voices of Young Researchers." A special workshop attended by NRF Open Meeting 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 a focus on problems of the Arctic and Sub-Arctic."

Northern Veche - the 2nd NRF Open Meeting in Veliky Novgorod, Russia, 2002

The second NRF Open Meeting, *Northern Veche*, took place in Veliky Novgorod, Northwest Russia, from the 19th to the 22nd of September, 2002. The event was organized by the NRF Secretariat and Steering Committee, the 2nd NRF Organizing Committee in Veliky Novgorod, and the Northern Research Forum

of Russia. Members of the 2nd NRF Local Organizing Committee in Veliky Novgorod were:

Mr. Mikhail Prussak, Governor, Novgorod Oblast Administration, Chairman of the Organizing Committee
 Mr. Nikolai Renkas, Vice-Governor, Novgorod Oblast Administration
 Mr. Alexander Korsunov, Mayor of Veliky Novgorod
 Ms. Olga Andrianova, Head of the Department for International Relations, Novgorod Oblast Administration
 Mr. Anatoly Gavrikov, President, Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University
 Mr. Valery Zelenin, Vice-President, Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University
 Mr. Vladimir Gantmakher, Vice-President, Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University
 Mr. Anatoly Donchenko, Rector, Institute of Humanities, Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University

Within the venues of the Novgorod Oblast Administration Main Auditorium and the Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University campuses, *Northern Veche* attracted 172 participants, 58 female and 114 male. Participants included heads of states and autonomous regions, politicians, business leaders, civil servants, community leaders, NGO representatives, resource managers, activists, scientists, university students and educators. There were 107 participants from Russia, 17 from Finland, 11 from Iceland, 10 from Canada, 9 from the USA, 5 from Norway, 4 from Sweden, 2 each from Denmark and Germany, and 1 each from Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Lithuania, and the United Kingdom. The official languages of the meeting were English and Russian, with simultaneous translation provided. Major funders of *Northern Veche* were the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, the Government of Iceland, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Novgorod Oblast Administration, the City Administration of Veliky Novgorod, and Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University.

In the Appendix of this volume you will find the

Program of the 2nd NRF Open Meeting, including the list of sessions, themes, sub-themes and formal presentations, and the names, titles and affiliations of panelists and other formal speakers, as well as session chairs and organizers.

Prior to the 2nd NRF Open Meeting in Russia, the NRF secretariat released, in both Russian and English, an "Introduction to the 2nd NRF" by Lassi Heininen, Chairman of the NRF Steering Committee, and 14 essays, or position papers, written specifically for the event by people prominent in Northern issues and activities from a variety of backgrounds. These people were asked to write a 4-5 page commentary on what they see on the horizon, within the next several years, as far as the critical issues, problems, and opportunities facing their region and people, their particular stakeholder group, or the Circumpolar North in general. In focusing on one or more of the themes that had been identified for the Open Meeting, position paper writers were also asked to address the question of what they see as the current opportunities for, and barriers to, research in the Circumpolar North. Rewritten and revised versions of the position papers and the Introduction by NRF Steering Committee Chairman Heininen, originally serving as springboards for discussion during the Open Meeting, are included in this volume within the different theme chapters.

Eighteen members of the young generation of researchers gave special presentations at the Open Meeting, either as panelists in theme or project sessions, or during *Veche*, the Square Hours, held on the first and last days of the meeting. The contributions of ten of these young scientists are represented in this volume. Furthermore, the young researchers served as the rapporteurs of the Open Meeting overall and, during the Summary Session, twelve of them presented oral reports, each on his or her respective plenary or project session, expressing personal impressions and describing salient ideas, proposals and initiatives that emerged from the presentations and discussions.

Extensive discussions followed, where participants expressed their experiences and views of the second

NRF Open Meeting and their aspirations for the NRF as a forum and as a process. Participants also filled out special evaluation forms that were distributed at that time.

The special reports on each session of the 2nd NRF Open Meeting that are included in this publication (see "Summary Reports: Plenary Sessions, Day of Projects, and Participants' Evaluation Results") are written by the young researchers who served as rapporteurs and gave presentations during the Summary Session in Veliky Novgorod. A participants' evaluation report, which is also included in the chapter "Summary Reports," is based on the results of the questionnaire that was distributed to all meeting participants during the Summary Session.

The Northern Research Forum of Russia

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

As an association of Russia's researchers in the North, the NRFR addresses especially the 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 on both the interregional/national and the local level

Projects and events with which the Northern Research Forum of Russia has been involved include:

- The 2nd NRF Open Meeting in Veliky Novgorod, September 18 - 21, 2002.
- The Northern Traveling Film Festival, based on the Russian Anthropological Film Festival (first held in Salekhard, Russia, in September, 2002). When in Veliky Novgorod, the Northern Traveling Film Festival expanded to include films from Canada, Finland and Iceland, in addition to films from Russia. The next proposed showing will be during the 3rd Open Meeting in Yellowknife, in 2004
- The Northern Archaeological Congress, held in Khanty-Mansiisk, Russia, September 9-14, 2002
- Natural and National Parks (Protected Areas - issues and initiatives)

For further information on the NRF of Russia, please contact: Andrei Golovnev, Professor, Institute of History and Archeology, Ural Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), 56, Luxemburg, St. Ekaterinburg, 620219, Russia. Tel.: +7 3432 516520; Fax: +7 3432 516527; E-mail: golovnev@basko.ru.

