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# IPS Update

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VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3

November 2004

## Russia Steps Up Internationally

There are encouraging signs that the largest of the Arctic states is taking seriously its coming circumpolar leadership as chair of the Arctic Council. The Russian Federation will assume the chair of the international body after the next meeting of Arctic Council ministers later this month.

The first, and most important sign of the leadership Russia will provide is the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, which deals with limiting the emissions of gases that contribute to climate change. President Vladimir Putin signed it this month.

This is particularly important in light of the coming release of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA). The assessment, assembled over four years by hundreds of scientists and indigenous experts, paints an alarming picture of the effects of climate change on the Arctic environment and Arctic peoples. While the release of the ACIA in November is an important step, it is just as important that the assessment, and the policy recommendations that will accompany it, should be promoted internationally. That effort will be much easier for Russia to lead, now that it has formally announced its intention to proceed with action on climate change.

Russia's seriousness about its responsibilities as chair of the Arctic Council was also demonstrated by recent parliamentary hearings on the theme, "The Arctic - region of global cooperation in implementation of a Russian state policy". The hearings were opened by the Chair of the Committee on Northern Affairs and the peoples of the North. In his statement, the Chair noted the Arctic's important geopolitical position and huge resource potential, as well as the vulnerability of its environment, and the unique culture of the indigenous peoples living in the region. He also pointed out that Arctic problems are global in nature and require increased international cooperation.

Participants in the hearings noted that Russia should have a defined position on issues such as sustainable development and international cooperation in the Arctic. They pointed out that a state policy for the Arctic has not

yet been completed, and that there has been constant reduction of state support for the Arctic regions. This has resulted in a serious social and economic crisis. The decline of fishing enterprises and traditional wildlife management were mentioned as examples.

The parliamentary hearings recommended to the President of the Russian Federation that he include the Arctic as a priority in Russian discussions with the other G-8 countries, and take other internal measures for the reconstruction and development of the Arctic.

A separate chapter was dedicated to the indigenous peoples of the Russian North and how to protect their interests and well-being. The recommendations include medical and environmental research, and development of  
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traditional economies, as well as building territorial and community self-determination in the North.

All of the recommendations help provide the Russian Federation with ideas for both national and international work as it prepares for its two-year term at the head of the Arctic Council.

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*President Putin in Salekhard in 2004*

## Arctic Council Permanent Participants: Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)

**An Interview with Rodion Sulyandziga the IPS Board Member and Director of the Russian Indigenous Training Centre**

*In several of the past editions of 'IPS Update', we have profiled some of the 'Permanent Participants'. These are indigenous peoples organizations that are partners in the work of the Arctic Council, the grouping of the eight Arctic states.*

The northern area of Russia, where the indigenous peoples represented by RAIPON live, can be roughly divided into three regions; the Russian North (the Arctic part of the northmost region), Siberia and the Far East. Russia is the most complex of the Arctic countries in the sense that the country is inhabited by a large number of very distinct indigenous groups, each speaking their own language. The indigenous peoples number approximately 200,000 individuals. Most numerous are the Nenets with about 35,000 persons; the least numerous are the Enets with about 209 and the Oroch with 109 individuals. The subsistence area of the indigenous peoples comprises

roughly 60% of the overall territory of the Russian Federation.

### What is the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North?

RAIPON was established in 1990 at the First Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation. The Association is made up of 34 regional organisations representing 40 indigenous peoples of the North, which have been formed on territorial and/or ethnic principles and enjoy organisational and financial independence. At the same time they receive assistance from RAIPON and participate in the events of the association.

The association helps the member groups to take in projects involving international exchange and cooperation. The RAIPON Congress, the organisation's highest level of decision-making, is held every four years. The next one is scheduled for April 2005. Between congresses, the Co-ordinating Council, which is RAIPON's President (elected by vote at the Congress), vice-presidents, and the presidents of the regional and ethnic associations, assumes the administrative duties. The Co-ordinating Council meets at least twice a year to discuss matters of common interest and to co-ordinate joint activities.

Today RAIPON has three executive divisions:

- ◆ The Project Centre is responsible for the co-ordination of projects, collection of information on the proposed regional projects and research into international funding opportunities;
- ◆ The Training Centre is responsible for educating activists to work with regional organisations and implementation of community projects;
- ◆ The Information Centre is responsible for the collection and distribution of information about indigenous peoples of Russia. Here the magazine "Indigenous Peoples' World-Living Arctic" is published and the Internet site is updated.

