

Far Reaching Program of Development Proposed
for Northern Ethnic Minorities

Every nation and every people, whatever the size of their population, is actively participating today in the renewal of Soviet society. An example of this is the Congress of Minority Peoples of the North, which opened on March 30 in the Great Palace of the Kremlin.

Representatives of the Evenks, Chukchi, Nanais, Nivkhs, Orochi, Saami - the 26 ethnic peoples inhabiting Northern, Siberia and the Far East - have gathered in the capital. The largest population of these peoples is slightly more than 30,000, while others number only a few hundred. The pressing problems of socio-economic development, ecology, and protection of these people's national culture are at the centre of attention of those participating in this forum.

In the hall are people's deputies of the USSR, officials of ministries and government departments, the heads of local organs of power, figures from the world of science and culture, and representatives of international and national organizations of ethnic minorities from a number of foreign countries.

V.I. Vorotnikov greeted those present on behalf of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and the RSFSR Council of Ministers. The peoples of the North, Vorotnikov said, occupy a worthy place in the community of the Russian Federation and the entire Union. And one has to be particularly gratified that the indigenous population of the republic is demonstrating its vital energy. This is evidence, once again, that the process of 'perestroika' is serving to the strengthen the sovereign rights of every nation.