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**Report at 13th session of the Regional meetings of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

**by Eduard Yaungad, Association of indigenous peoples *Yamal-potomkam!*** (Yamal –to its descendants!)

Region: The Arctic; Central and Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia

December, 2, 2020

Dear Madam Chairman,

My name is Eduard Yaungad. I represent the reindeer herders of Yamal. Nowadays, Yamal is home to almost 50 thousand representatives of the indigenous peoples of the North, 18 thousand of them lead a nomadic lifestyle.

I would like to tell you about the collaboration work between indigenous peoples and local authorities that has been carried out during Covid-19 pandemic. The increase in Covid-19 cases occurred in Yamal when reindeer herders had already moved to summer pastures. All nomadic families had also managed to buy food for a long period of migration. This made it possible not to visit local communities and villages at the height of the pandemic and wait out this time in the tundra. A kind of natural self-isolation of the nomadic population.

A Covid-19 information campaign was organized in Yamal combining the efforts of mass media, social networks, telephone and satellite communications. Our Association posted information about the coronavirus and recommendations on preventing the disease in social media, both in Russian and native languages of the peoples of the North. Native youth joined *Medical volunteers’* movement, delivered food packages and medicines to elders and other people needing assistance. On October, 17 one of the young activists of our association Konstantin Lapsuy was awarded the medal of the President of Russia *For selfless contribution to the volunteering all-Russian campaign #Myvmeste (*we are together)*.*

Our Association *Yamal-potomkam!* organized a charity event with the support of the regional government and industrial companies. The purpose of the campaign was to provide large nomadic families and low-income families with food and provision. In order to deliver food supplies to the tundra area helicopters and special all-terrain vehicles called Trackols were used. These vehicles are designed in a way that does not bring damage to the fragile tundra vegetation.

Indigenous children from nomadic families were brought to their parents to the tundra area for summer holidays. They were provided with clothing and food supplies for several months. In addition to payments from the federal budget, the regional authorities allocated monetary assistance to families with minors and pensioners. Payments were made automatically online thanks to the unified data bank on all Yamal residents who lead a traditional lifestyle.

The situation with COVID-19 has once again demonstrated that measures to combat the epidemic and its consequences need to be taken with the active participation and cooperation of indigenous peoples. This is the only way to meet new challenges and resolve the existing health problems. Thank you for your attention.