

Education for Sustainable Development: Russian-Swedish Project

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This issue includes...

Editorial. Parameters of February: Anomalies or normal

Document on Russia's environmental policy

Governmental report "On the state of the environment and on environmental protection in the Russian Federation in 2010"

Technologies of environmental development

A "window" into the world of the subglacial lake
New specially protected natural territories in Russia

New legal acts in the field of environmental management

Increase in hydrocarbon reserves

Russian Government Award

Sustainable development on the agenda

Editorial. Parameters of February: Anomalies or normal

February 2012 will be remembered by the Russians for the unusually persistent frost, which the country has had time to forget over the past decade. Against the background of the never ceasing talk in the press about climate warming, such weather was seen by many as an anomaly rather than the norm. What the case is in reality and what to expect in the future remains unclear, since the experts express themselves both ambiguously and evasively on this subject.

In contrast to the air temperature in the atmosphere, the temperature of the political activity in Russia in February was much higher than last year. This was, above all, a reaction of discontent with the last elections to the Duma and the approach of the March presidential elections. The country has not known such a pitch of political activity of its citizens for over 20 years. For many countries in the world this is the norm, but in Russia it is rather an anomaly.

There is another characteristic sign of the past February - also neither the norm, nor an anomaly. This is the unprecedented journalistic activity of the country's undoubted political leader Vladimir Putin - seven articles in seven weeks on the most important aspects of domestic and foreign policy of the country. Here is an indicative list of these publications in the central Russian editions: "*Russia focuses - the challenges that we must answer*" (January 16), "*Russia: the national question*" (January 23), "*On our economic challenges*" (January 30), "*Democracy and the quality of the state*" (February 6), "*Building justice. A social policy for Russia*" (13 February), "*Being strong: a guarantee of national security for Russia*" (February 20) and "*Russia and the changing world*" (27 February).

It is symptomatic that in this series of publications the problems of sustainable development are not forgotten. This topic is most clearly represented in the article "Building justice ...", in which the concept of justice is interpreted as a decisive factor for sustainable development. It is noteworthy that this article, iconic for the state social policy, ends like this: "*Every ruble directed to the social sphere is to make justice. A fair system of society and economy is the main condition for our sustainable development in these years.*"

However, we cannot help but notice that the theme of environmental prerequisites and conditions for sustainable development is not represented in the mentioned series of publications by Vladimir Putin. Only in the article "On our economic challenges" it is mentioned in passing that "... *have never been as serious threats to the environment.*" Does this mean that the problem of green development will not get national priority in the period of Putin's new presidential term? And what will this be for the country -

an anomaly, or the now customary norm? February with its frosts has given many reasons for skepticism. But there are also other months in the year; maybe they will give more reasons for optimism. Particularly as these months will be Stockholm +40, Rio +20, Tbilisi +35 and other events essential to sustainable development.

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Document on Russia's environmental policy

The Russian government has approved the draft presidential decree "On the basis of state policy on environmental development of the Russian Federation until 2030" prepared by the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment. The document reflects the main global and national environmental issues and establishes strategic objectives, taking into account national and international experience in environmental protection and environmental security, and also identifies objectives and implementation mechanisms.

The objectives of the state policy in the field of environmental development is environmentally oriented economic growth, maintaining a favorable environment, biodiversity and natural resources to meet the needs of present and future generations, implementing the citizens' rights to a healthy environment, and strengthening the rule of law in environmental protection and ecological safety .

As the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment **Rinat Gizatulin** remarked: *"This is the first strategic document in modern Russia in the field of ecology, which creates a balance between economic development and environmental conservation. All interested parties have participated in its creation - from state authorities to environmental organizations, academia and business associations. "*

According to R.Gizatulin, over the last decade at multiple GDP growth, key indicators of emissions, discharges of pollutants, waste generation as a whole are stable. At the same time, the previously accumulated problems remain. To solve these problems, the state will create an effective system of governance and legal assistance in the field of environmental protection, as well as a new system of regulation of industrial and economic incentives to modernize, increasing the liability for environmental offenses. Transparent conditions and improved oversight mechanisms to collect information about the state of the environment will be created.

