

**International Workshop
“Snowchange 2007: Traditions of the North”**

FINAL RESOLUTION

Snowchange 2007 was held April 7th to 9th, 2007, in the communities of Iengra and Neriungri on the Evenki homeland, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Russian Federation. Our Workshop assembled indigenous delegates from Norway, Finland, New Zealand, USA and Russia. In addition to indigenous people the Workshop convened scientists, state organizations, legislative entities, administrative authorities, and other stakeholders. The main themes of the Workshop were ecological and climatic change in the Arctic as well as preservation of traditional knowledge in the local cultures of the North. **The Workshop participants wish to present to a broader group of stakeholders the following resulting resolutions;**

First, Snowchange 2007 recognizes that the indigenous peoples have been living off the land since time immemorial. Traditional cultures of indigenous peoples are dependent on intact ecosystems as well as healthy and clean environments. Traditional knowledge is the primary basis of indigenous education. Climate change poses a catastrophic threat to the existence and survival of the indigenous peoples in the North.

Second, traditional knowledge of the indigenous people in the North is a source of information which is as valid and complex as scientific knowledge. Traditional knowledge is a considerable but under-valued source of information which can make significant contributions to the development of humankind.

Third, the Snowchange 2007 Workshop agrees that in order to find solutions to potential future crises caused by a rapidly changing climate the following actions should be taken; Traditional knowledge should be recognized in the scientific and decision-making policies of the North.

Indigenous communities should be equal partners in the sustainable development of the Arctic. Future survival of traditional knowledge requires that indigenous peoples are able to continue to live off land. This requires support and survival of local indigenous languages and dialects. Elders of indigenous peoples are key holders of this knowledge. Ownership and intellectual property rights of traditional knowledge should be the property of the respective indigenous peoples.

Education of indigenous peoples should be first and foremost based on traditional knowledge. Language, spirituality, and traditional land use are the basic elements of the indigenous education. Larger society entities and nation states have to be key partners in preventing the assimilation and destruction of indigenous languages. Educational tools also have to be developed which are culturally specific and allow indigenous education to take place on the land. Nomadic schooling is an experimental method in Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), which is an attempt in this direction. Indigenous leaders should be trained based on these premises.

Unsustainable industrial development poses a significant threat to the existence of the indigenous cultures of the North. Compensation benefits and participation of indigenous communities need to be addressed where modern development impacts indigenous territories. Survival of traditional lifestyles needs unrestricted access to traditional lands, such as reindeer pastures, hunting territories, and fisheries. Previous experience indicates that development can cause ecological imbalance as well as the social and economic marginalization of indigenous peoples when their needs are not fully addressed.

We participants of Snowchange 2007 urge all responsible bodies to take action on all levels to address the issues identified in the international Indigenous Snowchange 2007 Workshop.