**10th Nevsky International Ecological Congress**

**CLOSING DECLARATION**

May 25-26, 2023 St. Petersburg

We, the participants of the 10**th** Nevsky International Ecological Congress under the theme “Ecology: a Right, not a Privilege”, issue the following declaration.

***We recognize*** the global nature of problems of preservation of the environment, the importance of consolidating the efforts of governments, business and society as a whole to overcome the negative effects of climate change and the intensive technological impact on the Earth's ecosystem.

***We support*** equal basis development of interstate cooperation in the sustainable use of natural resources.

***We build on*** previously developed joint documents regulating a systematic approach to global environmental and climate policy.

***We acknowledge*** the leading role played by the parliaments in improving national legislation in the field of environmental safety and implementation of effective norms of international law.

***We highly appreciate*** the activities of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States Member Nations in the field of model law-making, which is aimed at harmonizing national environmental legislation. We also recognize its contribution to the implementation of a concerted environmental policy in the states of the Commonwealth.

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

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

1. Facilitate the creation of legal mechanisms in support of sustainable development of territories and the transnational cooperation in the field of environmental protection and the use of natural resources.
2. Consider establishing a constantly operating platform for exchange of experience and discussion of the most topical issues of the rational environmental management in mountain territories (for example, within the “Sustainable Development of Mountain Territories” Forum).
3. Initiate development of national strategies and programs for sustainable development of mountain territories of the CIS Member Nations.
4. Pay special attention to the issues of studying the impact of climate change on glacier melting, river flow and activity of dangerous exogenous hydro-geological processes.
5. Foster international cooperation in the field of monitoring of natural and anthropogenic hazards, adaptation to environmental changes.
6. Improve the coordination of activities in the field of ecological monitoring within the CIS, including through the development of a model law “On Ecological Monitoring” for the CIS Member Nations and its implementation in national legislation.
7. Include measures for the development of organic farming in national and regional programs of development of agriculture to form the organic farming system.
8. Recognizing the special role of international cooperation in reducing the anthropogenic impact on the atmosphere, ensure earlier transition of companies to the best available technologies, and transition to environmentally friendly modes of transport in the transport sector.
9. Continue the implementation of projects for the transition to a circular economic model, involving the recycling of useful fractions from construction, agricultural and industrial waste.
10. Introduce economic incentives for environmental modernization of industrial enterprises and at the same time toughen responsibility for hazardous emissions into the atmosphere and failure to achieve the parameters of emission quotas.
11. Continue to work under the Montreal Protocol to protect the ozone layer.

*Recommendations pertaining to adaptation to global climate change:*

1. Continue to strengthen cooperation between federal executive bodies to ensure comprehensive participation of the Russian representatives in international multilateral platforms on climate change.
2. Ensure the promotion of the Russian approaches to adaptation to climate change at multilateral international platforms.
3. Prioritize the effective implementation of the set of tasks and objectives of the most important innovative project of state importance “The Unified National Monitoring System for Climatically Active Substances”.

*Recommendations pertaining to development of the digitalization in ecology:*

1. Implement progressive technological solutions in the strategic areas of digitalization in ecology: ecological monitoring, digitalization of the waste management industry, circular economy, environmental safety and control.
2. Continue to work on the development of information systems capable of bringing the model of environmental and natural resource management to a new level through the use of analytical functionality, the introduction of elements of predictive analytics.
3. Ensure further development of the system of digital transformation in the field of ecology and environmental management, covering all areas of the environmental and natural resource sector: hydrometeorology, ecological monitoring of the environment, water management and subsoil use, production and consumption waste management, management of specially protected natural areas, hunting and forest complexes.
4. Widely implement artificial intelligence technology, “digital twin”, Internet of things and big data in practice, using Earth remote sensing data, data from digital trail cameras and unmanned aerial vehicles.
5. Use the experience of flying over the MSW landfills when further extending the technology of creating “digital twin” to other areas of the environmental sector.
6. Deepen international cooperation in the field of digital transformation of the ecology and environmental management sector, in particular, within the framework of partnership and friendship with the Member States of the Eurasian Economic Union, including implementation of joint promising projects.
7. Work out the issue of building an international system of control over the impact of digital technologies on the environment, as well as creating a program for transition to energy-efficient computing systems to reduce the carbon footprint of data centers (quantum computing, neuromorphic artificial intelligence).

