

★ ANSIPRA BULLETIN ★

Arctic Network for the Support of the Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Arctic (ANSIPRA)
Сеть Арктических Организаций в Поддержку Коренных Народов Российского Севера

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Secretariat: Norsk Polarinstitutt, Polarmiljøseneteret, N-9296 Tromsø
Norwegian Polar Institute, Polar Environmental Centre,
N-9296 Tromsø, Norway
E-mail: ANSIPRA@npolar.no
Phone: +47 - 77 75 05 00
Fax: +47 - 77 75 05 01

Coordinator / Editor: Winfried K. Dallmann, Tromsø
Assistant Coordinator: Galina Diachkova (Дьячкова Галина), Moscow
Assistant Editor: Helle V. Goldman, Tromsø

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ANSIPRA (formerly NNSIPRA) is a communication network linking Russian Indigenous Peoples' Organisations (IPOs) with international institutions and organisations alarmed about the future of the indigenous peoples of the Russian North. ANSIPRA's main goal is to spread information, to mediate contacts, and to assist in project coordination and application for funding.

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The results of the decade

The events celebrating the 10th anniversary of RAIPON took place on 12-16 May in Moscow. The events attracted the intense interest of the Russian authorities, foreign representatives, Russian and international NGOs and the press.

More than 700 people applied to take part in the 10th anniversary celebrations, including representatives of the regional Associations (more than 300 people) that make up RAIPON, as well as representatives of the authorities – the State Duma and the Federative Council. The Government was represented by the Ministry for National and Regional Policy, the Ministry of Education, and the State Committee of Northern Development (Goskomsever).

The events drew representatives of foreign governments. All Arctic countries sent representatives from their embassies – Canada, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, the USA, and Sweden.

Many Russian and international NGOs took part in the sessions of the Jubilee conference, “Past Decade as a Basis for Development in the XXI Century”, including the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the Saami Council, the International Aleut Association, the UN Environmental Programme, IWGIA (the International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs) and many others.

The events were widely reported by the press: by *RTR TV* in the programme *Federation*, by *NTV* in *Sreda*, a programme on environmental protection, the radio broadcasters *Rossiia*, *Mayak*, *Radio Liberty*, by the news agencies *Interfax* and *Itar-Tass*, by newspapers *Trud* and *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, by magazines *Migratsia v Rossii*, *Severnii prostory*, *Neft Rossii*, *Gosudarstvennaya vlast i mestnoe samoupravlenie*, *Munitsipalnoe i konstitutsionnoe pravo*, by regional TV broadcasters *Yamal-Region*, *Novy Urengoy*, *Zapolyarnye*, *Chukotka*, and by the regional newspapers and magazines *Yamalskiy Meridian*, *Naryan Vynder*, *Aborigen Kamchatki*, *Naryana Ngerm*.

Against this background the indifference to the conference shown by the Administration of the Russian President was somewhat surprising. Our request to the Administration to rent the hall of the Kremlin Palace for the Constituent Congress of the RAIPON for the Anniversary celebrations was rejected. We invited representatives of the Presidential Administration to take part in the opening of the conference but none attended. This indifference to an event of such significance to the indigenous minorities of Russia has, of course, upset the participants of the conference. The attitude of the current Government contrasted with earlier attitudes of the Kremlin. On a brighter note, Mikhail Gorbachev, the former President of the USSR, who took part in the 1st Congress of RAIPON, sent a letter with congratulations to RAIPON.

The opening of the Anniversary Conference took place in the conference hall of the Federative Council. Mr Kharyuchi, the President of RAIPON, opened the conference. Numerous guests took the floor for the welcome speeches. Many were awarded with symbols and certificates of honour for their long and productive cooperation with RAIPON.

The youth conference ‘The frontier of the decade - view on the future’ took place the same day. The delegates discussed the problems of the young generation of the indigenous minorities.

The programme of the Anniversary celebrations was very intensive. It included:

- the youth conference ‘The frontier of the decade - view on the future’, where problems of the Northern indigenous youth were discussed;
- the workshop ‘The indigenous people and the environment of the Russian North’, organised by RAIPON with support by the Danish/Greenlandic Initiative for assistance to the indigenous people of the Russian North, UNEP/GRID-Arendal, the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat;
- the meeting of RAIPON’s Coordination Council, which RAIPON manages, underlined the significance of regional activity. The applications for collective memberships by NGOs of the indigenous peoples of Khakasiya and Altay, and of the Veps and the Inuit were approved.
- consultations with the regional leaders of the indigenous associations and ethnic groups on strategic planning for RAIPON;
- computer and Internet training for regional Associations (further information is published below);
- the second international workshop, ‘Priorities in research on key problems of the Northern indigenous minorities’, with support by the International Arctic Science Committee and the Russian Academy of Sciences;
- the meeting with the scientists of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology and the leaders of the regional and ethnic organisations of the Northern indigenous minorities.

The cultural programme ‘Northern Sun’ completed the anniversary conference. Many indigenous musicians took part: the Itelmen group “Elvel” from the village of Kovran of the Koryakskiy Autonomous Okrug, the Nivkh group “Mengume Ilga” from Sakhalin, the Aleut group “Chian” from the village of Nikolskoe, Kamchatka, the Evenk group “Youkte” from the village of Iengra in Yakutiya, Mrs Yakovleva and Ms Galkina from the village of Lovozero of Murmanskaya Oblast, the Kelchins from the village of Muzhi in Yamalo-Nenetskiy Autonomous Okrug, and the elders who preserve the national cultures - Mr Suroi from Salekhard and Mrs Voldina from Khanty-Mansiysk.

Thoughts on what has been done and on the future strategy

Pavel Sulyandziga

Vice President of RAIPON

The movement of the indigenous minorities of the Russian North started on an informal basis by the people. It was established in late March 1990 at the movement's first congress in the Kremlin Palace of Congresses. Here the indigenous peoples of the North started the Russian Association of the Indigenous People of the North. It was the time of radical democratic change. On the wave of the democratic euphoria, gifted indigenous leaders came forward – Vladimir Sangi, Evdokiya Gaer, Eremey Aipyn and many others.

I was then chairing a village council, and was invited to take a place at the Presidium of the Congress. I sat next to the leaders of the Soviet Union – Gorbachev, Lukianov, and Vorotnikov. My heart trembled when I listened to the presentations at the Congress. I thought then that at last our problems would be solved. I remember the words of Mary Simon, then the President of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference. She said that the indigenous people have to get organised in any type of society, be it communist or capitalist: indigenous people face the same challenges, carry the same burden.

It was the time when the Udegey of Primorie continued their fight to preserve their own home, the Ussurian taiga. Russian and South Korean forestry companies tried to hijack the Bikin area, Cuban forestry companies tried to get their share of Samarga. It was a direct conflict: our hunters together with the Ussurian Cossacks guarded the taiga, while our women and children picketed the offices of the regional authorities in Vladivostok. Many supported us in this fight, including the local Soviet, the scientific community, and international environmental organisations. A group of Russian MPs came over on our request. The result of this meeting was the Decree by the Soviet of Nationalities (the upper chamber of the Soviet Parliament) which supported our claims. An expert group of Soviet ministries chaired by Evdokiya Gaer have expressed their support as well. Through this struggle we realised the need to get organised and to unite our efforts.

Simultaneously, the struggle for indigenous rights spread over the Russian North. We felt the emotional and spiritual uprising of our peoples. One could write down a long list of challenges the indigenous leaders and activists had to overcome. This was the time of hope.

Unfortunately, a lengthy period of disappointment and apathy followed. Locally, we felt that the euphoric period was over; we had to face harsh conflicts. I believe we did not know how to establish and run organisations, how to go about solving practical and very specific problems. Many were frustrated; we did

not have enough knowledge and experience. We knew nothing of the indigenous movements in other countries, the work of the United Nations on indigenous affairs, or the support available from various NGOs in connection with the indigenous struggle. Our association could not become the uniting force for the regional and ethnic associations. It was not because of our leaders; it was our common problem. Everybody went his own way to build a regional association in his or her own fashion.

I will not try to go into details of what was going on then. Neither do I want to analyse our common actions, actions of my colleagues or myself. I believe everybody who was at the start of our movement will need to do this analysis in the future. I will instead attempt to provide a general description for that period in order to understand where the indigenous movement is now and in order to suggest my vision for the work in the future. We have yet to draft the fundamental statements of our movement, to answer many important questions, define our principles and describe our working procedures. I understand many issues here require internal discussions; much has to be discussed with the wide range of associates and friends. However, the starting point for our discussions must be the suggestions made by the inhabitants of the indigenous villages - of the indigenous communities - since our movement was established to protect their rights.

