

## 9th Nevsky International Ecological Congress

### CLOSING DECLARATION

We, the participants of the 9th Nevsky International Ecological Congress, which took place on 27–28 May 2021 in St. Petersburg under the theme “Ecology of the Planet: Sustainable Development”, issue the following declaration.

*We recognize* the global nature of today’s environmental challenges, and the need to rapidly draw up a roadmap to address them.

*We affirm* our commitment to the rapid and full implementation of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

*We endorse* the decisiveness taken by global leaders at the April 2021 Climate Summit with regard to giving a new impetus to international dialogue on sustainable development.

*We support* Russian President Vladimir Putin’s environmental modernization initiative for the country. This initiative is of strategic importance with regard to the sustainable development of ecosystems throughout Eurasia, and to preserving the biosphere of our planet. It is also key to establishing fundamentally new forms of international cooperation. These will enable all involved nations to work together on an equal basis to implement innovative joint ventures which will address environmental and climate objectives.

*We are particularly aware* of the risk of climate policy being exploited as a means of unfair competition, thereby exacerbating global inequality and hindering growth in the majority of countries for the sake of the interests of a small group of nations and multinational corporations.

*We emphasize* the need for all countries to play a far-reaching role in developing mechanisms and standards related to global climate policy.

*We believe* that attempts to artificially separate the climate agenda from other sustainable development objectives (including tackling poverty and closing the development gap between countries) are not to be permitted.

*We acknowledge* the special responsibility that parliamentarians have in terms of legislative support for environmental modernization in our countries, and in terms of monitoring compliance with national environmental protection laws. We also acknowledge the important role played by parliamentarians in fostering international dialogue on sustainable development, harmonizing approaches to environmental policy, and making cooperation on transnational ecosystem management more effective.

*We recognize* the longstanding contribution made by the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States in facilitating dialogue at the Nevsky International Ecological Congress at Tavricheskiy Palace in St. Petersburg. We also recognize longstanding efforts to bolster international ties and accumulate experience from joint solutions, which have served as a strong foundation to further develop environmental protection initiatives.

*We welcome* the attention that member states and international organizations have paid to the Congress, and to the consideration of recommendations from each edition of the Congress as they pertain to national and international environmental agendas.

*We endeavour* to move cooperation on environmental issues in Eurasia to a new level.

*We consider* close coordination between the legislative and executive branches of government to be essential in order to effectively implement state environmental policy. We believe coordination between all levels of an integrated government system to be similarly essential. We also believe there needs to be cooperation between the business sector, the scientific community, experts, and non-profit organizations to achieve these ends.

We have discussed critical areas where improvements need to be made to legislation governing the use of natural resources and environmental protection. We have also examined ways to facilitate the implementation of resource- and energy-saving technologies in the advanced processing of raw materials and waste. In addition, we have considered ways to facilitate the development of the circular economy, put green financing mechanisms in place, improve approaches to environmental education, raise awareness of environmental responsibilities, and strengthen transnational cooperation with a view to minimizing mankind's impact on the environment.

***In light of the above, we are issuing the following recommendations:***

***Recommendations for the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States***

Maintain consistent efforts to develop and harmonize legislation governing environmental and climate protection in member states, including through drafting model laws and related recommendations.

Employ the democratic parliamentary mandate from our respective peoples to promote the pooling of efforts from all branches and levels of government, civil society, the scientific and expert community, and business sector in the interests of environmental modernization in our countries.

Employ interparliamentary channels and platforms to promote a constructive and inclusive approach to international cooperation on environmental issues, and prevent attempts to twist the agenda to foment confrontation, discrimination, and unfair competition.

***Recommendations for government bodies of member states at the Congress***

***Recommendations pertaining to drafting national and international strategic documents:***

Ensure member states at the Congress work together to formulate responses to environmental and climate-related challenges, and also to address transnational issues related to environmental safety.

Consolidate resources in the interests of environmental modernization, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and sharing best practices and experience pertaining to environmental projects and initiatives.

Facilitate the promotion of successful projects related to the green economy; facilitate the replication of said projects across a large scale; enable the transfer of best green technologies and the exchange of information related to sustainable development and environmental protection; and foster an environmentally aware culture.

Draw up a range of measures aimed at attracting private investment for environmental and climate initiatives.

Strengthen the role of the science sector in developing and implementing programmes aimed at addressing challenges related to environmental development and climate change.

***Recommendations pertaining to water resource management:***

Continue to work on key issues related to integrated transnational water management with consideration given to best practices and strategic reference points.

Undertake additional efforts to better address the effects of climate change on the depletion of freshwater resources, geographic and seasonal disparities in water distribution, and the increase in the frequency and intensity of hydrologic events.

Work on more efficient approaches to better adapt to climate-related changes to water resources, water availability, and dangerous hydrological phenomena.

Facilitate an exchange of professional experience and promising ideas related to integrated water resource management.

Continue efforts to identify mutually beneficial solutions, and share experience and best practices on securing universal access to water and sanitary infrastructure based on partnership and respect for national sovereignty – these being key to successful international efforts and global water diplomacy (encompassing aspects related to the expedited attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 6 – “Clean water and sanitation for all”). Ensure that modern digital data-collection technologies are used to these ends (the Internet of Things, remote sensing), and that data is processed and used in a decision-making system for integrated water resource management (mathematical modelling, the development of digital analytical and signal services), including in relation to transnational water bodies.

Prioritize diplomacy and transnational cooperation which is based on equal partnership and strategic collaboration, and which complies with generally recognized norms of international law. Areas of applicability include the development, testing, and joint implementation of modern digital technologies used for integrated water resource management, with the view to protecting and rationally using transnational water bodies at all levels.