### What are RAIPON's main priorities?

The main purpose of RAIPON is to protect the interests and lawful rights of the indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation, including their rights to land, natural resources, and self-governance (in accordance with international standards and Russian legislation). RAIPON also works on resolving socio-economic problems, and assists in the development of indigenous culture and education.

The difficult social and economic situation in our country has put indigenous peoples at the brink of physical extinction, and our rights to preserve our traditional lifestyles are often violated along with civil rights in general. Various industries wish to develop the rich natural

resources lying on or underneath the traditional lands of indigenous peoples.

With pressure from RAIPON and other indigenous peoples' organizations, three federal laws on the rights of Russian indigenous peoples have been adopted over the last two years. With these laws we have a tool at our disposal. Our task now is to use this instrument to develop a traditional economy and sustainable use of our lands.



*Rodion Sulyandziga, IPS Board Member from RAIPON*

#### **Who is the RAIPON President?**

Sergei Haruchi from the Yamal Nenets area of Russia was the president from 1996 until 2001. In 2001 he was re-elected for another four years. He directs the work of RAIPON, and makes decisions on behalf of the Coordinating Council between meetings. Mr. Haruchi is also a Chairman of the Parliament of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, which is an administrative district in north-central Russia.

#### **How is RAIPON funded?**

As Permanent Participants, RAIPON receives funding from the Norwegian and Canadian Governments to attend the Arctic Council meetings, and to be able to have input to the Arctic Council processes. The Danish government is the main donor, and without its understanding of indigenous peoples' goals and aspirations, it would be difficult to achieve international attention on the problems of the Russian Arctic and its indigenous communities. RAIPON also works to raise funds from other sources.

#### **How would you describe your relation to the Arctic Council?**

Very positive. I would like to thank all people working in the Arctic Council for their commitment to the issues they are dealing with. We continue to play an active role in the work of the Arctic Council and we welcome the Russian government as the incoming Chair of the Council. The Arctic Council has given indigenous peoples an opportunity to actively participate in policy changes that will affect those of us who live in the Arctic. Because of this, the governments in other international gatherings are

beginning to recognise the role of indigenous peoples and the valuable knowledge that they bring.

RAIPON's experts participate in sessions of the Arctic Council working groups and programs dealing with environmental monitoring and assessment, biodiversity and sustainable development of the Arctic. For instance, RAIPON together with the working group on Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), worked with the Russian indigenous communities on a Sacred Sites Project. Also, the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) working group is in the process of finalizing our common project, "Persistent Toxic Substances, Food Security and Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North".

#### **Does RAIPON have any co-operation with the other Permanent Participants?**

There has been a long time co-operation with the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) and Saami Council (SC). These organisations helped us to make our first steps in the international movement of indigenous peoples. We have common projects with ICC Canada and the Saami Council. Our organisation unites Russian Saami in the Kola region, Aleuts in Kamchatka and Inuit in Chukotka. Cooperation is needed at all levels to seek solutions to common challenges and problems. With the Arctic Athabaskan Council, RAIPON has organized a seminar in Moscow initiated by the Yukon First Nations to exchange the experience in the area of land claim negotiations, and environmental and social issues. This meeting was an important input into the life of indigenous peoples of the Russian North. We live within different social and political frameworks. We have much to learn from each other, and the aim and the objective for the engagement of our Arctic indigenous organisations in international cooperation, must be real political influence.

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#### **More about RAIPON:**

<http://www.raipon.org>

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## Toxics in Russia

A project to study the toxic materials present in the bodies and food of some Russian indigenous peoples is now complete. "Persistent Toxic Substances, Food Security and Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North" was sponsored by the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), in partnership with the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) and supported by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). The project is expected to fill a significant gap in tracking the flow of contaminants to the Russian environment and to indigenous peoples.

The draft final Report was considered and approved by the project Steering Committee in June. The Final Report in English is currently being completed, and a video has been prepared to help explain the results to the indigenous peoples who took part in the project. A draft Executive Summary in Russian will be sent to the regions for their comments. After this, the project results and its recommendations will be considered at the coordination meeting of the federal and regional authorities with participation of RAIPON representatives. This is expected to be held in the State Duma in Russia in November and will be followed by a news conference to officially release the results.