The general development of our regional associations repeated the development of Russian society. In the beginning, many were quick to 'put on the clothes' of power; to be in authority to control funding and various quotas on fishing and forestry. Simultaneously, the indigenous people started to join the local and regional administrations. The people in power were frustrated at the time: they saw that the old policy did not work with any new policies in place. We have to admit that the new policy on ethnic groups and minorities was not formulated. Then everybody switched over to do so-called business. The associations started to form various companies and enterprises, whose main task was to earn money for the associations. I want to stress that I do not regard these processes as positive or negative; they were not specific to the indigenous peoples. Everybody did it. It went on all over Russia, when no clear understanding on the role of civil society and nongovernmental organisations was in place. No rules of the game were defined for any sector of economy and society.

We realised that we had to change the tragic position of the indigenous people but we did not know how to do it. Of course, many of us believed they

knew. Many did not understand that integration and coordination of our activities were as important as definition of aims and action plans for the indigenous movement. The contradictions between indigenous leaders and the clans behind them became the main obstacles to these processes. Again, this was not specific to the indigenous movement; it was typical for Russia as a whole. However, due to the small numbers of the indigenous peoples, the spatial limits to the areas they inhabited (the result of the Soviet policy for rural consolidation, when indigenous people were forced to move to denser settlements), and due to historical reasons in ethnic relationships, these contradictions in the indigenous movement took especially ugly forms. I strongly believe that we should not pay too much attention to it, that these contradictions are not subjects for public discussion, since they are internal issues for any indigenous minority and any clan. Yet others should be aware of these contradictions and take them into consideration. This is especially relevant for administrations. Unfortunately the contradictions are often used to harm the indigenous people. I understand that here I touch upon very delicate matters related to traditions and ethics. I hope that the indigenous people will understand that I did not want to offend anybody. I am an indigenous person myself; these are not mere reflections to me, it is my reality.

Today, ten years later, we all face one question: what is our Association (here I mean RAIPON as well as regional and ethnic associations), and what is that the Association should do? This may seem to be a far-fetched question since everybody knows what we shall do. It is a mistake to think so. It brings misunderstandings regarding what we should do and what we can do. Several episodes illustrate what I mean. One of our regional associations was accused last year in having no foodstuffs and fuel for the indigenous villages. Many come to associations for assistance on very important but private issues. When they get no assistance, they ask 'Then what do we need you for?' I do not want to explain here that these issues lie within responsibilities of local authorities, social authorities etc. I want to illustrate that we have to answer many questions to make our work on protection of indigenous rights more efficient.

These are not simple questions to answer. I saw many times how the problems of indigenous people are perceived, locally and at the international level (including the eternal problem: which organisations have the right to represent the indigenous people). Some international organisations tried to put our associations in the category of organisations which deal with poverty and the environment. Yes, according to national legislations and international standards we are NGOs. At the same time we represent ethnic groups. This inherent contradiction brings a lot of confusion and turmoil to our work. It also gives a wide scope for our activities, primarily in the field of law making at the federal and the regional levels.

There is yet another contradiction I want to discuss. It involves many indigenous leaders and affects the indigenous movement. It concerns ethics and, as strange as it sounds, personal attitudes. This contradiction is personal when you are to fight with yourself. Here I mean the first activists and the first indigenous leaders. They passed through the crucible of various counteractions by authorities and indigenous groups. Now these leaders take positions in power structures at the federal, regional and municipal levels.

It happened to me when I had to overcome the doubts I had when I worked in the regional administration of Primorskiy Krai as an advisor to Eugene Nazdratenko, the Governor. I wrote above that I have always remembered the words of Mary Simon in her presentation at our first Congress. I have always thought that due to the antagonistic conflicts between the Government and the indigenous people, the indigenous people and power structures cannot become partners. When I was about to take the job of the Governor's advisor I asked the Governor, 'Will I be a representative of the governmental administration among the indigenous people, or will I be a representative of the indigenous people in the governmental administration?' The Governor answered, 'Of course, you will be a representative of your people in the administration'. Nonetheless, during the decision making process the officials often hinted to me that it was the administration which paid my salary. I believe many indigenous representatives in governmental administrations faced the same contradictions. Unfortunately, they are also faced with negative opinions about themselves from their own people. As a result, many officials of indigenous origin stress their distance from the indigenous people. I believe a compromise may be achieved here and the indigenous representatives may and must work in the governmental administrations, though I have even heard from my people that those indigenous people who work for the government 'have one leg on the shore, and the other in a leaving boat, and they are about to fall down'. In my opinion, if the government is in the boat, our representatives work to keep it from sailing too far away from the people. As an example, I point to the work of Andrey Krivoshapkin, Oleg Zaporotski, Pavel Kulyakov, Tatyana Gogoleva and Sergey Khar-yuchi, RAIPON's current President.

The last 300 years saw several ideological swings of the pendulum in the governmental policy towards indigenous people – from laissez-faire and conservation-minded toward the traditional lifestyle, to attempts toward full integration and modernisation of the indigenous peoples. One may remember many negative and positive examples of this policy in the times of tsarist Russia, and then during the Soviet era. This has been described well by professor Vladimir Kryazhkov and by researchers Olga Murashko, Vadim Turaev etc. In one of my presentations I said that 'together with openness, democracy and market re-

forms in Russia, the nature of the indigenous problems changed. The Soviet power together with the Communist Party led us to a 'bright future' and attempted to eliminate our culture, customs and traditions. Now the so-called democrats, with the assistance of multinational corporations and domestic businesses, buy our lands, extract resources, and do the same thing as the Soviet power did, i.e. elimination of the indigenous people'.

Our daily life saw no significant changes. Our people on the taiga and the tundra do not envisage a better future, do not believe in it, and do not hope for it. A foreign journalist asked me recently if I believe my people will survive. I answered that I did not know. I would give the same reply today. However now I am sure that the answer does not depend on governmental policy alone. Our survival depends upon the work of everybody, every friend of mine and every colleague. Our survival depends upon us, the indigenous people. I am far from naive optimism but I believe that the framework for our activities has been established.

Firstly, the new Russian Constitution protects rights and interests of the indigenous minorities in accordance with the norms and principles of international legislation. The Constitution protects native environments and traditional ways of life. It is possible to define principles of the Russian policy towards ethnic groups upon this legal basis. It is also possible to set the legal framework for the indigenous people in the spirit of worldwide trends, i.e. the transition from the paternalist policy of integration into modern high-tech society towards the policy of recognition of indigenous cultures in a way that supports their endeavour to control their own development and resources. This policy is based upon the concept of partnership between the state and indigenous people. In Russia today, indigenous peoples do not have the authority to direct their own development. In my opinion, this should be the priority for the Association at the federal and regional levels.

Secondly, our young people do a lot to help the indigenous people. It is important to help them, to support their initiatives and to direct their energy towards constructive work.

Thirdly, a consolidation of the indigenous organisations is taking place today. We have to coordinate this process, assisting in structuring the work of the indigenous NGOs and helping them strengthen the organisational capacity.

Fourthly, the international community is undergoing significant changes. The international organisation and governments have realised that there are values which cannot be sacrificed for the sake of business profits. They have also realised that the indigenous people may consult others on environmental and cultural challenges based on the indigenous experience of communication with nature. The cultural challenges arise as a result of hasty and destructive

exploitation of natural resources. In the global economy, this may have catastrophic results. Many governments took on the policy of partnership with the indigenous people. Resolutions of the UN General Assembly, the Convention on Biodiversity, the establishment of the Nunavut Government in Canada, the principles of the Arctic Council, the World Bank's Operational Directive 4.20 - this is an incomplete list of success stories in the development of the partnership policy.

I have already mentioned my earlier view of the antagonistic relationships between indigenous people and governmental authorities. However, the success stories for the policy of partnership and the trends in development of the international community tell us that only cooperation and partnership in every sector of the civil society may provide us with solutions to conflicts between indigenous people and governments, between indigenous peoples and industry, and between indigenous people and newcomers. Indigenous people are not the only party to these conflicts that needs the understanding of other parties. The other parties need to clarify their goals and define what they want of us. We have to explain what we want from these other parties as well.

Therefore, in a discussion of the protection of indigenous rights, a number of considerations concerning the new policy making process seem to be important. Due to such problems as the high rate of mortality, unemployment, poverty, problems related to preservation of native languages, cultures and traditions, conflicts around the control of traditional land and traditional economies, it is vital for the government policy on indigenous minorities to be accompanied by short-, middle-, and long-term development programmes. These programmes must be implemented simultaneously.