The 3rd NRF Open Meeting:

The Resilient North - Human Responses to Global Change

The 3rd Open Meeting of the Northern Research Forum will take place in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada, from the 15th to the 18th of September in the year 2004. The event will be hosted by the Government of the Northwest Territories, the City of Yellowknife, and Aurora College, and organized by the Northern Research Forum in cooperation with the Canadian Polar Commission.

In the Appendix to this volume you will find an announcement of the 3rd NRF Open Meeting, includ-

ing a comprehensive description of themes and sessions, and a call for your participation.

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 (Chairman), Docent, University of Lapland, Arctic Centre, Finland
 Patricia Longley Cochran, Executive Director, Alaska Native Science Commission, Alaska, USA
 Andrei Golovnev, Professor, Ural Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia
 Thorsteinn Gunnarsson, Rector, University of Akureyri, Iceland
 Peter Johnson, Professor, Department of Geography, University of Ottawa, Canada
 Gail Osherenko, Researcher, Donald Bren School of Environmental Science and Management, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA
 Zaneta Ozolina, Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Latvia, Latvia
 Larissa Riabova, Senior Researcher, Institute for Economic Problems, Kola Science Centre, Russia

Members of the NRF Honorary Board

The NRF 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
 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

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Introduction: The Northern Research Forum

– A New Design for Open Dialogue in the North

Lassi Heininen

The 2nd Open Meeting of the Northern Research Forum (NRF) in September, 2002, in Veliky Novgorod, Russia meant three days of interesting open discussion and intensive dialogue between heads of state and regions, civil servants, business leaders, film makers and academics. It was a promising step, even a success, and not only revealed itself as a potential new forum for open cross-sectorial dialogue but also promoted dramatically the NRF process as an international research and expert network.

The NRF has two ambitious aims: first, to discuss the acute and relevant issues of northern regions (such as the themes of the Novgorod gathering) together with representatives of different stakeholders and interest groups across sectorial borders, and second, to use this dialogue to develop processes and procedures of fruitful discussion for these societies in general, and for decision-making in particular. Behind the NRF there is the interplay between science and politics, between researchers and decision-makers. If we agree that science is needed, whether for trying to solve problems or for developing new technology, then is important to interpret and transform new research findings into a form that is useful for decision-making and vision-creation in modern northern societies.

Although only recently begun, the NRF process has

been intensive, due in large part to the fact that there has been both a lot of interest toward, and a social need for, an open discussion and dialogue between different people, across different sectors.

2nd Open Meeting in Novgorod

As part the implementation of the NRF process, there were several rounds of dialogue which took place during both the preparation and the course of the 2nd Open Meeting: The latter included not only three plenary sessions, a round table discussion on business, eight project sessions, two square hours and a summary session spiced with an intensive and substantial open discussion, but also all the informal meetings such as discussions, chats and networking during lunch hours and coffee breaks with their own special dynamics. In the summary session were the reports of all the sessions by young researchers, proposals for the 3rd Open Meeting in 2004 in Canada, and follow-ups of the NRF which went beyond the Novgorod Meeting and concentrated on future themes and long-range initiatives of the NRF.

The NRF Steering Committee's initial list of suggested main themes for the 2nd Open Meeting included many more topics and subjects than the three actually chosen for the main panel sessions. However, most of these early ideas for potential themes were also

discussed, and thus a part of the dialogue of the Novgorod meeting: some of them constituted the sub-themes under each panel session, while others came to define and formalize the project sessions. In respect to the discussion of the 2nd Open Meeting, there were several themes both interesting and relevant for Russia and the Russians including the situation and role of the North within the Russian Federation, and EU-Russian relations, both in general and in economics in particular.

Before undertaking our discussion of the background and contents of the main themes of the 2nd Open Meeting, it should be borne in mind that behind the formation of the NRF are not only the changed state of the international system and a new geopolitical situation but also the regional dynamics of the North. This has both encouraged a new kind of contribution and expertise by the scientific community and made obvious the need for dialogue between decision-makers and researchers.

About the Main Themes and the Discussion

A great and even dramatic transformation of transnational and inter-regional co-operation has taken place in the Northern regions of the globe since the 1980's. This transformation is due in part at least to the general process changes in the international system in the 1990's, that is, globalization and broad-scale regionalisation.

Looking at the North in general at this new stage, two main features are of particular note: The first is the declining importance of military-based security - though there are still heavy military structures and environmental risks on account of the military, such as the nuclear problem of the Russian North - and the increased emphasis on, and competition over, the utilization of natural resources. Secondly, we are witnessing the intensified activities of non-governmental and regional players. Common interests have turned them into a strong presence in the domain of international and inter-regional co-operation. The interests of these actors interact in complex ways

with those of governmental and external actors; and this has resulted in the creation of a new kind of regional dynamic in the North (cf. Heininen 1999).

The North appears to be fresh and innovative in other ways as well. For example, trans-boundary cooperation is seen as a realistic possibility and a new resource for development, and regionalisation represents new possibilities for international cooperation at the regional level which challenge the politics of power and hegemony characteristic of the Cold War period. Sustainable development based upon regional and local actors could be a realistic goal in the North. This potential is based on a new geopolitical focus, placing the emphasis upon the attainment of a socially stable and peaceful situation and environmentally sustainable order, instead of seeking comprehensive control over a particular region.