## Inuit Speak to U.S. Senate Committee

*The following is part of the testimony given in September 2004, by Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, to the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.*

While global warming is affecting the entire planet, there is a scientific consensus that it is impacting the Arctic much faster. Our elders having been experiencing these changes since the mid-1970's.

The Inuit connection to the environment remains strong, and many of us still depend upon the land and sea to sustain our families. Our elders and hunters have intimate knowledge of the land, sea ice, and have observed disturbing changes to the Arctic Climate and environment, and to the wildlife. These changes include:

1. melting permafrost causing beach slumping and increased erosion and damaging infrastructure;
2. longer sea-ice free seasons;
3. new species of birds and fish: barn owls, robins, pin-tailed ducks and salmon invading the region;
4. invasion of mosquitos and blackflies;
5. unpredictable sea-ice conditions;
6. glaciers melting, creating torrents in place of streams.

Our observations are confirmed by western science in the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) which is to be presented to Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the eight Arctic states in November. Let me quote two key conclusions from the summary volume of the ACIA:

1. Marine species dependent on sea-ice including polar bears, ice living seals, walrus, and some marine birds are very likely to decline, with some facing extinction; and
2. For Inuit, warming is likely to disrupt or even destroy their hunting and food sharing culture as reduced sea-ice causes the animals on which they depend to decline, become less accessible or possibly go extinct.

By looking at what is already happening in remote Inuit villages in Alaska, such as Shismaref and Kivalina, you can understand the future dangers for more populated areas of the world such as Florida, Louisiana or California. Shismaref is literally being battered to the point of falling into the sea.

If we can reverse the emission of climate change inducing greenhouse gases in time to save the Arctic from the most devastating impact of global warming, then we can spare untold suffering for hundreds of millions of people around the globe. Protect the Arctic and we Save the Planet. Use us in the Arctic as your early warning system.

Global warming connects us all. Use what is happening in the Arctic - the Inuit Story - as a vehicle to re-connect us all, so that we may understand that the planet and its people are one. The Inuit hunter who falls through the depleting and unpredictable sea-ice is connected to the cars we drive, the industries we rely upon, and the disposable world we have become.

*Senator John McCain, chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.*

"Last month, I visited the Arctic region and saw first hand the impacts of climate change on the region. These impacts are real and are consistent with earlier scientific projections that the polar regions would experience the effects of climate change at a faster rate than the rest of the globe. The retreating glaciers provide irrefutable evidence supporting the need to take action on this issue. We cannot continue to ignore an issue that is not static. We need to take action that extends well beyond eloquent speeches, and includes meaningful actions such real reductions in the emission of greenhouse gases."

## Implementation of The Stockholm Convention: What Role for Indigenous Peoples?

Arctic Indigenous peoples played a significant role in the negotiations leading up to the Stockholm Convention on POPs. Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference worked effectively with representatives of the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), the Arctic Athabaskan Council and others present indigenous viewpoints. They ensured the negotiations focused not only on the science and money matters, but also made delegates focus on how POPs are affecting people.

“I cannot believe that a mother in the Arctic should have to worry about the life-giving milk she feeds her infant.” Watt-Cloutier told delegates to the second POPs negotiating session. “Nor can I believe that a mother in the south has to use these very chemicals to protect her babies from disease. Surely we must commit ourselves to finding and using alternatives. While adopting elimination, not perpetual management, as an ultimate goal, the POPs Convention must simultaneously ensure that cost effective alternatives, particularly for DDT, are made available in the developing world.”

The Stockholm Convention entered into force on May 17, 2004. Entry into force of the Convention triggered an entirely different set of activities and priorities. No longer are efforts to convince anyone necessary -- national implementation plans need to be developed, specific actions need to be taken and commitments need to be met. Plans are underway for the first Conference of the Parties for the Stockholm Convention (COP 1) in Uruguay, May 2005, where the countries that have ratified the Convention will look at progress to date, and decide what more needs to be done.

Implementation for Inuit and other indigenous peoples may be more important than the negotiations. If the commitments are not met, the Convention is little more than goodwill and paper and POPs will continue to flow to the Arctic. So what role now do Inuit and other indigenous peoples have as we approach COP1 and beyond? Many!

- Indigenous Peoples can provide technical expertise, training and capacity building in many areas related to the Convention.
- Indigenous Peoples have a long history of dealing with the environmental and human health effects of persistent organic pollutants and are willing to share their methods and best practices.