In the framework special attention is paid to environmentally sound waste management. For these purposes, it is proposed to organize separate collection of waste, impose strict sanctions for its storage in unauthorized locations, and additional environmental fees if a buyer purchases goods that requires environmentally safe disposal. These measures, together with the proposed ban on disposal of certain types of waste that can be recycled, would reduce the number of unauthorized landfills and create a waste recycling industry.

Other objectives stated in the document include the establishment of mechanisms for compensation for harm and elimination of the past environmental damage, restoration of damaged natural systems and biodiversity conservation. Much attention is paid to environmental education and awareness, the formation of an environmental culture in society, international cooperation and others.

The state policy in the field of environmental development focuses on the active participation of citizens in the discussion of decisions affecting their right to a healthy environment.

An action plan to implement the state policy on environmental development will be developed following the signing of the relevant draft Decree by the President of the Russian Federation.

The activities will be funded from the federal budget, the budgets of Russian Federation subjects and

local budgets, as well as extra-budgetary sources, including through public-private partnership. It is expected that after the activities the number of cities in the Russian Federation with high and very high levels of air pollution will decline from 128 in 2012 to 50 in 2020. The number of people living in such cities will decrease accordingly: from 54 to 21 million people. The increase in investment in fixed assets for environmental protection by 2020 will amount to 110%.

The draft Environmental Policy Framework has been agreed with the Russian Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Justice. 47 subjects of the Russian Federation have approved it without comment, while 31 subjects have made proposals, which are taken into account in the document. The draft Presidential Decree is fully harmonized with all international obligations of the Russian Federation and corresponds to the Action Plan on Russia's accession to the Organization for Economic Cooperation.

Source: Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

Governmental Report "On the state of the environment and on environmental protection in the Russian Federation in 2010"

In early February the official website of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation published the Governmental Report "On the state of the environment and on environmental protection of the Russian Federation in 2010". This report is the information basis for the government executive bodies in planning and carrying out environmental protection activities.

The Ministry notes that this year's delay in publishing the report was due to the need to refine the data obtained from the subjects of the Russian Federation.

The negative impact on the environment during the reporting period compared with the level of 2009 has increased marginally: by 0.5% - the total amount of pollutant emissions into the air (from stationary sources), by 3% - polluted waste water without treatment, by 6.6% - the amount of waste generated.

Compared with 2009, capturing and disposal of pollutants emitted from stationary sources increased by 2% to 75.7%.

In 2010 the following cities were included in the priority list of cities with the highest level of air pollution: Azov, Barnaul, Volgograd, Volga, Moscow, Naberezhnye Chelny, Rostov-on-Don, Solikamsk, Tver. The cities excluded from the list are: Ivanovo, Magadan, Petrovsk-Zabaikalsky, Raduzhny, Salekhard, Saratov, Tumen, Ulan-Ude, Chegdomyn. In total the Priority List includes 36 cities (2009 - 34 cities).

According to the report, the total greenhouse gas emissions in Russia amounted to 2159.3 million tons of carbon. In relation to the previous year, emissions decreased by 3.3%. The main source of emissions is the energy sector (use of fossil fuel).

The report also reflects data on intake of water from natural water bodies located in the country. In 2010, the consumption was 58 million m³, and in comparison with 2009 increased by 1.5%. Water losses in external networks for transport from sources to consumers amounted to 7 million m³, virtually unchanged from the previous year.

The area of land resources of the Russian Federation in 2010 amounted to 1709.8 million ha (excluding

internal sea waters and territorial sea). The area of forest land increased by 7.3 million hectares (1115, million ha), while the land area of the water fund remained unchanged and amounted to 28 million hectares.

Much of the world's reserves of the most important types minerals have been found and prospected in the bowels of Russia. In 2010, the growth of hydrocarbon reserves was as follows: crude oil and condensate - 750 million tons (2009 - 620 million tons), free gas - 810 billion m³ (2009 - 580 billion m³). 74 hydrocarbon deposits have been discovered.