Human Capital in the North

An especially critical issue pertinent to the theme of "Human Capital in the North", concerns the overcoming of geographical barriers. The sub-theme of integrating traditional knowledge with new technologies is particularly relevant with respect to sparsely populated areas, although it is not clear whether there is a real, perceived linkage between traditional knowledge and new technologies among native peoples. Information technology (IT) provides the means, and there is also content, i.e. actual contacts and a need for communication to be viewed as part of culture. In a multi-cultural world, the culture of multi-level and multi-functional interests may be seen as communication, and even as a controlling factor in understanding. On the one hand, advances in IT have enhanced communication and distribution of information within many remote areas (cf. Kuula 2001, and also Huskey in this volume); while on the other hand, it has made outside communication more available and has brought new actors into such areas as Saami reindeer herding and environmental initiatives. Therefore, in addition to traditional power there is also influence. Thus overall, one of the main questions we are concerned with is the balance between technology, especially new IT, and sub-

stance; and another is the question of whether traditional knowledge and new applications of technology fit together, and if they can do so, how their integration can best be implemented.

The reason why sustainable development could be a realistic goal in the North is the fact that there exists not only the political will among regional and local actors but also rich natural resources and the requisite scientific knowledge. If we try to implement the great ideas of sustainable development as expressed, for example, at the recent World Summit in Johannesburg, then it is important to apply theories of governance for local and regional purposes, to identify new models and possible obstacles, and to find out what the necessary preconditions might be for building a system of governance based on sustainable development.

There is a strong need for a cross-sectorial dialogue; not least in the North. But being largely free of certain acute global problems - like terrorism, lack of fresh water, AIDS, and poverty - the North may perhaps serve as a kind of driving force in the present geopolitical transition period, and the northern experiences may provide much-needed models to the world (cf. Fenge 2001).

Innovation in Northern Governance

The second main theme, "Innovation in Northern Governance" invokes the political concept and policy called the Northern Dimension. Following upon and encouraged by the Murmansk Speech of President Mikhail Gorbachev in October 1987 (Gorbachev 1987) there occurred a series of national initiatives dealing with international cooperation in the North, and, as a result, most of the states of the Arctic Eight have either already defined, or are in the process of defining, their own northern policy or dimension.

Furthermore, the European Union has created its own Northern Dimension involving external and cross-border policies with respect to Northern Europe, especially Northwest Russia (cf. Action Plan 2000; also Ozolina in this volume). The Northern

Dimension of Canada's foreign policy addresses the issues of sovereignty and other national interests in the North. But also clearly manifested in Canada's Northern Dimension is the strong notion of the circumpolar north as an integrated entity for the pursuit of human security and sustainable development (The Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy 2000).

Correspondingly, in Russia there has been, and still is, a political discussion of EU-Russian relations both in general and in terms of EU's Northern Dimension, particularly as to what role Russia might play in the policy. We also note a more academic discourse, accompanied by efforts to create an academic network, addressing the need to redefine the role of the Russian North as something more than a geo-strategic entity. In September 2002, 15 years after the Murmansk speech by President Gorbachev, the NRF Meeting demonstrated how Russians are willing to participate actively in international relations and Northern cooperation, taking account of their own interests, problems, and new ideas.

As we see, there are several Northern Dimensions (see also Introduction 2002). On the agenda of the NRF, the Northern Dimension is, on the one hand, a good metaphor for a new relationship between the North and the South, and on the other hand, an important subject of research for the political and other social sciences.

As a part of the activity of the 1990's there has been economic cooperation across the Iron Curtain of the Cold War period. The discussion in the special session "Business Initiatives for a Joint Agenda in the North" took place within the context of the integration of the North into the globalized world economy, which is in great part due to the North's potentially rich natural resources (cf. Lyck 2001). The terms of this integration are being dictated mostly by the unified states, political and economic blocs, and transnational corporations, rather than by the northern regions themselves. In the future, the importance of the northern regions will most certainly grow because of the increasing demand for raw materials by expanding companies with increasingly more capital and evermore advanced technology.

Briefly stated, if globalization in the North means more integration into the larger world, then regionalisation refers to integration geared to a different approach, one based on the point of view of the Northern Regions, which will entail wider and deeper cooperation within Northern regions as well as with external actors.

Indeed, within the regionalisation movement, a region is interpreted as an actor or subject in international, or inter-regional, cooperation. This is possible, and even necessary, in the North of today to counteract the globalized economy and global changes. It pertains to governance, and to democracy and self-determination, which are preconditions for the implementation of sustainable development. If regional actors such as counties and municipalities had more freedom to govern and develop themselves, the question would be how they could do this, and whether they would have the intellectual and material resources sufficient for the purpose.

In order to utilize this new and developing situation, there is a need to continue the discussion, for example by organising a workshop on Governance in the North. This kind of workshop, which the NRF is ready to promote, would aim at making a comparative study of the different modes of governance in the North, analyzing existing theories of governance and regionalisation and trying to apply them for local and regional purposes, identifying new models and possible obstacles, and determining the preconditions for building a system of governance based on sustainable development. In trying to implement sustainable development in the Arctic North, the need for an open and cross-sectorial dialogue is strong if humankind is to implement the ideas of sustainable development on a global scale.

The euphoria surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union instigated a transition in global and European security arrangements, and dramatically changed Northern Europe from an area of high tension into one of potential cooperation. Although the Cold War is over as an historical period, many of the old structures, particularly the nuclear weapons systems, still play a

major role in world politics. Although there are neither obvious nor determinate reasons for political-military conflicts between the West and Russia, there are certain new threats and security issues (cf. Trenin 2000). As an old enemy and the Other, Russia has been seen recently as a problem and a challenge for the West, especially due to the Chechnyan wars (cf. Tunander 1997).