Through many decades of environmental and human health research and contaminated site cleanup projects, Inuit and others have gained significant expertise in:

- ♦ the design of environmental programs and projects,
- ♦ environmental appraisals and audits,
- ♦ the environmentally sound destruction/disposal of POPs,
- ♦ remediation of POPs contaminated sites
- ♦ evaluating the health impacts, environmental and socio-economic impact of POPs
- ♦ POPs monitoring and assessment
- ♦ developing legislation and infrastructure
- ♦ enforcement and compliance mechanisms.

Our expertise extends from the community level through industrial and political areas. We must seek out our role, where we can constructively contribute and be part of the next exciting phase of the Stockholm Convention.

*Stephanie Meakin M.Sc.  
Technical Advisor, Inuit Circumpolar Conference*

### The Stockholm Convention

The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants (POPs). POPs are chemicals that remain in the environment for long periods, travel long distances through air and water, accumulate in the fat of living creatures and are toxic to humans and wildlife. POPs can travel thousands of kilometers and can cause damage wherever they land. The Convention obliges governments to take measures to eliminate or reduce the release of POPs.

For more information:

<http://www.pops.int>

## Old Issues – New Concerns at the Saami Council’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The Saami Council celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in early October by welcoming more than 200 participants to its conference in Áváhki – Honningsvåg, Norway - only a few kilometres from the northernmost point of Europe. The island on which Honningsvåg stands is a summer pasture for reindeer and has traditionally been home to coastal Saami settlements.

The theme of the three-day conference was “Saamiland for Saami – natural resources and land rights”. Delegates examined the use of natural resources in the four states in

which Saami live: Finland, Norway, the Russian Federation and Sweden. They looked at land use issues from a traditional use point of view, and from the example of natural resource management among the Gitksan people in British Columbia, Canada. The theme was also reflected in the conference declaration when stating that, "Saami themselves shall administer their inalienable historical rights to own land and sea territories and natural resources therein".

The mention of sea territories is important to Saami. When the Norwegian government presented its proposal for a Finnmark Act last year, the sea territories were left out from the text. The Finnmark Act was a proposal by the Norwegian Government on the Legal Rights to and Management of Land and Natural Resources in Finnmark County, Norway. This Government proposal ignores the work of the Sámi Rights Committee, which spent seventeen years working on a new land act.

The sea resources represent an essential part of the Saami coastal culture. The Saami argue that it has become necessary to recognise and express these rights, in accordance with international indigenous rights. But progress is slow. The Saami right to natural resources has been on the agenda of the Saami Council since its first conference in Johkamohkki, Sweden, in 1953.

A relatively new challenge for the Saami people is the rapid change in climate. In his opening speech, Saami Council President Geir Tommy Pedersen commended the Arctic Council for its cooperation with indigenous peoples during the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) process. He also spoke of the significance of the assessment for the Saami people. Delegates to the conference followed up on this issue, resolving that Saami people are prepared to take responsibility for adapting to changing conditions, provided that the National States accept *their* responsibility by reducing emissions of greenhouse gasses. Delegates further resolved that the National States, in close cooperation with the indigenous peoples, should begin concrete actions to prevent negative impacts of climate change, and continue research and monitoring of the Arctic climate.

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*Saami Conference 2004*

## Knowledge in the Next Generation

"Knowledge in the next Generation" was the title of a recent conference held in Tromsø, Norway, on the sustainability of indigenous cultures. The conference was organised by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). It looked at the challenges facing indigenous cultures, and on what has been achieved during the UN International Decade on Indigenous Peoples (1994-2004).

Among the outcomes of the decade are the establishment of the Permanent Forum, the appointment of a 'Special Rapporteur' on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, and the Working Group on the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Permanent Forum has been successful in giving indigenous peoples an opportunity to work closely with various UN agencies. The focus on indigenous issues over the last decade has also stimulated various donor agencies to develop specific indigenous peoples' programs.

The Director of IWGIA (International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs), Jens Dahl, told the conference that the UN system has been changed by the experience of having indigenous peoples more directly involved in the international body. He believes the challenge for the future will be for the indigenous peoples to take their experiences back home again and put into concrete form the ideas discussed at the UN.

The idea of putting the talk into practice was echoed by the chair of the Permanent Forum, Ole Henrik Magga. "There is no help only in declarations of good will," he said. "The international level has a very important role to play in developing norms, obligations and models for states to follow. We should proceed as fast as possible from the stage of declarations to the stage of legislation and institutionalisation".

