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**translation from Russian**

## **THE ELBRUS DECLARATION**

We, the representatives of a number of Caucasian non-governmental organisations, having met in the Russian town of Nalchik at the foot of Mount Elbrus between 19 and 26 July 1998, have established the Caucasian Forum of non-governmental organisations. In view of the fact that many of today's problems in the Caucasus stem from the insufficient development of civil society and the isolation of the peoples of the Caucasus, the Forum will adopt the following objectives:

- to strengthen trust and improve communication between the peoples of the Caucasus
- to revive Caucasian culture
- to provide support for joint civil projects aimed at promoting tolerance, improving the level of political culture, raising civil awareness, reviving the traditions of peaceful coexistence and overcoming ethnic hatred and prejudice.

The main aims of the Forum shall be:

- to ensure the possibility of regular contact and dialogue in the Caucasus
- to establish an effective communication network between all participants of the Forum
- to provide support for, and develop NGO activity
- to provide support for specific projects elaborated in accordance with the main areas of activity of the Forum.

The founding meeting of the Forum established a steering group which will coordinate the future activities of the Forum.

The Forum shall be open to non-governmental organisations representing all regions and peoples of the Caucasus and which share the main aims and areas of activity of the Forum.

The Forum would also like to express its concern in connection with the growing tension in a number of regions of the Northern Caucasus and thinks it necessary to search for means to stabilise the situation in the Caucasus.

The founding session of the Forum was made possible thanks to the Confidence-Building Programme for Georgians and Abkhaz financed in part by TACIS, and with the assistance of the international conflict resolution NGO International Alert.

Nalchik, Dolina Narzanov hotel, 24 July 1998.

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