It is assumed that the State report for 2011 will be published already in the end of the third quarter of 2012 in connection with the amendments to the Federal Law "On Environmental Protection" in regard to establishing the procedure for preparation and distribution of the annual state report on the status of the environment and environmental protection.

The state report for 2011 will be prepared in a new format: using environmental performance indicators harmonized with the indicators used in EU countries and other regions and reflecting the interaction of economic, ecological and social systems.

Source: Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

Technologies for environmental development

One of the elements of the economic modernization announced by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev is the so-called *technology platforms*. It is believed that the idea of technology platforms is borrowed from the West. It is known that in the EU countries there are 35 of these. Russia has so far formed 28 technology platforms, one of which was named "*Environmental development technologies*".

The initiators of this platform are the Moscow State Lomonosov University, the Russian State Hydrometeorological University and the National Research University "Higher School of Economics". The project is coordinated by the Russian Geographical Society (RGS) and personally by Academician **N. Kasimov** - First Vice-President of the RGS, chairman of the Public Council under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Dean of the Faculty of Geography.

By its conception, this technology platform is a tool for cooperation between private and public sectors to address pressing problems in the environmental field. All interested organizations can become members of the technological platform. Today the platform brings together more than 100 institutions: universities, research institutes, design, consulting and engineering companies, manufacturing companies, development institutions and foundations, government bodies. The platform's founding conference was held in November 2011. A Supervisory Board was elected and a steering committee for the platform formed. A Scientific and Technical Council is being created; it will determine the direction of the interaction, develop recommendations for the strategic development of the platform to assess the effectiveness of the work, etc. Active international cooperation will be part of the platform Environmental development technologies.

There are many environmental problems today, says academician N. Kasimov. But the most important thing now is to complete the formation of proper legislation on the use of natural resources, waste management, environmental monitoring, impact assessment of climate change and economic adaptation to these changes.

Waste and environmental damage caused by them is perhaps one of the major problems that exist in Russia. One example is our presence in the Arctic. There is a program for cleaning the Arctic islands and

the coastal zone from the accumulation of metal, barrels, lubricants etc. The problem of waste management is extremely urgent and requires a radical legislative solution and financial support.

Several regions have problems with getting clean water. This is quite closely linked to industrial and municipal wastes and effluents. Much attention is now on the transboundary transport of pollutants. Transport agents can be divided into two groups - water flows (rivers) and the wind, the prevailing direction of which depends on the characteristics of atmospheric circulation in a given region. Thus, European Russia because of the predominance of western transfer of air masses is influenced by transboundary transport of pollutants from Western Europe. There is also a multi-faceted problem of cross-border flows of water coming from abroad.

One remarkable feature of the platform is its complexity and breadth. This has both pluses and minuses. But the very fact of its creation and the formation of a community that wants to cooperate in solving environmental problems certainly deserves attention. The start is good. The platform's further work to a great extent will depend not so much of the organizers, as of the platform participants themselves.

Source: Own information. See also: <http://www.rg.ru/2012/01/24/platforma.html> (in Russian)

A "window" into the world of the subglacial lake

On February 5th, 2012 at 20.25 GMT on Russian inland Antarctic station Vostok an event occurred, which had kept the international scientific community, and many domestic and foreign media waiting in suspense: the glaciological-drilling detachment of the 57th Russian Antarctic Expedition of the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute of Hydromet penetrated into the relict subglacial lake in the deep ice borehole at the level of depth 3769.3 m. This event was confirmed by the numerical data of drilling parameters, taken by a video camera, the raised fluid level of fluid in the borehole, and also by the extracted water samples and cores of lake ice, which is stockpiled in the Vostok station's core storage.

As expected according to the technology for clean penetration into Subglacial Lake Vostok, developed in 2000 in Saint-Petersburg State Mining University, and the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute of Roshydromet, the rise of water from the lake in the bottom of the borehole occurred at an altitude of about 40 m from the bottom surface of the glacier. Less dense than lake water, the drilling fluid, consisting of a mixture of kerosene and freon, began to rise rapidly up the borehole. As a result, about one and a half cubic meters of this liquid poured through the top surface of the borehole into special trays installed in the drilling sector.