Magga also referred to UNESCO's ongoing drafting of a convention on the protection of diversity of cultural content and artistic expression. He was concerned about the poor effort to include the indigenous peoples in the drafting process and the lack of reference to indigenous peoples in the document itself. Several of the participants in Tromsø took the opportunity of having the UNESCO Director of the Division of Cultural Politics and Intercultural Dialogue in the room to ask for more involvement of indigenous peoples in this process.

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## **International Polar Year (IPY) 2007-2008: a New Approach to Arctic Study?**

More than a century ago, in 1882-1883, scientists around the world worked together to explore and conduct scientific research in the polar regions. Fifty years later, a second International Polar Year in 1932-1933 led to major scientific advances. In 1957-58 the International Neophysical Year brought together scientists from around the world

Now once again scientists around the world are eager to organize an international science campaign that expands the boundaries of our understanding of the polar regions and their key roles in affecting the rest of the world. Environmental changes being observed in the polar regions are happening more quickly than elsewhere. The polar regions are also good places to study past change, though the information contained in the layers of ice.

For many years, the poles were considered remote, but modern technologies, and the continuing thirst for resources such as oil and gas have made them more accessible, and more important to the rest of the world.

Planning for the next International Polar Year has involved many scientists in many different countries coming together to create a vision for what might be accomplished. The IPY has now been endorsed by the International Council for Science, the World Meteorological Organisation, and numerous other organizations. Now nations around the globe are making concrete plans to participate.

The Arctic Council will take an active part in the IPY, as it is in the Council's interest to stimulate cooperation and coordination on Arctic issues, to increase awareness and visibility of the Arctic region and to further Arctic research. The activities of Arctic Council working groups can function as building blocks for the IPY, particularly those activities that focus on the life of Arctic communities.

The IPY sponsors, the International Council of Scientific Unions and the World Meteorological Organisation will soon establish an IPY Joint Committee responsible for developing plans for the studies to take place. The Arctic Council is interested in being represented in this Joint Committee.

As part of the preparation for the IPY, a paper has been prepared on how to increase knowledge of the polar regions and promote the IPY. One of the ideas identified in the paper is better communication between Arctic communities and researchers. The paper suggests that the Arctic Council could play a leading role in that effort.

That is certainly an area in which indigenous peoples could play a role. One of the IPY's themes focuses on social science. It is here that IP can best make their voices heard. Indigenous communities have long complained that they are treated by researchers as objects of study, rather than as partners in the study process. Indigenous peoples want to be more involved in Arctic research; from the point of deciding what is to be studied, through the actual gathering of information, to the analysis and recommendations that flow from the research. The coming IPY will be an opportunity to advance those issues.

In October 2004, the IPY Joint Committee will call for proposals for IPY core projects and associated projects. The deadline for proposals is January 1st, 2005. In February 2005, the Joint Committee will review the proposals and identify initial core projects and a number of associated projects.

More information can be found on the IPY web-site <http://www.ipy.org>

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## **Community Based Monitoring – Making Better Decisions on Resources**

'CAFF X', the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna working group's biannual meeting, was held in Anchorage, Alaska, in September. The event attracted broad participation from the Permanent Participants, partly because the CAFF working group provided the support necessary for indigenous participation.

At the meeting, CAFF indicated that its Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) would become the cornerstone of CAFF's work in the coming years. The aim of the CBMP is to work for the conservation of the diversity of the Arctic plants and animal species, and to ensure that people can make informed decisions about how to use those living resources in a sustainable manner. Many partners have expressed interest in cooperation and will contribute to the CBMP, such as Wetlands International, The United Nations Environment Program, the World Conservation Union and the World Wildlife Fund.

An essential part of the CBMP is community-based monitoring, a process where people in a community work together to observe and respond to changes in the environment around their community. Local knowledge is an important factor in those observations. The information gathered would support making decisions that are best for the community with the full involvement and participation of community members.

The Permanent Participants present at the CAFF meeting agreed to prepare a discussion paper to talk about the

community-based monitoring initiatives that are already happening in some regions. This paper will be a first step towards incorporating the concerns and interests of indigenous peoples about community-based monitoring, in particular the ownership of information gathered in indigenous communities, and how other people make use of that information.

