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**FORUM COMMITS TO IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE FOR NORTHERNERS**

WHITEHORSE – Improving the quality of life of Northern people and supporting sustainable development were the focus of discussions at the 8<sup>th</sup> Northern Forum General Assembly in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia last week.

Economic Development Minister Jim Kenyon attended the assembly which took place Sept. 26 to 28 and saw a number of program reports presented on northern issues including the environment, society and culture, sustainable development and business support services.

Kenyon attended in place of Premier Dennis Fentie, who serves on the Northern Forum as Governor for Yukon, and gave a presentation entitled ‘Yukon: An Economic Overview.’

Yukon’s housing programs were also highlighted in a presentation by Yukon Housing President and Community Services Deputy Minister Marc Tremblay, who toured Khanty-Mansiysk’s municipal and sports facilities.

Economic Development Assistant Deputy Minister Terry Hayden attended a business round table during which the Northern Forum passed a resolution to establish a network of Regional Chambers of Commerce in Northern regions.

Participants signed the Khanty-Mansiysk Declaration, which commits to its continuing work in areas such as quality of life, scientific and technical cooperation, economic development and inter-regional and international cooperation. Subject to Cabinet approval, Kenyon offered to host the 9<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Northern Forum in 2009.

The Northern Forum is a non-profit, international organization comprised of 17 Northern regional governments and addresses common political, environmental and economic issues.

Travel to Russia also presented an invaluable opportunity for the minister to meet with Canada’s Ambassador to Russia, Ralph Lysyshyn in Moscow. Discussions surrounded areas of commonality such as sports training and infrastructure endeavours.

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For more information on the Northern Forum go to: <http://northernforum.org>

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