The aim of a short-term (3-5 years) programme must be the levelling of the quality of life of the indigenous people to the average regional levels (phase 1) and then the national level (phase 2). This aim defines the main task for the relevant development programme as: the development of policy tools for government support to the indigenous people with obligatory federal funding of health care, social development, and general and professional education.

A middle-term programme (5-10 years) must include development of the legal framework and strengthening the economic and resource bases of development, first of all the traditional economies. Here it is necessary to: a) complete definition of boundaries and transfer of the areas of traditional natural resource use to the indigenous people, including the waters where indigenous people hunt sea mammals; b) to implement the gradual transfer of collective titles for lands, subsoil and other natural resources to the indigenous people in their native environments and areas of traditional use of natural resources. In a middle-term programme, it is impor-

tant to establish the legal, financial, communication and fiscal environments for development of SMEs to process the products of traditional natural resource use. Here it is vital to establish a fund with a clearly defined source of revenues, for example, from the tax on use of natural resources. A number of issues on tax and civil liabilities have to be considered, for example, tax-free status on VAT and other taxes such as income tax, contributions to the pension fund etc. for enterprises engaged with traditional economies in native environments with at least 70% indigenous employment. To support the national villages, a system of quotas (shares of hunting, fishing, etc. resources) for aboriginals is to be established. The system must include principles for the distribution of quotas.

However, to give the revenues of the quotas to the indigenous people is not enough. The money will be consumed. We have to use the funding to achieve the long-term, sustainable development for indigenous villages and communities. A long-term programme (10-15 years) should involve establishment and development of indigenous self-government, with gradual transfer of the governing functions, the powers of local authorities and resources to the indigenous people, including definition of the local funding sources. Further, a long-term programme must target establishment of contractual relationship between indigenous individuals or indigenous self-governments and the industry that undertakes economic activity in the traditional areas. Finally, the long-term programme should envisage adoption of legislation and definition of implementation procedures for participation of the indigenous people in the revenue-sharing agreements when the natural resources are industrially developed in the traditional areas, through the institutes of indigenous self-government.

Currently, the Federal programme, "The economic and social development of the Northern indigenous minorities until 2010", is the most important policy tool. The programme states its aim to be "building the framework for sustainable development of the Northern indigenous minorities in the areas of their compact living based on rehabilitation of the traditional use of natural resource and of traditional economy, and on the basis of the currently used natural, industrial and infrastructural resources". The responsibility of the state to protect its most vulnerable minorities is of course preserved. Here provision of health care and education to the indigenous villages and to reindeer herders is maintained. It is important to find such tools and management models that will allow maximal participation of the indigenous people in the

programme, from the drafting stage to the period of implementation.

Currently, the federal and regional authorities invite the associations of the Northern indigenous minorities to define priorities and desired levels of governmental support. In the future, the role of associations must increase during the implementation stage. Another important step is to include the assistance in communal development – the tribal communities, the local ethnic communities who attempt to maintain the traditional way of life - in the modern forms of governmental programmes, including gradual transfer of local governance to the tribal communities. Three main directions for governmental efforts are feasible here – support to the labour market (in contrast to the newcomers, the indigenous people have no home place to emigrate), establishment of a new training and re-training system for indigenous professionals, and the assistance to development of the indigenous self-government. In short, the government must define the policy to transfer its authorities (the rights and the responsibilities) to the indigenous institutes. Thus the indigenous people will be able to solve the problems of their development. Social history tells us that everybody solves his or her own problems best. It is equally valid for individuals, ethnic groups and nations. Others may only help.

Finally, I want to draw your attention back to something mentioned at the start of this article. Our Association is rather young. We have just made the first steps; we have just built the foundation for our activities. However we have no time to waste, we have no time to rest: due to the high vulnerability and sensitivity of the indigenous people who live so close to nature, the strength of our peoples melt as snow under the sun. It does not mean that we have to rush all the time. On the contrary, I believe that now we have to apply the wisdom of our ancestors, we have to stop and give some time to thinking for a while, to answer the questions we face, to move forward deliberately and on solid ground.

P.S. One of my last regional meetings started with harsh criticism at the Association. Many negative comments were made regarding the managerial activities. When I took the floor, I asked, 'May I tell you perhaps what we did or at least attempted to do?' Suddenly a woman told me, 'Please do not feel hurt by our harsh words. We waited so long for the Association to start work, and finally work started. If you do not like the criticism, please tell us so and we will not tell you anything bad. Remember, however, only the dead are never criticised.'

Will Eskimos live in Chukotka in the third millenium?

Lyudmila Bogoslovskaya, Dr. Sc. (Biology)

Centre for Traditional Subsistence Studies, Russian Institute of Cultural and Natural Heritage

I have been working in Chukotka for many years, investigating the wildlife and the ancient hunting traditions of indigenous peoples. In the 1970s I happened to participate in an expedition to Chukotka, and the unique nature and the admirable people of that region have since become part of my life. Unfortunately, beginning in the 1990s I have witnessed some tragic new developments in Chukotka – devastation, starvation and disease ravaging the villages, the suffering of the people, both indigenous and newcomers.

Each time I call Chukotka to find out how the hunters helping us to monitor whales, walrus and seals are doing, I am afraid to hear in reply “he is gone”, “he fell asleep” (the Eskimos and Chukchi avoid saying “he died”). But I hear those bitter words with increasing frequency. The death of hunters from accidents, cancer, tuberculosis, alcohol poisoning and suicide has become appallingly common.

Eskimos are the smallest indigenous minority of Russia, numbering only 1719 people according to the census of 1989. They have already lost a considerable number of hunters older than 45 years of age. The same applies to the Chukchi, marine hunters and reindeer herders, but the population of this people being 15 thousand, their death rate is not yet that dramatic. Over the last six years, out of the 14 hunters with whom I closely cooperated, five died of cancer, two persons were drowned (the total number of victims in that accident was ten), and one died in the tundra. I am looking at the expedition pictures with a bitter feeling – we Muscovites are alive and the majority of our indigenous companions, most of whom are younger than ourselves, are gone forever. The lifespan of indigenous people in Chukotka is very short – only a few men reach the pension age of 55.

The reaction of federal, regional and municipal authorities to the high mortality among indigenous people, even as massive a case as that of September 7, when ten Eskimos were drowned, is the same – complete indifference and cynical (sponsored) coverage by the regional newspaper. No official condolences are offered, no lump-sum allowance to the families that lost their breadwinners. True enough, every accident was attended to by a commission from Anadyr, the capital of Chukotka, who would invariably conclude that the indigenous people died through their own negligence.

That was what happened last summer. The Eskimos of the Novoe Chaplino village were returning from the American Saint Lawrence Island. Under the long-term storm and mist conditions, the hunters should not have put out, but they had been visiting with their relatives too long, and decided to chance it. The storm overturned the boat, and two hunters died,

while three boats were lost in the sea due to the mist. The families and friends of the lost people spent several days on the shore under stormy wind and heavy rain, expecting a miracle. All that happened near the offices of municipal authorities, who did not condescend to come out and speak with the people to console them. The Alaskan Eskimos kept calling the village of Provideniya, and they summoned a USA Life-Saving Service aircraft. After a long search in the mist, the aircraft found one boat, reported the coordinates, and a Russian vessel picked up the hunters. The two other boats were found by the Eskimos of the Sireniki village. Late at night, the saved hunters, their faces cankered with sea water, with heavy leg edema, arrived in Provideniya on a British yacht, which was specially sent for them. On the shore they were met by a police detail, who tore them away from their families to take them to the district department of the interior for interrogation rather than to hospital.

Subsequently, a commission flew in from Anadyr, as is usually done, to make its predetermined conclusions. One of the members of the commission was a conceited sports official who reprimanded the Eskimos gently for neglecting their traditional sports.

During the time when in the Provideniya district hunters were dying, the governor organised a sea festival in the neighboring Chukotskiy district.

The newcomers are also having a tough time. All those having a toehold in the mainland, if only a small one, have left long ago. The people who stay are those who have nowhere to go, those who still are looking forward to receiving the “northern” pension or who are still to receive their wages owed to them for several years running (those who leave get nothing), and well-off members of the administration and people close to the administration. Everybody wants to leave. There are several containers waiting near every house, but one has to wait for years until those containers can be sent to the mainland. The sea route that was busy some time ago is currently deserted, and the price of transporting a container is too high for people who are not paid their wages for months.