The specialists of the 57th Russian Antarctic Expedition's glaciological-drilling detachment, who on 5 February 2012 made the entry into the waters of relict Lake Vostok, located beneath the ice of Antarctica.

Thus, the technology theoretically calculated 11 years ago for clean penetration to the subglacial lake has been fully confirmed in practice. The drilling works and scientific research were carried out by scientists and specialists of the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute of Roshydromet, St. Petersburg State Mining Institute and the Russian Academy of Sciences.

On February 6th the seasonal work of the 57th Russian Antarctic Expedition at Vostok station was finalized and the glaciological-drill team flew to the Russian Antarctic station Progress for further boarding the scientific expedition vessel Akademik Fedorov.

The ultra-deep ice drilling and entry into Lake Vostok is the greatest global scientific achievement of Russian scientists and specialists. The drilling works were carried out in the harshest climates on Earth (the absolute minimum temperature recorded at Vostok is -89.2 degrees, the station is situated at an altitude of over 3,400 meters above sea level). The area of the lake is 16,000 square kilometers, its length is about 300 km, and its width 50 km, the depth reaches 1200 meters. In size Lake Vostok is comparable to Lake Ladoga.

According to the analysis of ice cores temperature variations over 420,000 years have been recorded, which is crucial for understanding the causes of current global climate change. Unique thermophile bacteria, characteristic of the biodiversity of geyser hot springs, have been discovered in the core. This fact is evidence of the rift origin of the lake basin, at the bottom of which the existence of geothermal flows is possible, and, accordingly, unique flora and fauna.

Further studies will provide new knowledge about the processes of evolution of living organisms in natural environments outside contact with the earth's atmosphere over tens of millions of years, to understand the geological processes in the radical cover of Antarctica to the epoch of glaciation, and to develop technologies and engineering solutions to find living organisms on other objects of the Solar system.

Source: The Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring

New specially protected natural territories in Russia

Russia's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has begun implementing the *Concept of development of specially protected natural territories of federal significance until 2020*. In 2012 two new conservation areas will be established: Ingenmanlandsky (Leningrad region) and Shaitan-Tau (Orenburg Region). This year six national parks will also be established: Beringia (Chukotka Autonomous District), Leopard Land (Primorye), Ladoga Skerries (Karelia), Onega Pomorye (Arkhangelsk region), Chikoy (Transbaikal region), and Shantar Islands (Khabarovsk territory).

In addition there are plans to expand the territory of the nature reserves Sikhote-Alin (Primorye), North Ossetia (Republic of North Ossetia-Alania), Astrakhan (Astrakhan region), Teberdinsk (Karachaevo-Cherkessia), Dagestan (Republic Dagestan), Hopersky (Voronezh region), Caucasian (Krasnodar Territory, the Republic of Adygea).

In the period from 2013 to 2019 it is planned to create one reserve per year, two reserves are expected to be formed in 2020. Reserve security systems will operate in the territories of the newly created protected areas: Vasyuganskiy (Tomsk, Novosibirsk Region, 2013), Barabinskiy (Novosibirsk Region, 2014), Beloozersk (Tyumen, 2015), Dzhidinsky (Republic of Buryatia, 2016), Saratov steppe (Saratov Region, 2017), Srednekurilsky (Sakhalin Region, 2018) Steppe (Omsk, 2019), Bolshoye Tokko and Bear Islands (Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), 2020).

5 out of 14 national parks expected to be created next year, will be in the European part of Russia:

Sengilevskie mountains (Ulyanovsk Region, 2013), Atarskaya Luka (Kirov Region, 2014), Pridesyansky (Bryansk Region, 2014), Khibiny (Murmansk region, 2015), Samur (Republic of Dagestan, 2020). In addition, it is planned to expand the park Panayarvi in Karelia in 2013.