Among new security challenges is the visible gap between the Nordic countries and Russia, due to the disparity in living standards, environmental issues, dissimilar political systems, and cultural differences. This makes multilateral and functional cooperation relevant in many fields, for example in the context of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) and the EU's Northern Dimension. This also indicates that there are different concepts of security. This might sound like a problem, but it can also be taken as an opportunity.

Problems to be dealt with include, for example, how to clean up environmental mess such as the nuclear waste in the Barents Sea region, or that created by the radar stations of the DEW-line in North America. The possible influences of global changes on the environment and on society, and thus also on security in the North need also to be considered. It is interesting to know that there has been a change in the definition of security problems, and in the relationship between the military and the environment, especially with regard to nuclear safety (cf. Heininen and Segerstahl 2001); and that the environmental aspect of security has appeared on the political agenda of the unified states and IGOs. This suggests an interesting, fundamental question, which indicates certain opportunities: in particular, what about security in the North from the point of view of a region? Although a complicated and challenging matter, it is possible to define regional security in a way that will provide an opportunity to discuss democracy, identity and culture as parts of the everyday security of citizens.

Applying the Lessons of History

In dealing with the theme "Applying the Lessons of

History” we have said that historical crossing points have been important for current East-West relations, and further, that in North-South relations, there is fruitful ground for new approaches. This can be concretized for example, by the following two conclusions which are based on the events of the Viking Age: First (and this is not to glorify the age), sailing over a huge part of the Northern Hemisphere, especially the North Atlantic, the Vikings were the great communicators of the North. Via their East-West connections, they integrated many parts of North Europe into loose trade and market networks, such as the Baltic Sea region economic network, thus conceptualizing the idea of a cooperative North Europe. And second, sailing outside Northern Europe as well, these people, in a way, drew the borders of Europe. We can see that northern peoples went to the South before any southern powers, such as the Catholic Church, came to the North.

In the renaissance of the Baltic Sea regional cooperation of the 1990's, the Hansa League was used as a metaphor. If talk of a 'New Hansa' serves as a metaphor for current Baltic Sea regional cooperation, then the old Hansa League was an example of the continuity of the East-West relations of Northern Europe. Therefore, the move of the NRF Open Meeting from Iceland, the old democracy of the North Atlantic, to Novgorod, the old Russian democracy, is natural and emphasizes the relevance of the main theme of Applying the Lessons of History. And indeed, the rich history of Novgorod the Great was manifested by the celebration of the 1140th Anniversary of Russian statehood in the Kremlin during the days of the 2nd Open Meeting. To continue on this course, in the awareness that in North America there is great interest in these matters, it will be fruitful to continue the discussion on the relations between east and west, in particular America and Eurasia, at the 3rd Open Meeting in 2004 in Yellowknife, NWT, Canada.

In the post-Cold-War period in the West, both the EU and the USA have searched for greater stability and ways to increase security without isolating Russia, with the result that they have initiated plans aimed at integrating Russia into international cooperation

and security structures (cf. The Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia 1999). The main aim here has been to build a strategic partnership, but not to take in Russia as a member state or let Russia have a veto in NATO enlargement. This may reflect a current trend toward the internationalization, if not westernization, of Russia, or it may reflect merely a realistic point of view towards the relationship between Russia and the West, and the necessary requirements for increased stability.

The paradox here is that this intergovernmental cooperation in Europe is largely based on the European Union and NATO, the old external political structures and IGOs established in the Cold War-period. Partly for that reason, the West forgot the bi-directional influence of integration, i.e. more integration usually means higher borders and more complicated relations between the integrated unit and the outside world. It also forgot that stability and security were, despite Cold War competition and tension, common interests of the unified states, for which purpose national borders, also shared by Russia, were important. Thus it is only natural that the Russian Government also seeks stability in today's world to ensure peace within the Russian Federation, and the security of its citizens, while building up a stable economy.

Since September 11th, 2001 Russia has taken new steps and moved closer to the West as a part of the international alliance against terrorism. Although the change in attitude and politics did not begin at that moment, it became more obvious and rapid due to that tragic event. September 11th is thus a milestone, marking Russia's inclusion politically as a part of Europe and the international community in reaction to the common enemy: international terrorism. The experiences of Russia in wars and conflicts in the south form a background for this. It is even possible to say that Russia, when fighting in the Caucasus, fought against terrorism on behalf of the West (cf. Kähkönen 2000). Due to the new NATO-Russia Council which includes NATO, the NATO countries, and the Russian Federation, Russia has almost attained 'de facto' veto power within NATO.

Due to the fact that the EU enlargement in 2004 will include Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, the Baltic Sea will become a sea within the EU. As a result of this, Kaliningrad will become an enclave, and a challenging hotspot in EU-Russian relations, calling for positive dialogue and an understanding of common interests. Although it was one of the topics of the plenary sessions (see Medalinskas in this volume), surprisingly little interest was shown toward this issue. In contrast - which is interesting - both positive and critical interest were shown in the model of Euregio Karelia which pertains to the eastern counties of Finland and the Karelian Republic of Russia (cf. Cronberg 1999, also, Cronberg in this volume).

It should also be noted that if, as has been said after September 11th, Russia is a strategic partner in the international community, and NATO has been transformed into a political alliance that is open to all countries seeking peace and partnership, then it should, logically speaking, be possible to offer a permanent seat in this intergovernmental organization to the Russian Federation. Underlying this idea is the interpretation, which the NRF highly supports, that any improvement in the current relationship between Russia and western organisations would ameliorate the divisions within Europe and increase mutual trust between former rivals.