*Recommendations pertaining to preservation of the ecology of the Arctic and Antarctic:*

1. Improve measures aimed at using natural resources rationally, as well as preserving and restoring the Arctic ecosystems.
2. Carry out a step-by-step modernization of the Russian Antarctic stations, implement efficient environmental technologies that reduce the negative impact on the environment, take measures for the disposal and recycling of biowaste outside Antarctica (area covered by the Antarctic Treaty).
3. Establish a state permafrost background monitoring system on the basis of the Roshydromet State Observation Network, taking into account the requirements of the existing international permafrost observation systems of the World Meteorological Organization.
4. Organize an ecological monitoring system in the area of the Northern Sea Route on the basis of an integrated approach and the use of modern technologies, aimed at environmental protection and environmental resilience taking into account the development of the Northern Sea Route.
5. Use existing mathematical models and modern databases to prevent and eliminate anthropogenic harmful impact on the environment, and to facilitate the environmental recovery of land and water areas which have been contaminated as a result of commercial and other activities.
6. Ensure public health protection and the sanitary and epidemiological wellbeing in the Arctic in the process of developing the region.
7. Conduct health risk assessments when justifying the placement and planning the construction of industrial and transport facilities and infrastructure in the Arctic region.

*Recommendations pertaining to environmental safety:*

1. Improve legislation in the field of environmental protection, including at the IPA CIS level. Consolidate resources in the interests of environmental modernization, active exchange of successful practices and projects, as well as joint implementation of environmental initiatives.
2. Continue to unite the actions of legislative and executive bodies of the CIS Member Nations to jointly develop measures to respond and solve problems as part of the implementation of national strategies in the field of environmental protection.

The main areas of joint activities shall be:

* development of consolidated joint positions on the improvement of environmental legislation, including taking into account transnational issues;
* harmonization of common approaches to the implementation of national environmental policy, taking into account the goals of sustainable development;
* organization of the exchange of information related to sustainable development and environmental protection and the transfer of the best green technologies between the CIS Member Nations.
1. Promote successful practices, management and technological solutions implemented as part of the “Ecology” national project for possible replication by the CIS Member Nations.
2. Consider establishing a non-governmental expert group with the participation of representatives of non-profit organizations, scientific institutions and businesses from the CIS Member Nations in order to promote the pooling of efforts to develop proposals on measures to respond to environmental and climate-related challenges, as well as to monitor and provide scientific and advisory support for the implementation of decisions made at the Congress.

*Recommendations pertaining to water resource management:*

1. Continue to work to ensure equitable water allocation principles for transnational rivers and develop information interaction on emergency pollution and floods.
2. Due to the impossibility of refusing to use plastic in such areas as medicine, industrial safety or housing and communal services, not supporting the position of Western countries on limiting the extraction of primary raw materials, we consider the Institute of extended producer responsibility, as well as a number of legislative restrictions the main national instruments for combating non-recyclable and refractory waste.
3. Continue to develop and establish a ban on the use of disposable tableware, bags, sacks and bags of various types of plastic within the central ecological zone of Lake Baikal.
4. Continue to develop advanced methods for integrated water resource management, taking into account best practices and best available technologies.
5. Enhance the effectiveness of efforts to better adapt to climate-related changes to water resources, taking into account uneven geographical and seasonal distribution, increasing frequency and intensity of extreme hydrological events.
6. Facilitate an exchange of professional experience and promising ideas related to integrated water resource management.
7. 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 in global water diplomacy (encompassing aspects related to the expedited attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 6 “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”) using modern technologies, including in relation to transnational water bodies.
8. Foster transnational water cooperation which is based on equal
partnership and strategic collaboration, and which complies with universally accepted norms of international law in order to protect and rationally use transnational water bodies at all levels.

*Recommendations pertaining to forest industry:*

1. Contribute to achieving a balance of forestry, economic, environmental and social aspects in forest resource management.

2. Continue to work on mutual recognition of information from state information systems of wood accounting and integrate the said systems.

3. Foster international cooperation in forest industry, including the protection of forests from fires, pests and diseases, forest reproduction, combating illegal logging and the trade in illegally logged timber.

4. Continue cooperation in the field of science and staff training for the forest industry.

5. Promote the involvement of people and environmental organizations in public activities for forest restoration and afforestation, as well as the dissemination of knowledge about the value of forest ecosystems.

6. Develop approaches to market formation and provision of forest ecosystem services (climate, biodiversity, recreation, air, water, etc.)

*In order to build a circular economy as one of the priorities of the state policy and sustainable development:*

1. At the legislative level, define the basic concepts of the circular economy, long-term objectives, rights and obligations of market participants, including the feasibility of developing and adopting a top-level Federal Law “On Building a Circular Economy.”
2. At the regional level, adopt programs for the transition
to the circular economy.
3. At the federal level, develop and approve sectoral programs for the use of secondary resources and secondary raw materials for all sectors of the economy.
4. Extend state support measures developed during the implementation of the “Integrated System of Solid Municipal Waste Management” federal project to companies engaged in treatment and disposal of industrial waste.
5. Expand state support measures for companies engaged in treatment and disposal of industrial waste by compensation of the logistics costs directly to the producers of secondary resources and consumers of secondary raw materials.

