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**Welcome address
by the Vologda Oblast Governor O.A. Kuvshinnikov
to participants of the 9th Session of the Russia-Belarus
InterAcademy Council on the Issues of Development
of the Union State and the International Research-to-Practice
Conference “Integration within the Union State as the main tool
for the implementation of Russia and Belarus security strategy**

Dear participants of the 9th Session of the Russia-Belarus Inter-Academy Council on the Issues of Development of the Union State and the International Research-to-Practice Conference “Integration within the Union State as the main tool for the implementation of Russia and Belarus security strategy”!

I am delighted to convey my greetings to the distinguished scholars, representatives of academic science from the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Russian Academy of Sciences, representatives of the management bodies of the Union State. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the hospitable Vologda land.

The declared topic of the event is devoted to integration and security; undoubtedly, it is important and relevant for Belarus and Russia in general and for their constituent regions in particular. By restoring the links, broken after the collapse of the USSR, by opening new spheres of interaction, we use each other’s strong points, thus enhancing our security.

The Vologda Oblast and the Republic of Belarus have long-standing and extensive relations in economic sphere and other spheres of social life. We can state with confidence that the Republic of Belarus is the most important strategic partner of our region.

So we have gladly accepted the offer of the Vice President of RAS, Academician A.D. Nekipelov, to host the Session of the InterAcademy Council and the Conference in the Vologda Oblast. Especially since we already have a positive experience of holding such events: one of the previous sessions of the InterAcademy Council and the International Research-to-Practice Conference “Economic and scientific innovation cooperation of the regions of Russia and Belarus” was held in the Vologda Oblast five years ago, in June 2008.

In comparison with the CIS states, the Republic of Belarus is the leader according to the volume of trade with the Vologda Oblast with a total share of 52.4%. The Republic's share in the total foreign trade turnover of the region in 2012 amounted to 8.4%. Trade turnover between the Vologda Oblast and the Republic of Belarus was 535.2 million US dollars. The export of goods from the Vologda Oblast reached 416.4 million US dollars, and the import of goods from the Republic of Belarus amounted to 118.6 million US dollars.

Such major enterprises of the Vologda Oblast as OAO Severstal, Severstal-metiz, OAO Cherepovets Casting and Mechanical Plant, JSC Vologda Optical and Mechanical Plant, OJSC Severny Kommunar, OJSC Vologda Machine-Building Plant, CJSC Vologda Bearing Factory, LLC Agrosnab Vologodsky, OAO Sheksninskaya Selkhoztekhnika take the most active part in foreign economic relations of the Vologda Oblast and the Republic of Belarus.

The cooperation between the Vologda Oblast and the Republic of Belarus in the spheres of education, science, culture is expanding as well. It is very important that these processes involve young people, since this lays the foundation for good-neighbourly relations between our peoples. Development of humanitarian cooperation is one of our most important tasks.

The Vologda Oblast has a large Belarusian association of fellow-countrymen. Its members, maintaining close ties with the Republic of Belarus, efficiently participate in the development of the economy and cultural life of the Vologda land.

In general, the cooperation between the Vologda Oblast and the Republic of Belarus is very active, businesslike, and most importantly, systemic in its essence. We are constantly coordinating our positions by holding annual sessions at the governmental level, where the progress of the joint work is discussed.

It is necessary to point out that both parties are interested in the enhancement of cooperation and establishment of new contacts for expanding the spheres of interaction. The development of flax industry is a promising and priority area of cooperation for us.

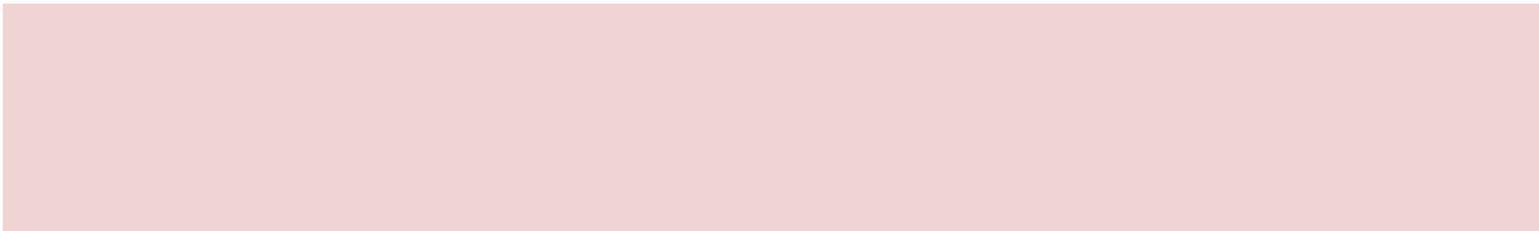
The Permanent Committee of Union State decided to develop a joint programme for the complex development of flax industry in Belarus and Russia with participation of the interested departments and science centres. It has been planned that the concept of the programme “Innovation development of flax industry of the Russian Federation and Belarus” will be approved in October – November 2013.

This union programme is aimed at innovation breakthrough and introduction of new technologies. Of course, it can be achieved only through the cooperation between the branches of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

The new programme promises a great technological breakthrough not only in the production of flax, but in the textile industry of the Union State as well, which will allow Russia and Belarus in the coming years to become reputable suppliers of linen products to the European market.

The Vologda Oblast, being the leader in handling the issues of support and development of flax cultivation in the Russian Federation, has accumulated great experience in implementing the priority investment project “Development of the Vologda Oblast flax complex through inter-sectoral and inter-territorial co-operation”. The Belarusian party, in turn, as the generally recognized leader in the sector, is searching for modern methods of enhancing the efficiency of flax industry in general. Uniting the efforts will help the two leaders rapidly and cost effectively meet the challenges of the comprehensive modernization of all the links of the production chain ‘from a field to a counter’. Furthermore, it will contribute to the introduction of advanced technologies, enhancement of competitiveness of the goods and their promotion in the foreign markets, improvement of the financial state of flax enterprises and increase of payments to the budgets.

It should also be noted that the session of the Council and the Conference are held in the framework of the “Agreement on cooperation of the Vologda Oblast Government and the Russian



Academy of Sciences in academic, scientific-educational and innovation spheres”. The planned activities include the visits to industrial enterprises aimed at defining the guidelines for the use of technological developments of the leading RAS institutions at the largest industrial enterprises in the region with purpose of production diversification and enhancement of its efficiency. Preliminary work in this regard is already going on: in April – June 2013 RAS expert groups visited the Vologda Oblast. We hope that more extended contacts will be established with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus as well.

I wish all the participants of the Conference and the Session of the InterAcademy Council fruitful work!