Some time ago, the indigenous leaders were very much concerned with the detachment of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug from the Magadan Oblast. They naively believed that as soon as Chukotka became independent, their compatriots would be thriving. Alas, those hopes never came true. Actually, the eight years of the existence of Chukotka as a subject of the Russian Federation have had a most detrimental impact on its life. This region of the Arctic enters the third millenium as a completely ruined territory.

The Okrug's population is less than half of that at the end of the Soviet period: 75 thousand people compared to its former population of 157 thousand. Over 20 large villages, numerous terminals and seasonal camps have been closed down. The transport systems have been destroyed, the material basis of the mining industry depleted, and the production of gold and rare metals sharply reduced. Not long ago, the Chukotka domestic reindeer population was one of the world's largest; during recent years it has declined to a quarter of its former size, so that today the words "reindeer herder" and "unemployed" have become synonymous.

The people's health is in a disastrous condition. Cancer, tuberculosis, scorbatus, scabies, hives, pediculosis and colds, which result in bronchites, pleuritis, pneumonia, have become common. Mortality from disease has soared among the indigenous people, and the number of suicides has also increased sharply. The entire Chukotka is drowned in vodka, whose standards and marketing are not controlled.

Crisis situations associated with fuel supply have become fairly regular. The Eskimos say that they receive heat "in a patch pattern". In 1998 multi-storey buildings, the kindergarten, and the school in Ureliki were frozen. In Provideniya 6 five-storey buildings and in Yanrykynnot, the entire central heating were frozen (the newspaper *Kraynyy Sever* [Extreme North] of June 4, 1999, the article "Who Is Behind the Outrage"). Currently, the worn-out generator of the electric power plant is under repair in Provideniya, and experts are fixing the old machines so that dwellings should be provided with light and heat at least in late winter.

Last year no state-provided supply programme operated in Eastern Chukotka. A spokesman for the Far Eastern Steamship Company reported on October 2, 1999, in the broadcast "Federation", that not a single application for any cargo deliveries had been sent in.

Multi-month wage arrears, failure to pay welfare since 1997, and the starvation in frozen villages have made the cup run over. In the summer of 1999, the federal authorities were sent piles of letters. They were sent care of people leaving Chukotka, via America – the majority of people know from their bitter experience that a complaint from Chukotka would not reach Moscow. Many people are afraid of losing their jobs if it becomes known that they are the authors of such letters.

It can be seen from the letters that the residents of Chukotka are offended not only by the man-made poverty and cold, but also by the cynical attitude of the authorities, the governor calling the tune. Let me quote from a collective letter by Provideniya residents (Office of President, Russian Federation for Citizens' Letters, № 26-02-1000039 of August 17, 1999):

How can a pensioner survive here on 700-800 rubles? The subsistence level per person is 2437 rubles 65 kopecks, an official figure, which is

obviously underestimated... The difference in salaries is huge – 20-30 times and more [the difference between the salaries of bosses and wages of common workers is what's referred to here – L.B.J.]

Why does the governor of Chukotka purchase real estate in Saint Petersburg – premises for the pension fund – while pensioners in Chukotka starve and have no heat? Why is huge money spent on trips to the SAR to study gold mining, and the results are nil? Why is the soccer team "Spartak – Chukotka" kept in Moscow, while children are starving?

How can a person in authority like the governor Nazarov really care for the residents of Chukotka? The person who failed to find a common language with the miners of the Beringskiy village said at a meeting with Provideniya residents: "Let them hang themselves with their children!"...A sleek, conceited man who arrives in Anadyr for festivals and major functions, how can he understand the starving people of the region?

In order to conceal from strangers the crime being committed in Chukotka, a system of isolation of the Okrug from the rest of the country has been developed. All the mass media are in the hands of the governor, who descends to speak in person against his opponents over the radio and TV. Nazarov and his associates will put the blame at the door of the federal administration, accusing the "Centre" and "Moscow" of footdragging.

The major cause of the Chukotka tragedy was recognised by Yu. A. Yeregin, who wrote to the RF Government: "The Okrug administration lack systemic solutions to the management problems, in particular, a concept of the Russian state, and the understanding of Chukotka as an integral part of the Federation economy..."

Strenuous supporters of the Chukotka sovereignty, the Okrug administration, only cared for a shortcut to the federal feed-trough. Whereas in 1991, the federal contribution to the Okrug budget accounted for 20.4%, in the first quarter of 1992 it soared to 58%.

There is a lot to say about the region's plight, but the most expressive seems to be an account by the doctor G. Velichko about the Chukchi village Yanrykynnot, an image of the entire modern Chukotka. "Every morning as I left my home I saw the following picture: crowds of villagers were walking down the dirty muddy road towards the sea for fishing, which was the only source of food. The procession was reminiscent of the one for water to the Neva river during the World War II Leningrad blockade – shabbily dressed people were dragging themselves along, followed by a string of children. The kids were walking in the hope that adults would drink tea and eat and the children would have something to eat, too. It is hard to see that sight. I am sick at heart for those people. How can one help them?"

Presumably, today it would be reasonable to hand over the administration of the “banana republics”, like the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug and others that live on federal subsidies, directly to the RF government. Accordingly, the top administrators should be nominated to those subjects of the Federation by the President of Russia. And, after the December election campaign, and particularly the “triumphant” re-election of the Primorie governor, comment is needless – the governors of faraway provinces elect themselves.

It is exactly direct election that offers the governors a unique opportunity to reign until they die, without accounting to anyone.

The democratic procedure of election in non-democratic regions makes it possible to press the voters and to rig the election. It also safely protects the

governor from the dissatisfaction of the electorate (you elected me yourselves!) and from the the federal administration (I can’t be touched – I’ve been elected by the people!).

But the real fate of such regions depends on the people themselves. People should give up believing promises and learn to make authorities of any level answerable for their deeds. However, the impoverished and disintegrated population of present-day Chukotka is hardly in a position to initiate any drastic change. It is now a matter of federal administration. And the situation should be changed very quickly – Chukotka is becoming increasingly involved in the economic and geopolitical interests of other states, primarily the United States and Japan.

Indigenous women in a new social reality

Nina Zaporotskaya

teacher, native village of Kovran

The life conditions of Russia are harsh as never before. It is hard for everyone, even those working, because the hardships of life are increasing. In Kamchatka life conditions are aggravated by severe climate, remoteness from the centre and some specific problems. Prices of food, dwelling and public utilities rise. What is the position and role of the woman in these conditions? Let us take a look at the situation in a single village, Kovran, of the Koryak Okrug of the Kamchatka Oblast.

The residents of the village are mostly indigenous Koryaks and Itelmen. Some time ago that was a well-to-do village with a developed collective farm. The residents were engaged in fishery, building, and cultivation. The village had a poultry plant and a commercial dairy plant. But things have changed. The people are having a rough time. Electric energy is supplied intermittently (currently it is not supplied at all), and there is no fuel or staple foods. Thus, the situation is gloomy.

The entire able population of the village have a good educational level, but only a few of them are in a position to take advantage of it. 9% of all the able women have received higher education, 40% finished technical colleges and 40%, high schools. The picture can change in the near future, since the majority of parents cannot afford the travel and living expenses of their children, even if the education itself is free.

The village women have a higher educational level, and, hence, they fill all the vacancies in the village administration, school, kindergarten and hospital: 52% the village women are employed here. 3% of women are employed in non-state-owned organisations and 24% are unemployed. Unemployment is the plight of all the Okrug villages. 90% of all the men are unemployed. Thus, in the majority of families the woman is the only bread-winner.

There are 22 pension-age women officially registered and receiving pension, which is their livelihood. While 22% of married women with children are unemployed, 48% of single mothers are not working. What do these single women — women with weak social support — and their children live on? Anyone

in the village would say: children's welfare and pensions. The situation is aggravated by wage arrears. Working women live on occasional advance payment money. To cut a long story short, the villages are suffering from poverty and starvation. Some people are underfed, others starve. What is the health of the children born by those women? How does a mother feel who does not know how to feed her child or support its future? Poverty is not only shabby clothes and meager food, but also the constant feeling of inferiority. The village intellectuals have many times addressed the regional administration. But it is hard to say who can change the situation. If the economic situation is to be considered as violence, failure to pay the salary is also a case of economic pressure on the part of the state, that is, violence on the national level. Who is to blame? It is useless to accuse history.

Under what conditions do our women have to work? The children in kindergartens and schools are starving. The children and workers are cold. The temperature in the classrooms is below healthy standards. Because of the low temperature regime, classes are reduced or called off. And how about the medical service? There is a hospital in the village, but what can it do without the necessary medicine and equipment? Currently the flu is raging throughout the village. This is the death of exhausted people devoid of any vitamins. Children, old people, and women are ill and there is no medicine available. What does a woman feel if her child is ill and she cannot help him?