All in all, despite western rhetoric and the scepticism and fears of the Russians, there are and have been, in the background, common interests between the West and Russia: they share a rich common history and the same European civilisation of the divided Christian church; there is ever-increasing trade between the EU and Russia; and, finally, there is the high dependence of the EU countries on Russian oil and gas (cf. Liuhto 2001).

The Central Aim of Implementing a Cross-Sectorial Dialogue

We have emphasized that the NRF is first and foremost a forum and not an organization; it is an open, public meeting - as the 2nd Open Meeting was - for

dialogue on northern issues, including the views of politicians, civil servants, business people, NGO-activists, and academics, aimed at promoting policy-relevant discussion and paying special attention to the role of research and science. The NRF is also a process for the development of fresh ideas, opinions and research findings, aiming further at applying those findings and at bringing researchers and other experts together to benefit from each others' work (cf. The Northern Research Forum. The Feasibility Report).

Emphasis is placed upon quality, rather than quantity. We value each individual's interest and participation highly. Therefore, the number of Open Meeting participants is limited (although it has become larger than expected) in order to create an atmosphere where each participant is able to have a presence in open discussion and make a notable contribution to the process. Underlying this is the disadvantage that opportunities frequently arise in discussions of a problem while no time has been provided for an open discussion of them, or items are mentioned in general statements without any realistic thinking about how and when they might be taken up.

At the beginning of the 21st century, one of the main dilemmas facing global and intergovernmental organizations is their lack of legitimacy in the eyes of the public. The result has been large and furious demonstrations against globalization. In part, these protests are on target and are due to the lack of a wider dialogue. They testify to the need for openness in the actions of the existing IGOs and a new kind of broadly based dialogue between decision-makers and citizens (cf. *Newsweek*, July 30, 2001). In today's world there is a strong need for communication across different sectors. This need is increasing in the current state of affairs, in which the sovereignty of the unified states is being undermined by the forces of globalization. The complicated economic, social and political mechanisms of modern societies present great social and moral challenges and test the mettle of the traditional decision-making mechanisms of existing political systems.

These are questions of power; if in politics power is

both a means and an ultimate goal in itself, then it matters critically where, and in whose hands, power lies: Traditionally, the decision-makers - MPs, other politicians, and civil servants - have the power in the sphere of politics, while the business people and shareholders have the power in the economic sphere. If, in earlier times, money and knowledge meant power, then we need nowadays to use another word which is parallel to Power namely, Influence, meaning the capability of using knowledge widely and selectively and of applying it quickly and effectively. For example, NGOs such as environmental movements are endowed, potentially, with influence to the extent that they are clever and flexible (cf. Heininen 1999).

Existing problems and challenges are made mostly by human beings and societies, and these can presumably be solved by human beings as well. However, solutions are not given: they require political will as well as suitable mechanisms for analysis, fora for open dialogue and political innovation, and methods for decision-making. Thus, although substance is the most important thing, methods, structures and procedures also matter. Here, communication across sectorial borders and between different stakeholders is necessary for balanced social development. One problem with this is, however, that the concrete implementation of effective dialogue is not simple. Even when a forum for discussion between stakeholders has been established, the working methods generally used channel discussion along traditional lines.

In conclusion, cross-sectorial communication within a society and between different sectors of a society, as well as in an international context, among societies, is both possible and necessary in order to create something new and better for individuals and social groups. This very important type of dialogue is the main focus of the NRF. I would even like to wear a slogan that says: Instead of shareholder value we are interested in stakeholders' opinions and ideas!

Process with Outcomes

Due to the fact that the NRF is a process, the preparation of the 2nd Open Meeting included several different modes of dialogue. For example, there were 14 invited position papers, distributed to all prospective participants in advance. The state visit to Russia by the President of Iceland in April, 2002, should also be interpreted as a part of the preparation, especially because it marked the entrance of the NRF onto the political agenda of Russia¹. There were two NRF sub-fora, the Calotte Academy in May, 2002, in Inari, Finland (see Tirronen and Heininen in this volume) and the Travelling Northern Film Festival in August, 2002, in Salekhard, Russia. As the latter event, many film-makers worked together to help ensure that a number of noteworthy films on the northern peoples and regions were screened during the Open Meeting in Novgorod. The design of the Festival was mostly Russian, and will most probably be imitated in the near future in other parts of the circumpolar North.

The 2nd Open Meeting is an example of the fact that procedure matters. Likewise, we deemed it important to give a general term to the biennial main event of the Northern Research Forum indicating its central aim; thus, we called this gathering of the NRF an Open Meeting. The title 'Northern Veche' refers to a public assembly, or *thing* in the Norse tradition, and reflects not only the rich tradition of Novgorod, but also the main aim of the NRF process, and the real purpose of this biennial event: that is, the NRF as a town square for dialogue. The 2nd Open Meeting has given us good reason to think that the NRF might also provide a new model, useful for and in Russia, to cross borders and "involve regional research groups in an all-North-Russian circuit" (NRF of Russia 2001) including both politics and science, and drawing together different sectors of northern research.