*Recommendations pertaining to development of eco-tourism:*

1. Introduce state support measures for investment projects to develop tourism, including in the natural environment, as well as to improve the socio-economic development of territories and the welfare of the local population.
2. Monitor and analyze the development and impacts of tourism in the natural environment, including anthropogenic pressure on natural, health and recreation areas and resort and recreation areas in order to prevent negative impacts on the environment and the local population, as well as to encourage the tourist business and tourists to contribute to the preservation of nature.
3. Facilitate the formation, promotion and implementation of international projects in the field of tourism, including in the natural environment.
4. Promote the involvement of the local population in the implementation of projects in the field of tourism, including in the natural environment.
5. Introduce modern tools and digital technologies aimed at the development of tourism in the natural environment.
6. Support and contribute to the formation of research, scientific works and projects aimed at the development of tourism in the natural environment.

*Recommendations pertaining to greening of the agro-industrial sector*:

1. Promote and develop green farming practices, minimizing impact on the environment, the production of organic products, the development of common equivalent mutually recognized requirements for the production of environmentally friendly products, raw materials and food.

*Recommendations pertaining to organization of environmental education and enlightenment:*

1. When solving the problem of forming an environmental culture, development of environmental education and training, ensure the formation of environmentally responsible behavior among young people in the first place.

1. Ensure that the process of education and training in educational organizations is aimed at the formation of environmentally responsible behavior, including by incorporating in federal state educational standards relevant requirements for the formation of the basics of environmental literacy among students.
2. Consider the issue of state support for educational organizations that provide education in the field of environmental protection.
3. Develop a system of financial and non-financial incentives for the organizations that successfully implement environmental projects and programs, including in the field of environmental volunteering.
4. Consider incorporating of issues of formation of environmental culture, environmental education and training into state, federal and regional programs.
5. Collect and replicate best practices of involving children and young people in environmental activities at the federal, regional and local levels.

*Recommendations pertaining to organization of eco-volunteering:*

1. In order to systematize support measures for environmental activism at the regional level, analyze the implemented public environmental initiatives together with the All-Russian Environmental Social Movement “Ecosystem” that is being established.
2. At the federal and regional levels, develop support measures for the All-Russian Environmental Social Movement “Ecosystem” being established and its members (public organizations), as well as incentives for the most active environmental activists.
3. At the federal level, together with the Association of Volunteer Centers, the All-Russian Environmental Social Movement “Ecosystem”, and the Public Law Company “Russian Environmental Operator”, perform the following steps:

- establish a unified on-line platform for the development of environmental youth activism in integration with the unified volunteering information system DOBRO.RU;

- create a Unified Calendar Plan of all-Russian and interregional environmental projects and events.

*Recommendations pertaining to consolidation of the efforts of the state and business:*

1. Approve the approaches outlined in the Concept on Cooperation of the CIS Member Nations in the waste management of hazard classes I and II and the elimination of objects of accumulated environmental damage, and recommend that the CIS Member Nations determine the bodies responsible for its implementation.
2. Recommend the CIS Member Nations to develop national programs (projects, plans) on the elimination of objects of accumulated environmental damage, providing stable financing of measures on the elimination of objects of accumulated environmental damage, including with the attraction of international financing and private investments.
3. Recommend business community to form the Council for Professional Competence to organize effective activities in the field of environmental protection - from educational process to qualification of specialists - within the framework of the National Qualifications System as an effective mechanism of human resource management in Russia.

*Recommendations pertaining to biodiversity conservation:*

1. Expand the list of natural heritage sites and strengthen their protection, create national and international centers for the reproduction of endangered species.
2. Develop a proper understanding of the principles of the ecosystem approach, the tasks of impact assessment and compensation, and the prediction of positive effects on biodiversity conservation among the authorities and commercial entities.
3. Introduce a hierarchy of mitigation measures and the “prevent - reduce - restore - compensate” principle into management practices.
4. Promote the practice of development of national initiatives “Business and Biodiversity”, conclusion of agreements with business on biodiversity conservation.
5. Within the framework of environmental education programs, organize seminars for business representatives on the issues of biodiversity conservation.
6. Contribute to the formation and promotion of methods and technologies for biodiversity conservation in the economic activities of organizations.
7. Contribute to the formation, promotion and implementation of international projects in the field of biodiversity conservation, including rare and endangered wildlife species, primarily within transnational specially protected natural areas.