While in 1988 – 1989 the average lifespan of indigenous women was 64 years, in recent years it has declined to 51 years. But this is not the limit. Each year, the situation in the village deteriorates. In addition to cardiovascular diseases, cancer and accidents, the higher death rate is accounted for by alcoholic poisoning. A third of Kovran women abuse alcohol.

The new reality calls for a new mechanism of social protection for the woman, primarily, the mother. The issues associated with the socio-economic status of the woman in the village are currently so acute as to become the most urgent. Their solution is the health and welfare of the entire people.

The history of reindeer herding in the Bystrinskiy Region of Kamchatka

Olga Murashko
IWGIA, Moscow

The Bystrinskiy Region of Kamchatka is in the centre of the peninsula. Its entire area is occupied by the Sredinnyy Range and its offshoots. In the Bystrinskiy Region originate the majority of Kamchatka rivers. The climate there is continental, but it varies with landscape. In the mountains there is snow in summer, while in the valleys, tomato crops are raised. It is a country of unique beauty. There are warm sunny valleys with hot springs, coniferous forests and snowy peaks.

Since ancient times, the region has been a site for small-scale reindeer herding. When Russians first arrived in Kamchatka, Koryaks had already been grazing their reindeer there. But by the year 1800, they left those kindly areas to leave for Chukotka, the Magadan Regions. There were several reasons for that. They wanted to get away from the new administration, which was strange to them – the Koryaks were never baptised and they never paid *yasak* (the tribute) to the Russian tsars. There was also the desire to escape horrible diseases – in 1770 smallpox epidemic ravaged Kamchatka, followed by the “rotten fever” (most certainly, typhoid fever). Presumably, there were in addition some climate changes handicapping reindeer herding. In fact, climate historians suggest that there was a local warming up of the climate at that time, which led to sleet, ice-up, and starvation of the reindeer, as well as epizootic disease affecting the herds.

During the first half of the 19th century, the population of Central Kamchatka thinned. The number of the Kamchadal sedentary indigenous population also sharply declined due to epidemics. The governor of Kamchatka, V.S. Zavoiko, approached his colleague in Anadyr with a request to return the reindeer herders of Kamchatka who left. Of course, after 50 years not only the children and grandchildren of those who had left many years before returned, but also their neighbors whom they befriended and became related to. The middle of the 19th century in Kamchatka saw the advent of Evens (there were particularly many of them) and Chukchi. More exactly, according to some records in 1852, they obtained from the governor official permission to settle down in the Bystrinskiy. It is not known how long ago the Evens (Lamut) appeared in Kamchatka. Presumably, long before the advent of Russians there had been many such arrivals and departures of Central Kamchatka reindeer herders due to epochal changes in the climate, which were numerous during the past millennia.

It is only known that by the end of the 19th century there were about 500 Evens in the Bystrinskiy Region, and they brought along a reindeer herd whose numbers by the end of the century ranged from 20 to

30 thousand. Reindeer herds were small, the majority of herds numbering 200-500 head, depending on the natural conditions of the clan rangelands.

During the collectivisation campaign, the reindeer were transferred to collective farm and state farm herds. The regional archive contains records of how many reindeer were removed and from what owners. According to these incomplete lists, by 1938 17000 reindeer had been removed from the people. At the same time, the administration attempted to make the people sedentary. The reindeer herders were concentrated in the villages of the Bystrinskiy District. Some older people disobeyed and remained in their camps.

The numbers of the collective farm – state farm herd of the Bystrinskiy District declined to 8000 during the first years of collectivisation, but then gradually grew to reach 21000 by the year 1989. But by 1992, it dropped again to 17 thousand. Today, the reindeer population is a mere 4000.

During the Soviet period, only a small proportion of the local people was engaged in reindeer herding. Large herds were grazed by 3–5 herdsmen. The rest were employed on cattle farms, on pig-breeding and vegetable-raising farms. All the activities were regulated by the increasing non-indigenous administration, and were regarded by indigenous people as peonage.

The numbers of the newcomer population in the Bystrinskiy District during the Soviet power period increased from zero in 1926 to over 2000 in 1989.

In 1991–1992 the state farms in Esso and Anagvai were privatised. All those employed in reindeer breeding were assigned their shares in reindeer. But the indigenous people never received the reindeer. The administration claims that the people did not want to take them. Like elsewhere, the indigenous people don't know how privatisation proceeded. They don't even know how many deer their share comprised. Perhaps they were never given a complete, coherent account of the process.

Two reindeer-herding joint-stock companies were established in Esso and Anagvai. Numerous non-resident administrators were retained. Only a few dozen indigenous people continued working as herdsmen. In fact, the majority of shareholders were newcomers, and there was never enough cash for payment; they had to kill reindeer and to sell their meat to pay the bills. Aggravating matters, wolves were said to be particularly aggressive in those years. In that way, over seven years, the reindeer population was reduced to a quarter of its former size.

The role of the villages of Esso and Anagvai, which appeared during the Soviet period “in order to make reindeer herders sedentary”, changed dramatically in the course of time. The entire life in those villages which were situated at some very good site

near one another proved to be more suitable to newcomers rather for indigenous people. Hence, during resettlement, some indigenous people never reached the villages and “got stuck” in the mountains. Others, after their life in Esso and Anagvai, reached pension age and gradually started settling down in the old camps. Legalisation of this “quiet” rejection of indigenous people occurred in the following way.

First, at the recommendation of the Ministry of Agriculture in 1992 the so-called “farming households” were officially registered in 1992, a total of 34 farms. Subsequently, in connection with the adoption by the Kamchatka Region in 1997 of the regional laws “On the Territories of Traditional Subsistence” and “On Territorial-Economic Communities of Indigenous Minorities in the Kamchatka Region” those “farming households” were registered anew as “clan communities”. Currently, there are 58 such camps in the Bystrinskiy District, where the majority of the adult indigenous population reside, permanently or temporarily. Schoolchildren go to schools in Esso and Anagvai. In winter, some adults live together with them. On the average, the indigenous people in the villages have two thirds less dwelling space than newcomers. The dwellings are mostly old and lacking basic amenities.

The founding documents of many clan communities say “reindeer herding”. But there are no reindeer. The people are mostly engaged in fishing and hunting. In spring residents of the camps mostly starve. The administration does not care for them – “they are farmers now”. In the winter 1999 I was approached by a mother of a large family, who was denied pension for loss of the breadwinner on the ground that “you, farmers should have an insurance fund of your own”. But the farmers got nothing and that suited everybody. The reason for that outrage might have been more serious. It was suggested that that widow should give up the right to her plot of land and then “everything would be O.K.” As long as indigenous people own their plots they need to be asked permission for, say, development of mineral resources. But despite pressure, the people will not give up their plots.

They can be understood. I had the chance of visiting several remote camps in November-December 1999. Every camp is a beautiful nook. Each has a unique isolated world of its own. Many people live in camps for dozens of years and they settled down fairly well. At camps there are numerous buildings, both dwellings and agricultural buildings – semi-subterranean and pile buildings. In open pile shelters are hung out embroidered clothes, and sable pelts. It is very clean there. Village life is unbearable for camp residents. In camps they live in harmony with each other and nature. In the village, they are afraid of wolves and bears, while at camps we saw old women (the men are away hunting), afraid of nothing. Here is a typical conversation recorded in the river Shanuch, near a hill which many people have long been trying

to acquire. The hill contains nickel deposits, they have been long prospected for to be found commercially non-important. Before my trip, I had heard some talk about that hill to the effect that the person who expects to get it hopes to become rich. But the hill belongs to the clan land of Alla Nutangovna; it is opposite to her home and she has been living there for 41 years. She settled down in that place when nomadic Koryaks were, for some reason, moved to the Bystrinskiy District from the neighboring Sobolevsky District. She lives there together with her son, who returned from the hunt during our arrival. When we were speaking about the hill she remembered the geologists who worked there for some time, whom she fed and cared for when they were working there. She was laughing, thinking of them – she treated them as her guests, as her children, who always needed help.

“Alla Nutangovna, they say they are going to dig up your hill.

- I can't give up my hill, this is my TV set.

- How is that?

- I look out of the window and see what weather it will be, what animals are walking there.

- And what animals?

- Foxes, hares and bears.

- And bears?

-Yes...they are walking quite near, they even come to my window.

- And you are not afraid?

- No. There is nothing to be afraid of. He knows that I won't shoot.”