The indigenous peoples' discussion paper is one of several supporting the CBMP framework document. They will be presented, along with the framework, at the next Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, this month.

**Sacred Sites Discussion**

Also on the CAFF agenda at the recent meeting was the issue of the protection of sites sacred to indigenous peoples. Last spring, CAFF released a report on the subject, which marked the end of the first phase of a pilot project between CAFF, the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), and the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat (IPS) of the Arctic Council. RAIPON has presented the outcomes of the project at several international meetings, raising awareness and interest about protection of culturally or spiritually significant sites.

RAIPON will follow up with a second phase of the project by conducting an international workshop. The workshop will discuss issues such as principles for publishing the locations of sacred sites.

The Russian experience has encouraged indigenous peoples in North America to begin similar work on sacred sites and other culturally important areas in their regions. They hope to hold a workshop to start the process within the next two years.

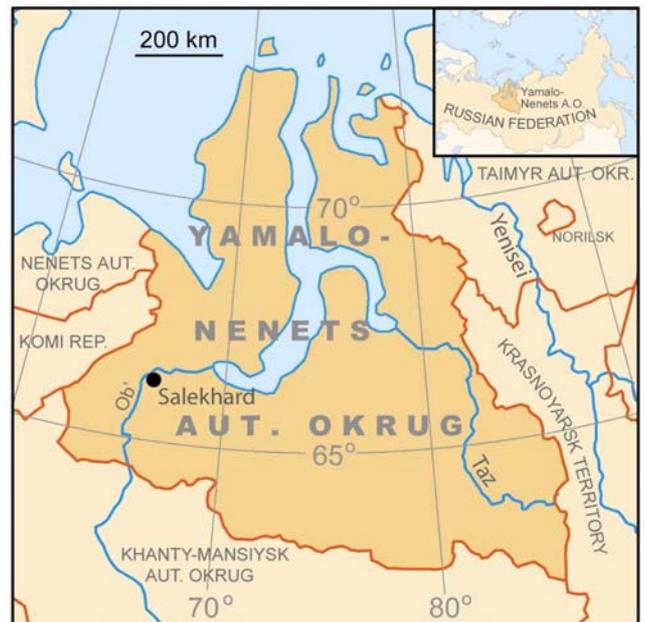
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*Sacred Site of Yamal*

**The regions of the Russian Arctic:  
Yamal**

*As the Russian chairmanship of the Arctic Council approaches, we thought it might be a good time for readers of IPS Update to learn more about the country, particularly about the regions which are home to most Russian Indigenous peoples. We begin by looking at the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (YNAO). In future issues of Update, we will bring you profiles of the seven other regions with large indigenous populations.*



*Map by Winfried Dallmann*

**Location:** The Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug is situated in the Arctic zone in the north of the West-Siberian Plain. In the west it borders with Nenets Autonomous Okrug and Komi Republic, in the south with the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug and in the east with the Taimyr (Dolgan-Nenets) Autonomous Okrug. In the north, the Okrug is washed by the Kara Sea.

**Territory:** 750,300 square kilometres, or 4.4 % of the area of Russia. More than 50 percent of the territory is above the Arctic Circle.

**Population:** According to the 2004 census, YNAO is home to 513,400 people. The indigenous peoples in the region include Nentsy, Selcupy, Khunty, Mansi and others. There are 33,891 indigenous people in YNAO, of which more than 14,000 are nomads.

**Political structure:** YNAO was formed by the state in 1930, and in 1992 it was declared by President Yeltsin to be an, "equal subject of the Russian Federation". It now has the status of 'autonomous district'. There are 7

administrative regions, 8 cities, 7 districts, and 111 towns and villages.

**Administrative centre:** The capital is Salekhard, a city of 29,600 people. The largest city is Noyabrsk with a population of about 100,000.

**Climate:** The winter is cold and lasts about 8 months, the average temperature in January is minus 23 to minus 27 degrees Celsius. The summer is short and cool, with temperatures in July ranging from 5 to 16 degrees Celsius.

**Transport:** Transport in the region is largely by air and water. Water transport is restricted to three or four months in the summer. There are two railways in the territory.

**Traditional Economy:** Reindeer herding was historically the leading branch of the economy of the Nentsy people, and remains important today. The reindeer population of Yamal is the biggest in Russia, about half a million reindeer.