***Recommendations pertaining to forest resource management:***

Take steps to accelerate the restoration of forests, increase the proportion of managed forests, and undertake a comprehensive science- and technology-based modernization programme in the field of forest resources and forest management (including through the broad application of digital technologies).

Continue efforts to improve transparency in logging and reporting.

Continue international cooperation, and continue to regularly share experience on protecting forests from fires, pests, and diseases. Endeavour to improve forests’ absorbability and climate-regulating capabilities.

Make provision for training a sufficient professional forest industry workforce; attach a high social status to the industry, and ensure high levels of motivation among forest industry professionals living in rural areas.

Attract a broad range of volunteers and young people (including from secondary and higher-education institutions) to work on mass initiatives to help restore forests.

***Recommendations pertaining to green energy:***

Work on all fronts to facilitate more efficient use of fossil fuels, and increased use of renewable and alternative sources of energy as part of energy-transition efforts.

Build international partnerships in the field of innovative green technologies.

Install gas-cleaning equipment at electric power facilities which employ the best available technologies.

Increase recycling and commercialization of solid-fuel combustion gases (from bottom-ash compounds, pulverized fuel ash, and slag resulting from burning solid fossil fuels at thermal power plants and furnaces).

Foster international cooperation in promoting nuclear and hydro-energy sources as low-carbon options; focus on a green national energy mix, including in terms of green certification.

Improve heat-supply management in residential areas with the aim of improving energy efficiency.

Develop the environmental and energy agenda at the Eurasian Women's Forum.

***Recommendations pertaining to climate policy:***

Continue climate research in the fundamental and applied sciences.

Undertake urgent measures to adapt to a changing climate, and to mitigate mankind's impact on the climate.

Improve climate risk management in the interests of sustainable development.

Continuously monitor climate change; factors affecting climate change; the impact of climatic effects on populations, the economy, and the environment; adjustments to climate forecasts; and the effectiveness of adaptation and mitigation measures.

Develop national and international greenhouse gas emission certification and verification schemes.

Work to establish international carbon unit processing centres in Eurasia.

***Recommendations pertaining to solid household waste management:***

Continue to develop legal regulation in waste management, with consideration given to norms of international law.

Foster international cooperation and the sharing of best practices in environmentally safe processing of household waste.

Work to sign a declaration on the hierarchy of waste disposal types by CIS nations.

Work on the establishment of a unified interstate system managing trade and ensuring traceability of the movement of waste and secondary resources.

Continue to implement the extended producer responsibility initiative with the view to achieving a 100% processing and disposal rate of household packaging waste.

Promote international cooperation and ensure that best practices are exchanged in the implementation of extended producer responsibility initiatives.

Make owners of household waste infrastructure facilities (including landfill sites) responsible for compliance with safety standards during the operation of said facilities in order to prevent environmental damage that could lead to an environmental disaster.

Foster public-private partnership in order to attract private investment in waste management.

Focus on environmental education for children and young people. Work to educate people of all ages and social groups on household waste management. Encourage waste separation as part of efforts to build an environmental culture.

***Recommendations pertaining to environmental education and the development of eco-tourism:***

Develop national environmental education programmes.

Promote the development of a universal, comprehensive, and ongoing environmental education system for children and young people aimed at instilling an appreciation of the riches of nature, and responsible behaviour in relation to the natural environment.

Provide ongoing environmental education for the public: disseminate environmental knowledge and information on the state of the environment, natural resources, and environmental safety. Endeavour to build the foundations of an environmental culture in the interests of environmentally safe and sustainable development throughout the global community.

Work to incorporate initiatives aimed at fostering eco-tourism into priority sections of national strategic documents.

Offer government support to investment projects aimed at developing eco-tourism at year-round resorts.

Foster public-private partnership in order to attract private investment in eco-tourism.

***Recommendations pertaining to environmental considerations in the Arctic:***

Improve measures aimed at using natural resources rationally, as well as conserving and restoring Arctic ecosystems.

Establish a network to monitor the state of permafrost soils using modern technologies, with the view to developing and employing databases which will enable all members of the Arctic Council to analyse and forecast permafrost degradation.

Use existing mathematical models and modern databases to eliminate mankind's harmful impact on the environment (and to prevent it in the first place), and to facilitate the environmental recovery of land and water bodies which have been contaminated as a result of commercial and other activities.

Ensure public health and wellbeing in the Arctic in the process of developing the region.

Conduct health-risk assessments when justifying and planning the construction of industrial, manufacturing, and transport facilities and infrastructure.

***Recommendations pertaining to environmental safety:***

Continue international cooperation, and continue to regularly share experience with regard to the following:

Reducing risks and eliminating the consequences of natural and/or man-made environmental disasters, particularly with regard to preventing oil and oil product spills.

Preventing environmental damage by industry, including through drafting legal mechanisms that will obligate owners of industrial facilities to ensure that any environmental damage is eliminated.

Updating information and technical guides on the best available environmental technologies.

***Recommendations pertaining to green financing:***

Develop an integrated approach to regulating green projects; set out a common terminology glossary, and establish common green financing principles and mechanisms.

Pinpoint state support measures for initiators of green projects.

*We call upon* world leaders, scientists, businesspeople, representatives of non-profit organizations and members of the media to do their utmost to foster a dedicated, scientifically grounded, and positive approach to environmental issues. We urge the aforementioned groups to take into account the outcomes of the 9th Nevsky International Ecological Congress and the decisions made at the event, and also to help promote the provisions outlined in the Congress' closing declaration.