And so they live in friendship with the bear. Old people who have not seen reindeer meat for a long time only sigh, and old women complain that they have no material to make new fur boots and kukhlyankas (fur undergarments). In fact, after the slaughter, the administration sells the hides to traders, or in case they fail to do that, the hides are left to rot.

Hence, reindeer herders dream of reviving traditional small-scale reindeer herding by the old time-proven method, which they used as late as the collective farm period in 1959-1960. When the deer in the herd grew smaller in number?, the best herdsmen were sent up north, where they purchased 700 reindeer in the Penzhinsky District and after two years of migration, almost 3000 deer were driven home. This story is told children as a legend, something that nourishes people's hope for the future. That is how the past of reindeer herders of the Bystrinskiy District looks like, and such are the dreams of its revival in the future.

In 1999 there appeared grounds to believe that the hope would come true.

In 1996 the five protected areas of Kamchatka were included into the UNESCO World Heritage system. It became possible after the long-term efforts of scientists and the public to call attention to the unique nature of Kamchatka and the problems adverse to its conservation. Since 1997, the UN Deve-

velopment Programme (UNDP) and the Global Ecological Fund (GEF) developed the strategy for the conservation of biological diversity in Kamchatka. The Russian Government and the administration of Kamchatka proposed two programmes: "Conservation of Biodiversity of the Four Protected Areas of the Kamchatka Region" and "Conservation and Management of the Biodiversity of the Salmonid Population in the Kamchatka Peninsula". The first programme concerned nature parks and zapovedniks of the Central Kamchatka, including the Bystrinskiy Nature Park, which is part of the Bystrinskiy District. The main purpose of both programmes is to create in Kamchatka conditions for the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, but also the creation of alternative sources of livelihood for the population. Those programmes were alternative to predatory use of resources. The programmes are designed for 10 years. It is planned to allocate considerable funds for their implementation.

It has long become common knowledge for the world community that environmental welfare is intimately related to the welfare of indigenous people leading a traditional mode of life. Hence, the Convention on Biological Diversity included a special article on the preservation and maintenance of the experience and knowledge of the indigenous people in nature management.

The UNDP-GEF programmes have been compiled in conformity with the principles of that international convention. Hence, it contains a special section and a special line in the budget concerned with indigenous peoples. At the current stage of the project this section is entitled: "Working out Recommendations on the Conservation of the Experience and Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and Development of their Potential for Self-Support". A contest was conducted in Kamchatka in order to reveal an indigenous expert who could write such recommendations for all the project zones. But presumably, the applicants did not clearly understand the tasks of the UNDP and GEF experts. An expert not only needed to be knowledgeable about the problems of indigenous peoples of all the zones of the project but also be able to turn those problems into projects of the development of indigenous peoples with special reference to the conservation of biodiversity on the basis of peoples' potential and the needed funds. The programme organisers consulted me as a specialist on the ethnography of the indigenous population of Kamchatka, and at the end of September 1999, they invited me to take part in the project as an expert on indigenous peoples.

The task proved very difficult even for a prepared person. I thought it was necessary to develop recommendations only for a joint discussion with representatives of indigenous peoples. For that I had to interview a number of people, to collect documented information in order to understand the reasons of the modern problems of indigenous peoples, to under-

stand their intentions and potential and develop a strategy for the transformation of that information into projects in conformity with the UNDP-GEF requirements.

For the Bystrinskiy District we developed recommendations together with Valeriy Sankovich, whose serious and diligent contribution is very much appreciated. Together with him we visited several remote camps and met the indigenous residents of Esso and Anavgai. He helped me to understand the situation in a very short time.

Valeriy Sankovich is characterised by a very conscientious attitude to all his duties, including his voluntary position of President of the Association of Indigenous Peoples of Kamchatka. He has already done his best to solve the problem of supply to remote camps and he worked out a project for the development of factories. That project has won a competition to receive the first development grant from the state. One area of his activities is assistance to folk dancing and singing groups, folk craftsmen and many other things. He told me a story of his grandfather taking part in driving reindeer from the north. Yes, the core of development programme should become revival of the basis of traditional nature management of the region, that is, small-scale reindeer herding. That could reduce pressure on fishing and hunting resources, and promote more even distribution of environmental impact in general.

My task was to link the vital problems of indigenous people with the major objective of the UNDP programme – conservation of biodiversity – and the problem of the organisation of the participation of indigenous people in the conservation of biodiversity.

In November- December UNDP-GEF made it possible for me to come Kamchatka to collect some extra evidence. Together with Valeriy Sankovich, we spent two weeks discussing some concrete problems of indigenous people and how can they be fitted in the programme of the conservation of biological diversity. By late December it was necessary to prepare a report and recommendations for the execution of particular projects and their budget.

Unfortunately, the leaders of certain district associations of the Kamchatka Region did not understand that it was necessary to work against time. They would not come to the arranged meetings, would not send in their concepts, if only general, of the projects coming from their organisations. The last project of the Association of the Petropavlovsk-closest Elizovo District was received by me as late as May, and no budget, if only tentative, was supplied. In order to estimate the project budget, I needed various kinds of information: the price of snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles for many years ahead. I needed to know the prices of a radio station, a reindeer hide, freezing chamber, beads, sun-wind energy generator and many other things.

True enough, I was somewhat prepared for this sort of situation, knowing that things are done slowly in the North. But at the Coordination Committee meeting for the UNDP-GEF project in the February 2000, when time came to defend the prepared projects, those who failed to send in their applications on time came out against the entire UNDP-GEF project on the grounds that their problems had not been addressed. The reindeer herders of the Bystrinskiy District and the communities of other districts whose projects were discussed were disconcerted – the representatives of indigenous were trying at the very beginning to undermine their hopes for the implementation of the plans for revival.

The projects of the indigenous peoples of the Bystrinskiy District had other opponents as well. The administration concept of conservation, the experience and knowledge of indigenous people, and developing their potential for self-support was presented to the Park Administration of the Kamchatka Region to be included in the business plan of the Bystrinskiy Park Development Administration as alternative projects for indigenous peoples.

But first let me say something about the projects that were prepared jointly with the Association and included in my recommendations. In accordance with the requirements of UNDP-GEF, the Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the Bystrinskiy District proposed the following projects:

“Establishment of Nature Conservation Stations with Concurrent Sports Fishing Functions and Camps for Groups of Organised Ecological and Ethnographic Tourists on Clan Lands of the Indigenous People of the Bystrinskiy District”. That project envisaged support to all the camps of the Bystrinskiy District to supply transport, radio stations, obtaining of certificates of public inspectors for environmental protection, availability of such an inspector in each camp and his salary at the place of his/her residence. In fact, complete isolation of indigenous people in the Bystrinskiy Park area, lack of communication and protection of territories creates preconditions for the appearance of poachers, who make use of fishing and game resources of the areas that legally belong to indigenous people in exchange for staple goods or under the threat of weapons.

In order to supply to the camps with whatever they need, to maintain environmental protection, and to assist in the marketing of the products of traditional subsistence, the project “Development of Factory Service of Environmental Protection Stations and Camps of Indigenous People in the Bystrinskiy District” was proposed.

The major project for the development of traditional integrated nature management by indigenous people was revival of reindeer herding. Presented below is the complete budget of that project.

- Purchase of 700 reindeer in northern Kamchatka: US\$ 162000;

- Travelling and living expenses for five herdsmen in the course of two-year migration – the driving of reindeer herd to the Bystrinskiy District: US\$ 15000;
- Wages to the herdsmen for two years: US\$ 10000;
- Veterinary service during the migration: US\$ 1500;
- Two snowmobiles and walkie-talkies: US\$ 9000.
- During the migration, an expansion of the purchased herd by 3-4 times is envisaged. Upon driving of the herd to the Bystrinskiy District it is planned to graze reindeer for another year and, subsequently, distribute them among small-scale reindeer herding groups.

In terms of the development of tourism, also recommended were projects on support of the available folk singing and dancing groups, provision of craftsmen with the necessary tools and raw materials for the manufacture of souvenirs. Organisation of processing and marketing of the traditional subsistence products was included.

The main idea was that the organisations of indigenous people should execute their projects on their own. For that, organisation of a workshop of indigenous people and a special investment fund was planned.

That did not seem to suit many people, although there were other programmes on the development of alternate sources of subsistence for the creation of biological diversity, and those opposing the project could include their interests actually associated with environmental protection.

Alternative programmes for indigenous people of the Bystrinskiy District were as follows: Project 1, “Integration of Clan Communities Leading a Traditional Mode of Life and Reindeer Herders into a System of Park Protection; and Project 2, “Factory Service of Indigenous People Leading a Traditional Mode of Life”.

