

**The Ministry for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection
of the Sakhalin Region**

Dear participants, venerable guests, and distinguished members of the Organizing Committee for the 1st ENCYNET Forum,

On behalf of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Sakhalin Region, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on the opening of the 1st ENCYNET Forum.

This ENCYNET Forum deals with the most important pending issues. Through the Forum, the participants will share their work experience in the area of environmental policy, draw up articles of association and action plan for the 2014 Cyber Environment Network of World Local Governments, while coming up with plans on facilitating cooperation in the field of environmental protection among the world's local governments.

I anticipate that decisions and recommendations adopted at the Forum will not only contribute to invigorating international exchanges between the Sakhalin Region and the Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, but also provide a new turning point in the development of the tourism industry and bring about additional income.

Jeju Island boasts magnificent, pristine natural beauty and that is why the numerous natural monuments of this amazing island have been included on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Sakhalin is also famous for its spectacular and abundant natural environment. However, Sakhalin's nature is extremely vulnerable and that is why the Government of the Sakhalin Region places top priority on environmental protection. A large-scale oil and gas project is currently under way in Sakhalin's continental shelf for the first time in Russia. It is taking place under extremely complex hydroclimatological conditions in an earthquake-prone area covered with ice. Furthermore, this conservation area is inhabited by valuable marine bioresources. That is why, in partnership with oil companies over the years, we have been proactively working hard to prevent and minimize the project's adverse impact on the environment. We are also ready to share our knowledge and experience with you.

I am confident that the 1st ENCYNET Forum will contribute to seeking optimal resolutions for key, imminent environmental issues by collecting problem-solving efforts from world local governments, discussing cooperation for sustainable social development and sharing the experiences of environmental protection activity.

I wish all the participants of the ENCYNET Forum good health and prosperity, as well as the enhancement of mutual benefits and cooperation.

A.V. Romanov

First Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Sakhalin Region