Reindeer are used by the Nentsy for food, clothing, transport, even dwellings. Besides the reindeer herding, the Nentsy continue to hunt and fish. Sturgeon, sterlet, and white salmon are fished in the local water basins. These valuable fish were once served at the Russian Imperial Court.

**Conflicts between traditional and new economies:** The YNAO is one of the richest regions of the Russian Federation, known for its enormous oil and gas reserves. 75% of discovered Russian gas, and 15% of known Russian oil reserves are found in the region. This year Yamal transported to Western Europe 242.000 tons of oil by the Northern Sea Route. Exploitation of these reserves has led to the destruction of vast areas of reindeer pastures, rivers, and spawning areas.

The further development of Guidan and Yamal gas fields, as well as the Ob Bay and the Kara Sea off-shore gas deposits during the coming decades may lead to the further destruction of large parcels of land on the territory of YNAO. This is expected to mean considerable ecological and cultural impacts on the Nenets, and on the okrug in general.

A new railway is proposed that will cross the most important grazing areas. Considering the number of reindeer in the area, many people say this may lead to disastrous effects.

**Government Policy:** Earlier this year, Salekhard hosted the meeting of the Presidium of the State Council of the Russian Federation. The main theme was the state policy towards the northern territories. At that meeting, RAIPON President Sergei Haruchi handed over to the Russian President Vladimir Putin a package of recommendations on indigenous peoples' legislation for the government to consider.

Salekhard will be among the regions hosting Arctic Council meetings for the next two years, allowing people from around the Arctic to see conditions there for themselves.

More info on: <http://www.yamal.org/>  
<http://www.sever-ok.ru/heft.html>

## IPS UPDATE

The Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat (IPS) was established in 1994. The main task of IPS is to facilitate the involvement of Arctic Indigenous Peoples' organisations - the Permanent Participants - in the Arctic Council, particularly with regard to sustainable development, the environment and traditional knowledge.

The Indigenous Peoples' organisations approved as Permanent Participants in the Arctic Council are:

- Aleut International Association (AIA)
- Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC)
- Gwich'in Council International (GCI)
- Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC)
- Russian Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)
- Saami Council (SC)

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<b>Schedule of Events 2004</b>	
<b>November</b>	
<b>9 - 12</b>	<b>ACIA International Scientific Symposium On Climate Change In The Arctic</b> , Reykjavik, Iceland Web-site: <a href="http://www.acia.uaf.edu/pages/symposium.html">http://www.acia.uaf.edu/pages/symposium.html</a>
<b>18 - 20</b>	<b>Development Trends in Saami Society on the Circumpolar – Focusing on Housing Environment</b> , Karasjok, Norway Contact: Gunnhild S. Engstad, Tel: +47 7842 7411
<b>22 - 23</b>	<b>SAO Meeting</b> , Reykjavik, Iceland Web-site: <a href="http://www.arctic-council.org">http://www.arctic-council.org</a>
<b>24</b>	<b>Arctic Council Ministerial</b> , Reykjavik, Iceland Web-site: <a href="http://www.arctic-council.org">http://www.arctic-council.org</a>
<b>29</b>	<b>The Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region</b> , Brussels, Belgium
<b>December</b>	
<b>6 - 8</b>	<b>Working Group of Indigenous Peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Re</b> , Petrozavodsk, Republic of Karelia, Russia. Contact: Roman G. Mikhalyuk E-mail: <a href="mailto:bipo@murman.ru">bipo@murman.ru</a>
<b>6 - 17</b>	<b>COP 10</b> , Buenos Aires, Argentina Web-site: <a href="http://unfccc.int/cop10/index.html">http://unfccc.int/cop10/index.html</a>
<b>Schedule of Events 2005</b>	
<b>March</b>	
<b>20 – 25</b>	<b>3rd World Reindeer Herder's Congress</b> , Yakutsk, Sakha Republic, Russia
<b>11 –14 April</b>	<b>V RAIPON Congress</b> , Moscow, Russia Contact: RAIPON Tel: +7 095 780 87 47 E-mail: <a href="mailto:raipon@online.ru">raipon@online.ru</a>
<b>April</b>	<b>SDWG Meeting</b> , Russia
<b>April</b>	<b>SAO Meeting</b> , Yakutsk, Russia
<b>10-13. Nov</b>	<b>ICARP II</b> , Copenhagen, Denmark Web-site: <a href="http://www.icarp.dk/index.html">http://www.icarp.dk/index.html</a>