Finally, a project on revival of reindeer herding included the following items:

- 500 reindeer females from local herds and 50 males of Tofalar reindeer from the Irkutsk Region were purchased;
- seven reindeer herders were employed and grazing of the herd near Esso and Anagvai organised;
- two field houses for reindeer herders will be built;
- reindeer have been prepared for riding and harness (sled);
- some deer (400 head) were handed over in property of the reindeer herders;
- reindeer herders begin grazing the herd on their own, on a self-repayment basis;
- the administration employs a new group of reindeer herders for them to learn the skills of

small-scale reindeer herding, environmental protection and tourism.

I felt awkward in front of the reindeer herders, who didn't know what to say after they familiarised themselves with the above-mentioned document. They would say that the reindeer would not survive transportation by aircraft as was planned by the project. The reason is that reindeer would not be tied up, leading to their death. Those who would survive would still be doomed, because they could not become adjusted to a new place. The reindeer herders did not bring up the subject of their "learning the skills of small-scale reindeer herding" and subsequent "grazing of the herd on their own"; there is nothing that could be said politely, and reindeer herders are modest people with good manners...

I had to write an official review of those projects. I indicated that the cost of analogous projects of the Association of Indigenous Peoples would be a third or a fourth of this project, and that the costly construction mentioned in all the three projects is unfeasible in terms of the projects' objectives, that the programme for improvement of reindeer herds through trans-

portation of Tofalar reindeer was proved untenable as early as the 1980s when it was proposed, that the projects proposed are permeated with the spirit of paternalism, which is inadmissible in our time, that the projects initiated by the Association of Indigenous Minorities would be executed by themselves more successfully if they themselves were to be held responsible for the execution of those projects.

In February 2000, at the meeting of the Coordination Committee of UNDP-GEF we managed to win our case. In public, in front of the reindeer herders invited to the meeting by V. Sankovich, the Park Administration withdrew their draft projects on indigenous people. Today all the projects are studied by the UNDP-GEF experts, and those organisations would be financed by the those organisations, and they have the right of choice. But the indigenous peoples would not surrender either.

They have made the revival of reindeer herding in the Bystrinskiy District their business, and if they receive the founding capital they would be ready to execute their project on their own and they would account for the results.

You need to have rights to be free, or "An oath on a bear's claw "

Natalya Novikova
Rodnik ("Spring") Legal Centre

I saw a bear's claw in the Uchinskiy ethnographic museum. The cultural artefacts of the Kondinski Mansi are exhibited here. Mr Anatoly Khomyakov, the founder and the manager of the museum, explained that the elder women in the Mansi villages used the bear's claw to exercise justice. When an offence was committed, the elders would order the suspect to go and cut off a wild bear's claw. Few dared to cheat or avoid the confession. The only other choice was to move to the forest – where the bear will not spare lives.

This tradition is only kept nowadays by the 'people of the woods'. How are we then supposed to resolve a conflict, to make judgements when the land is claimed for reindeer herding and extraction of oil? The oil industry may perhaps obtain temporary rights, agreeing to return the land to the indigenous people afterwards. So the elders thought, but it did not work this way. A conflict arose. Mr Yuri Vella, a famous poet and a reindeer herder, wrote open letters to the Government and the executives of LukOil. Then he decided to appeal to the local authorities to obtain exact information on his rights to the land where he and his family live. He also wanted to know if the Law on environmental protection had been followed when the land was given to the oil industry. The only result was a rather rude formal reply. Mr Vella resolved to take legal action. However the regional judge in the Khanty-Mansiyskiy Okrug refused to take the case against the Governor. Mr Vella filed a second request for information, and after the legal workshop was conducted concerning the reindeer herders' legal standing, Mr Vella's neighbour filed a similar request. Rodnik ("Spring") Legal Centre provided the reindeer herders with legal aid. We have recently learned that the Parliament of the Khanty-Mansiyskiy Okrug is drafting a new law 'On information in the use of natural deposits'. The local legislators think perhaps that the rights which the Russian constitution and the federal laws give to Russian citizens are too broad.

LukOil drew their own conclusions. Usually the owners of the traditional land enter into contracts with the industry that extracts deposits on this land. A conflict arose in the Surgut region between the parties to such a contract, and LukOil unilaterally cancelled the contracts with five families in 1998 in spite of the fact that, according to law, only the court may cancel such agreements. This conflict has not been resolved.

A book written by the oil industry in the souls of the inhabitants of the Western Siberia contains many tears. Their pain and anger take form of numerous letters, appeals, resolutions at informal meetings, workshops and conferences. Many did not live to see

the result of these efforts. We had to find another way to resolve conflicts.

All over the world, legal actions are used to assert people's rights. However, in Russia people generally do not trust the courts; they are afraid of the courts. This is sometimes merely the fear of the unknown. Perhaps we should bring actions to the courts more often, since the Northern indigenous peoples — those who maintain a traditional way of life — have special rights to legal protection.

Let's have a look at how the Russian legislation may help us here. Firstly, the right to legal protection is ensured by the Constitution. Secondly, this right is expressly stated in the new federal law 'On ensuring rights of the indigenous minorities of the Russian Federation'. The Law provides the indigenous peoples special rights to protection by the courts. Article 14 of the Law states that 'the indigenous individuals and associations of indigenous minorities have rights to protection by the courts of native lands, the areas of traditional ways of life, of traditional economies and of traditional trades...'. Thus the legislators buttressed the usual civil rights of citizens by specifying the right of the indigenous peoples to protection by the courts as a right that requires special care.

Article 14 brings us to several important conclusions:

1. In the context of this law, both citizens and associations enjoy the right to legal protection.
2. The text of the Law expressly states that the Law is applied to protection of native lands and areas of traditional ways of life.
3. The traditions and customs of these peoples should be taken into account by the courts.
4. The appointed representatives may take part in legal hearings.

What does this right mean to us? First of all this right concerns the responsibility for land. The norms of the usual Law of the indigenous peoples towards land express the basic feature of the indigenous ideology – the high value of responsibility towards the condition and the future of the native land. Another important feature of the indigenous ideology lies in the fact that following the norms of the usual Law the land was not distributed among the owners. The estates may be superimposed upon each other. The Khanty, the Mansi and the Nenets distributed the land based upon agreements with neighbours. Neighbours know the life of each other, they try not to impede on each other, not to inflict damage on the pastures. If the traditional lifestyle is preserved, the neighbours together attempt to preserve the land, since everybody knows what is good for your neighbour and what is not. The indigenous people believe that

land use rights could be granted to the oil industry if they had the right attitude toward the land, and toward their neighbours, but the oil industry cannot and does not want to follow these rules. The oil industry demands rights to land strictly on its own terms.

Naturally, the traditional indigenous ideology has changed today; some indigenous people have taken up a more exploitative attitude towards their lands. Indigenous people told me that the Mansi who live in the urban centre and visit their native lands from time to time only take from the land. They told me that that land should be taken care of, just as you take care of your children or elder parents. It is not only older people who believe this; many young Mansi who obtain rights to the native lands and move to the forest share this view. In this view, the land cannot become people's property; one can only take care of it.¹ Therefore the Khanty and the Nenets do not understand the concept of 'remitting land for industrial development'. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why they so easily gave access to their lands to the geologists and later to the oil industry. The elders tell us now that they thought the "guests" would work here and leave afterwards; they did not know that the land would be permanently alienated from them. The Khanty believe that it is their obligation to preserve the land and, most importantly, the holy land. The people of the woods and the people of the tundra consider themselves part of the land, in fact, a very necessary part of it. One reindeer herder explained this connection: "We have a large herd. Our summer pastures come close to the oil rigs. I cannot put up a fence, since the herd is so large. The herd requires a very large pasture; a small one will be used up quickly. Now my reindeers are short of land, and they go out of the boundaries of our pastures. Once the land is used up, the reindeers start to disappear. This means that the people will disappear, too".

Mr Tarastupga, one of the initiators of the indigenous movement, spoke to me about what he called "the Law of mutual responsibility", a morality that is distinct from the formal laws of the state. It is this Law of mutual responsibility — people's obligations toward one another, with respect to the land — that helps the Khanty and the Mansi explain why a traditional economy works in one community and does not in another. Not everybody who lives on the native land does well. There are several reasons behind it. Some got parcels surrounded by oil rigs. This presents enormous challenges to the traditional economy — there is nothing to hunt or to fish. Others got good untouched forests, but they still fail. Many were educated in boarding schools and lived in the urban centres. They wanted to have their own farm, but it does not work. They are so used to living in the urban centres, even being unemployed. Life in the taiga

requires other knowledge, other skills and - what is very important - an entirely different attitude toward one's place on the land.