We have been asked, why Russia and why Novgorod, especially now when the Russian Federation is not going through the easiest period of its statehood, thus making the preparation and arrangement of an international meeting somewhat difficult. From our point of view, it was relevant that the Russians

have been an active and equal partner in the NRF process from the beginning; the Russian delegation at the 1st NRF Open Meeting in November, 2000 in Iceland already represented several regions of the Russian Federation. Since then, the positive feedback, along with numerous proposals and activities within Russia have made it possible for us to create good contacts with several Russian regions.

It is clear that in Russia there is interest in the activities that the NRF stands for, as the establishment of the Northern Research Forum of Russia shows. This is a branch of the NRF "to envision local issues within interregional/national context" and "to shape and coordinate important and urgent projects" (NRF of Russia 2001). Although based on the model of the international NRF, it is a Russian network of researchers and other experts.

An important part of this story is the new kind of relationship between Russia and the West which has been described as a strategic partnership, aimed at increasing stability via cooperation instead of resorting to confrontation. This partnership should not be viewed merely as strategic, however, or as a vehicle for economic charity from the West, but rather as an equal and fruitful partnership, arising from common interests and a necessary interdependence among Russia, Europe and North America. This is the case especially in the North, where serious international cooperation began already in the 1980's (cf. Grimsson 2002; Heininen 2002). The NRF would like to make its own contribution in support of the new Russian policy toward international cooperation by functioning not as a western or eastern forum, but as a forum for northern actors based on equal, and mutual, participation.

It was therefore an easy choice to go to Veliky (Great) Novgorod, an ancient northern Russian state and an old Russian democracy, entwined in the rich history of interregional relations in Northern Europe between the east and the west, and between Russia and the North Atlantic. This made, as mentioned earlier, the move from Iceland to Novgorod seem only natural. Another consideration was the innovative atmosphere of both the Novgorod Oblast and the

Novgorod State University and their strong interest, and good results, in international cooperation.

As an international meeting with its own design and strong participation from different parts of North America, Europe and Russia, the 2nd Open Meeting was a clear success, especially in view of the fact that there were certain risks in organizing this kind of gathering in Russia. Pointing to the fact that the participants from Russia covered geographically the whole federation might sound old-fashioned, but geography is still relevant, both in general and more especially in Russia, where issues of representation loom large. Of course, more relevant is the fact that Russian participants were active in the sessions, and even leading influences in the discourse. In short, as an international design the NRF can be interpreted as a means for evaluating how Russia today both creates and applies new innovations; and the NRF of Russia can be seen as an example of a new, flexible institution representing a progressing Russian civil society.

The Long-Range Steps of the NRF Process

When looking beyond the 2nd Open Meeting, the critical question becomes how to continue the essential cross-sectorial dialogue and activities in the context of the NRF. For the NRF process, both continuity and renewal are critical. Finally, what kind of a forum should the NRF be: the Davos of the North? A think-tank between decision-makers and academics with reports, analysis and scenarios for the future? A scientific forum on the matters of research and university studies? Or an on-going Open Meeting?

It is important to understand, that the NRF process can only go forward, and the open meetings will only be creative, if the participants think that these events and activities are worth accomplishing. And here an important fact is that the 2nd Open Meeting already revealed itself as a new kind of forum for open dialogue. In order to maintain continuity, there is a need to formulate long-range ideas and proposals. Also, contacts and networking are important and can be

realized by creating a loose network of institutions dealing with northern issues, and by making deeper contacts with relevant IGOs such as the Arctic Council and the United Nations and its sub-organisations.

Finally, instead of having formal official procedures and duties, the NRF seeks to adhere to four fundamental principles: first, to organize and promote an open cross-sectorial dialogue; second, to be issue-oriented and to concentrate on opportunities; third, to bring together both senior professionals and young researchers with fresh ideas and unconventional approaches; and fourth, to be an open process, as the 2nd Open Meeting was in September, 2002, in Veliky Novgorod, Russia.

Notes

ⁱ Additionally, the student excursion of the Aleksanteri Institute and the University of Helsinki in June 2001 to Northwest Russia took place under the NRF 'umbrella', with the result that several of those students attended the Novgorod Meeting, too.

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Opening Addresses

Opening Address

Mikhail Prussak
Governor of Novgorod, Russia

Dear Mr. President, dear ladies and gentlemen, dear participants of the Forum!

Today we are opening the 2nd Northern Research Forum in Veliky Novgorod. We are very pleased with the fact that Veliky Novgorod hosts the Forum. Let me pay my deep respect to the President of Iceland, H.E. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, and express my sincere gratitude to him for choosing Veliky Novgorod as the place for the 2nd Open Meeting of the Northern Research Forum. We are very thankful to President Grímsson, his colleagues and the NRF Steering Committee for their efforts in the organization of the Forum. I would also like to welcome all the Forum's participants to our Novgorodian land.

We have received a greeting telegram from the Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Gennady Seleznyov. We are glad that he acknowledges the importance of this event.

The fact that the 2nd Northern Research Forum takes place in Veliky Novgorod testifies to its actuality and interest from the world community. The Forum personifies a relay race baton passed on from Iceland to Russia and then from Russia to the New World. It proves the intensive development of the globalization process and the unification of nations. We are sure that the challenges of the new millennium can

be responded to only by nations having a centuries-old history and we realize that our joint efforts will contribute to solving crucial modern issues.

The purpose of the 2nd Northern Research Forum is to promote intensive dialogue between scientists, researchers, statesmen and public figures. The Forum's participants are encouraged to give their opinions on unlimited possibilities in the context of social and economic change.

The Northern Research Forum was launched not so long ago but it has become a significant event. This is proved by the close attention it receives from communities of the Russian Federation and the West. The Forum fosters the development of different ideas, initiatives and projects in social and humanitarian spheres. I think that the open dialogue enables us to unite politicians, civic actors, scientists and cultural workers, and gives us an opportunity to discuss problems crucial not only for the northern nations but for the whole world.

The 2nd Northern Research Forum provides an example of cooperation between Russia and Iceland: its positive influence on northern policy, the development of political and economic relations and the maintaining of cultural links. We know that the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, attaches great importance to working out a new northern policy on

the grounds of the changed political vector from the 'East-West' axis to the 'North-South' one. The majority of our population supports this policy. We are very glad that our country has also made its contribution to forming the basis for the necessary dialogue.

The Northern Research Forum unites scientists, politicians and businessmen willing to make bridges between nations. It is evident that to preserve our planet it is necessary to pursue a policy of counter-balances instead of a policy corresponding only to the economic interests of certain financial and industrial groups or states. All of us bear the responsibility for solving actual problems; both large and small countries should make efforts to promote peace in the world and to take up the challenges facing our and the next generations.

It is a pleasure for us to see that many young people participate in the Forum and it is much owing to the President of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson. This

fact is of paramount importance as the future of our world depends on the next generation and the ability of young people to take care of our heritage and cope with crucial problems. In my opinion the Northern Research Forum is not only an organization but also an inter-territorial and intercultural form of communication. The Forum encourages young people, scientists, researchers and other enterprising people to work out new approaches to modern issues which will have an impact on our future. It gathers the experience of all northern countries, as their peoples have many common topics for discussion.

We have arranged the Forum together and I hope that the city of Veliky Novgorod and the Novgorodian land will contribute to its success. The NRF Steering Committee, the NRF Secretariat and President Grímsson have made many efforts to organize the Forum on the highest level. I would like to wish success and further promotion of the Forum's ideas to all the participants.

Opening Address

Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson
President of Iceland

We assemble here today for the second meeting of the Northern Research Forum in a spirit of optimism and cooperation, convinced that the new century will bring the North a wealth of opportunities for progress and innovation.

The North is rich in history and culture and our people have always shown persistence and strength when faced with new challenges; the forces of nature which have so dramatically moulded our environment have also provided inspiration and encouragement.

We welcome the changes which in recent years have brought us together. The end of the Cold War and the spirit of cooperation and peace which now dominates the European and Atlantic vision of the future have transformed the international dialogue and given the North a new relevance in the global evolution.

The Northern Research Forum is a strong manifestation of this transformation and the wide-ranging agenda which awaits us in the days to come demonstrates how comprehensive Northern cooperation has already become.

It is furthermore highly symbolic to host the Northern Research Forum here in Novgorod, a region which reminds us of the thousand years of

history that link us together, a region which in a fascinating way demonstrates the dynamism of the new Russia.

At the opening of our meeting I express our heartfelt thanks to Governor Prusak, the Novgorod Oblast Administration, the Oblast Duma, and the University of Novgorod for their excellent work in preparing the Northern Veche and for their generosity in offering to host this distinguished assembly of scholars and officials from the northern countries.

During my State Visit to Russia earlier this year, I sensed the positive interest which the leaders of Russia show towards increased cooperation in the North. From my very first meeting with the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, and throughout the dialogue with other leaders, ministers and governors of this great country, it was absolutely clear that the Northern dimension is a prominent part of the Russian vision for the 21st century.

This emphasis is of great importance not only for other countries in northern Europe, the Nordic countries and the Baltic States, but also for Canada and the United States of America.

We now have a new opening in the North and the countries and regions, ranging from Russia across

Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea to Iceland and Greenland and into North America, can now utilize the potential of our people in a multitude of ways which only a few years ago were almost unthinkable and beyond our reach.

By hosting the Northern Research Forum under the fitting banner of Northern Veche, Russia has shown both leadership and determination, signalling to other countries in the North that we have entered a new era. The hindrances and restrictions from previous times have now been abolished and we are being challenged to show that we are capable of creating together a renaissance of the North, a new alliance of far-ranging cooperation which through its success demonstrates how dramatically the world has changed.

I take this opportunity to thank President Vladimir Putin, the Government of Russia, and the governors and regional leaders involved for their initiative and vision towards the North and I am convinced that this second meeting of the Northern Research Forum will lay solid foundations for our extensive cooperation in the years to come.

Novgorod is indeed a symbolic place for our endeavour. A thousand years ago princes and kings from the Nordic countries came here to learn and to gain new experience. The Icelandic sagas, written on calfskin in the middle of the 13th century, describe the journeys to this great city by explorers and poets whose families had settled in Iceland before the year 1000. Ever since, the Icelandic language has preserved the ancient Nordic name for Novgorod - Hólmgarður. Our Viking ancestors were certainly the most widely travelled people of their times, highly cultured, skilful navigators and experienced traders. We can be profoundly proud of the legacy they gave us, a legacy that a thousand years ago brought Russia, the Nordic countries, the Baltic Region and the newly discovered continent in the west - which five hundred years later became known as America but the Icelandic discoverers named Vinland - into a single world which we now have the opportunity to bring together again.

The North embraces the radical transformation which has taken place in international relations in recent years and it provides the global community with a new vision, creating a platform for North America and Russia to cooperate in a dynamic and positive way in the company of the smaller states of Northern Europe. In this respect the North paves the way towards the future and is free of the problems and restraints which dominate attempts to create greater harmony in the central and southern parts of the European continent.