The traditional perceptions of natural resource use as a responsibility has some important legal implications. For example, Russia's Law on flora and fauna gives priority rights to the use of natural resources to the indigenous minorities and ethnic communities whose "distinctive cultures and lifestyles include traditional ways of protection and use of flora and fauna". However, if the traditional hunting ways are not followed, the people cannot enjoy special legal status within the framework of this Law. The laws regarding indigenous peoples may be used only when the traditional ways of life are maintained.

The Act on Tribal Lands has been in force in the Khanty-Mansiyskiy Autonomous Okrug since 1992. The lands were distributed among the indigenous people. The local authorities in the eastern oil-producing regions have not yet issued titles to these lands. So they are considered "uninhabited" when the oil industry claims rights to them and the local authorities then issue licenses to extract oil. The local authorities first tried to settle resulting conflicts, but later sided with the oil industry, which got control of more and more land. The conflict between the reindeer herder Aivaseda and LukOil has roots in this situation. Mr Aivaseda has no deed on the land of his actual abode. An employee of LukOil told me: "We work here, we invest, and out of the blue come the Nenets with the reindeer". The oil industry considers itself first on this land. And the oil industry will not cut the bear's claw.

This old way of conflict resolution is being replaced nowadays by the new opportunities provided by the federal legislation. Article 14 says "*The indigenous traditions and customs that do not contradict the federal and regional legislation of the Russian Federation may be taken into consideration by the courts in cases where the indigenous minorities are plaintiffs, defendants, victims or accused*".

Should the need to defend indigenous rights in the court of the Khanty-Mansiyskiy Autonomous Okrug arise, I and Ms Yakovleva, our lawyer, are ready to use this right in a court hearing on the case of Mr Aivaseda and his complaint on violation of his rights. Firstly, we will look into his right on 'the tribal land as a native environment'. There are wooden houses of Mr Aivaseda's ancestors on this tribal land; the holy lands of his tribe are here as well. We may use these arguments in court to prove indigenous rights to this land and the right of Mr Aivaseda as a representative of the indigenous peoples.

In this context, evidence that a part of the tribal land is 'holy land' may become an important argument to the court. There has been a precedent in the Khanty-Mansiyskiy Okrug. The boundaries of one tribal land were defined by the instructions of the oil industry. The Nenets wanted to retain rights to that land since it was holy to them. However, they did not

¹ Traditional, indigenous land "ownership" consists of **use** rights, passed down through the generations and sometimes temporarily extended to others, rather than freehold property rights. --The Editor.

mention this during the negotiations. They simply said they need the land, without further arguments. The administrations found the arguments of the oil industry to be more convincing. Today, the Nenets are ready to tell the court that the land is holy to them and that they go there to offer sacrifices. Now they are aware of their rights and responsibilities in accordance with traditional land-use. There is an opportunity in place to protect the Nenets' rights in court, especially by using the new Law that provides further protection.

Another outcome is plausible though: the representatives of the indigenous minorities may attempt to claim land rights on the basis of past use. If, however, these people live in the urban centres, are on governmental salaries, and merely use the land as plots for their summer houses, the oil industry may say in court: 'The Khanty come to their tribal lands so seldom that they have no right to claim the land where we extract oil'. Unfortunately, there are many cases in the Khanty-Mansiyskiy Okrug where people were granted legal rights to their tribal lands, but are not aware of their responsibilities related to these lands.

The Law gives indigenous peoples right regarding traditional uses of natural resources. One of the disadvantages of the Law is that it only gives rights to the government to adopt laws and to protect the indigenous rights, to the indigenous peoples to maintain the traditional economy, to the NGOs to protect the indigenous rights. There is nothing in this Law about responsibilities. The Law does not say that the traditional use of the natural environment is not only a right but also a responsibility of those who choose this way of life. This does not mean that the 180 000 indigenous men and women have to move to the forest and engage in hunting or reindeer herding. No, many indigenous people work in the urban centres and live on salaries, even though they may not get salaries on a regular basis. They choose to maintain an urban way of life.²

I believe the indigenous intellectuals whose activity contributes to the traditional use of natural resources shall enjoy a special status in this system. These are the teachers of the indigenous languages, the artists and the folklorists whose way of life relates directly to the traditional use of natural resources. It is a well-known fact that most Northern indigenous minorities limit use of their languages more and more. This leads to major cultural losses and sometimes has direct effects on the very existence of the small ethnic nations.

The use of indigenous languages is linked to the traditional economy. For example, the Inuit of the

Lavrentiya village at Chukotka use either the Inuit or the Chukchi language in whale hunting. All hunters, even the Inuit hunters, know the Chukchi language since it is widely used and taught in schools. Whale hunting is a dangerous trade; the hunters say that if they speak Russian while hunting the whale will elude them or drown them all. In the context of the whale hunt, the Chukchi and the Inuit languages are more effective than Russian: one or two words are enough for everybody to understand what to do.

The Law envisages other ways to protect indigenous rights, for example, in the form of compensation for damages incurred in result of an economic activity. Conflict settlement between the parties to a conflict is possible as well. However, today we observe that the industry does not fulfill their responsibilities. Therefore the application of Article 8(8) of the Law is only possible through decisions by courts. The Law may play an important role in ethnologic assessment. In this context, the arguments that point to the absence of the Law on ethnologic assessment and procedures for its implementation have no ground. The Law on ethnologic assessment is needed but the right to the assessment is provided by the existing legislation. Therefore citizens may claim their rights. The ethnologic assessment may significantly widen the scope of application of the Law on Environmental Assessment that covers environmental impact assessment and 'social, economic and other impacts of the subject of EIA'. Current practice shows that in this respect the EIAs include only certificates of archaeological monuments. This brings both funny and tragic results. The Tyanskiy mineral deposit is under development at Trom-Agan in the Khanty-Mansiyskiy Okrug. The status for the holy lands is not defined here, though any indigenous person or an anthropologist knows that that a holy land is a land that people consider to be holy. However the oil industry does not know that, and the government does not require the oil industry to have this knowledge. Therefore when the industry started to construct a road here, Mr N.N. Vyllo, the owner of the tribal land, wrote a letter to the oil production company. He wrote that the land is holy. The reply from the managing director of the oil company was that his map of archaeological monuments does not show any holy lands here. Perhaps the application of the Law to conduct an ethnologic assessment may help here. Further, the Law may be applied here, as it states that the traditions and customs of the indigenous minorities must be taken in to consideration.

The Law will work when the indigenous peoples themselves, both individuals and organisations, will feel the need for its application. We have also faced the situation where courts were not ready to apply the Law. For example, even though Article 4 of the Law gives rights to indigenous peoples to seek support from organisations, the court of Khanty-Mansiysk re-

² The author is referring to the responsibilities of those indigenous individuals who have rights to traditional lands (in reality, some of them are irresponsible and lands are in decay), but who have chosen an urban way of life. They are responsible for the bearing of traditional culture, language etc., but not for their lands. According to the author, they cannot continue to take care of their ancestors' lands when leading an urban way of life, but they might still have quota for fishing, hunting etc. --The Editor.

jected a complaint because an NGO supported the complainant.

The legal process, and even just submitting a complaint to the court, may have direct and indirect effects. For instance, Mr Yuri Vella sent in a complaint to the court after he had been denied information that he had requested. The court rejected Mr Vella's complaint, but when Mr Vella applied for information once again, he received about 50 pages of documentation, which is what he wanted to get from the court in the first place.

I do not want the reader to get the impression that a court may solve all our problems. Experience shows that the court is one tool to protect the rights of indigenous peoples. However, our own civil activity will determine the effectiveness of legal protection. Here I mean establishment of an NGO, public meetings, pickets, writing appeals, conducting polls, conducting public environmental impact assessments and ethnologic assessments, participation in the legislative

process, establishment of zones under special protection, and defining the status of holy land.

The government is interested, or should be interested, in the preservation of the northern natural areas, including its biodiversity, and in achieving sustainable development. Therefore the government should support the people whose very lives are preconditions to sustainable development. However, only people who maintain a traditional way of life have legal and moral rights to enjoy governmental support. Therefore norms of usual right that regulate native environments, traditional ways of life became part of the legal system. This means that the norms of the usual right correspond to the legal system. In this context, advisability to apply the norm of the usual right may be proved in the court of Law on the basis of its compliance with the humanitarian and environmental orientations of the current legislation, especially with the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

The right is an obligatory form of freedom. Perhaps, with thoughts of freedom people go to courts.