The North has become in many ways the laboratory of the new world, rich in initiatives for political, social and economic cooperation. The Arctic Council, together with the Barents and Baltic Councils, has become the vehicle for active coordination of efforts and policies by the member states. Iceland hopes to use our upcoming presidency of the Arctic Council to further Northern cooperation in significant ways and the ideas and the proposals which will be made during this Northern Veche will be incorporated into our preparations for the Arctic presidency.

We have also seen effective forms of cooperation between the nation states and the regional and provincial governments in the North, a network which supersedes the old traditions of diplomatic protocol and creates productive avenues for progress. I therefore welcome especially the statements by both President Vladimir Putin and the Prime Minister of Russia, Mikhail Kasyanov, in our meetings earlier this year, that the respective regions in Russia, their governors and Oblast Administrations, should seek a direct form of cooperation with the other northern states.

There are many areas which promise substantial results from northern cooperation in the years to come.

We have seen many positive examples of successful business enterprises from our countries linking their efforts in order to gain a stronger position in regional, national and global markets. In many ways corporations from the northern territories share experience, culture and professional outlook and are, therefore,

well equipped to reap the benefits from joint efforts. At the meeting of the Northern Research Forum here in Novgorod we have decided to devote a special session to business initiatives in the North, and it is especially encouraging to see how enthusiastically the business community decided to join our deliberations. By building commercial and economic bridges we can make the North a promising area for industrial and financial progress.

Our countries are rich in resources such as oil, gas and hydro and geothermal power and this gives us a unique advantage. Some of our countries are in the forefront of information technology, among the leaders in the world in mobile phone usage, internet connections and the ownership of personal computers. We have traditionally given a high priority to education and training and consequently our workforce is among the most skilled and technically advanced in the world. All these factors contribute towards making the North extremely rich in the factors required for progress and development in the new century. We could be on the top of the world not just geographically but also in terms of prosperity and human well-being.

With improved communications, new routes for ships and airlines, road networks and modernised railway systems, we can enhance these potentials of the North in significant ways. By focusing more exclusively on the North as an interconnected area, the communication companies could indeed establish a profitable basis for operations. The Icelandic experience provides an interesting example in this respect. Icelandair flies regularly from the capitals of the Scandinavian countries to destinations on the North American continent, thus making our island in the Atlantic a strategic hub in bringing North Europe and North America together. An Icelandic shipping line has in recent years established an extensive network in Russia and thus succeeded in broadening its traditional European routes. The Northern emphasis has proved to be a profitable approach.

We have also seen in recent years a tremendous increase in cultural cooperation among our countries.

Exhibitions, concerts, films, books, theatre and ballet have all enjoyed intra-north relations and the cultural experience of our people has been greatly enhanced. Our countries are rich in cultural history and in modern times we have been blessed by an extraordinarily creative community of artists and writers, painters and composers, singers and actors, filmmakers and theatrical directors. When St. Petersburg celebrates next year three hundred years of its spectacular history we should note that it was especially the thriving cultural creativity of the city which made it so great, and that the treasures it preserves are unique in the heritage halls of mankind. We should let the example of St. Petersburg be an inspiration to us all and consolidate our determination to make cultural exploration the foundation of increased northern awareness. Our countries have a lot to offer and there are many cultural centres throughout the North which have enriched the lives of the people and broadened human experience in profound ways.

We have already decided to increase our educational cooperation. The University of the Arctic and bilateral university agreements, as well as the establishment of many forums and associations to promote research and scholarship, all manifest the existence of a vibrant academic community in the North which continuously brings us new visions and fascinating results. The meeting here in Novgorod will manifest this in many ways and I would like to congratulate the scholars and researchers who are contributing significantly to broadening the basis for northern cooperation and progress.

There are indeed many other areas where urgent tasks await us. The preservation of the environment, the strengthening of sustainable development and the utilisation of the complex bio-systems in our regions are all challenges which will loom large in northern cooperation in the future. We have been given great responsibilities in this field and it is of utmost importance that the environmental record of the northern countries meets the highest global standards.

This year we have seen dramatic confirmation of the new cooperation across the North Atlantic in the field

of security and peaceful coexistence. The agreement between NATO and Russia which was finalised in Reykjavík in May, and signed in Rome a few weeks later, signifies a new era. The countries of the North can now develop new dimensions in our security cooperation and remove some of the vestiges of the Cold War which are still to be found in our regions. We must also make sure that the nuclear arsenals which can still be found on land and in the oceans are systematically reduced and that the risks of environmental nuclear disasters be absolutely minimised.

The times ahead do indeed offer us numerous opportunities, challenging tasks, and new avenues for progress. It is highly encouraging to see how the nations of the North have moved swiftly to prepare ourselves for this exciting future. The meeting of the Northern Research Forum here in Novgorod is a clear manifestation of our will and determination.

I want to thank all those who have so skilfully prepared the meeting, the Steering Committee of the

Northern Research Forum, the organisers here in Novgorod and the secretariat in Akureyri, Iceland. I also deeply appreciate the support given to the meeting by the Novgorod Oblast Administration, the City Administration of Veliky Novgorod and the Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University. I also thank the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Nordic Council of Ministers for their financial support.

There are many who have helped to bring the Northern Research Forum into existence and provided it with firm foundations and at the opening here today we declare our appreciation of their vision.

The members of the Honorary Board are proud to be of assistance and on their behalf I wish all of you successful and productive deliberations.