The other national parks created are: Zingalga (Chelyabinsk Region, 2014), Kurgan (Kurgan Region, 2015), Lena Pillars (Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), 2015), Kodar (Transbaikal region, 2016), Tokinsko-Stanovoy (Amur Region, 2016), Koygorodsky (Republic of Komi, 2016), Gornaya Kolyvan and Togul (Altay, 2020).

We recall that the Concept of development of specially protected natural territories of federal significance until 2020 was approved by the Prime Minister of Russia Vladimir Putin in December 2011. Its aim is to improve governance in the organization and functioning of specially protected areas (PAs) in the interests of sustainable development, environmental safety, protection of biological and landscape diversity, conservation and rational use of natural and cultural heritage.

When creating the Concept the experience of management and the main results of development of the federal system of protected areas over the past 20 years were taken into account.

Source: Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

New legal acts in the field of environmental management

In 2012 Russia's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment will develop 48 drafts of normative legal acts. The Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation Yuri Trutnev has approved the departmental plan for the Ministry's norm-setting activities in 2012.

The document envisages to develop federal laws aimed at the legislative regulation of the order of tenders and auctions for subsoil use, the establishment of clear and unambiguous grounds for refusal to accept applications for participation in auctions and tenders, clarification of the authority of bodies of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Russia's, introduction of differentiated approach to object to measures of state regulation in the field of environmental protection according to environmental hazard, resolution of issues of state supervision in the field of hydrometeorology and establishing an effective system of state supervision of hunting.

In addition, the departmental plan provides for the development of other projects in order to implement the rules adopted in the 2011 federal laws. In particular, it foresees the preparation of acts for the operation of a unified system of ecological monitoring, objective assessment of the negative impact of businesses on the environment, ensure their accountability, the regulation of hunting production control and supervision over the observance of the regime of protected areas. In addition, it provides for the development of documents aimed at ensuring Russia's international obligations in the field of environmental protection, the elimination of problems and gaps in the legislation of the scope of the Ministry, identified by law enforcement, and the development of interagency electronic interaction.

The adoption of projects planned for development in 2012 will enhance the transparency of public administration in the sphere of nature and the environment, optimize compliance and enforcement and permitting activities within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Russia.

During the State Duma's spring session of the current year it is planned to consider the second reading of a number of key bills introduced to the Duma by the Government in 2011. They relate to the establishment of a new system of regulation in field of environmental protection, introducing the best

available technology, economic incentives activities in the field of waste management, protection of the marine environment from oil pollution, optimize the management of protected areas. It is also planned to review legislation to address issues of economic development of territories with danger of flooding, the establishment of Russian legal entities and individuals in the Antarctic, amendments to the Subsoil Law, aimed at transferring all law enforcement functions in respect of subsoil areas of local importance to the subjects. In addition, the most pressing problems identified by the practice of the new law on hunting will be addressed.

In total during the spring session of the State Duma it is planned to review eight draft laws developed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Russia, and to accept seven of them.

Source: Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

Increase in hydrocarbon reserves

In 2011, the increase in forecasted reserves of hydrocarbon raw material reached 100%. During the regional geological investigations particular attention was paid to expanding the resource potential of the long-term and poorly studied northern and eastern regions of the country and the adjacent waters, obtaining the data needed to support the outer edge of the continental shelf. According to the results of this work, the area of Russia's continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean could increase by 1.2 million km², which ensures the right of Russia to the development of the richest hydrocarbon reserves.

This the head of Rosnedra, **Anatoly Ledovskikh**, reported to the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Yuri Trutnev at the concluding meeting of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Russia. According to him, the greatest number of objects of geological exploration for oil and gas were in the Siberian Federal District (27), the Far East Federal District and the continental shelf (each 13 sites). Subsoil plots with an area of 400 thousand square kilometers each have been prepared for licensing. The volume of the localization of forecast resources in the category D1 LOC was 4000 million tons of standard fuel. According to preliminary information subsoil resource companies have opened 54 new oil and gas deposits in 2011. The expected increase in crude oil and condensate is 700 million tons, in gas 1.1 trillion m³.

The liquid hydrocarbon production in 2011, according to the Energy Ministry of Russia, amounted to 511 million tons, and the gas production to 638 billion m³. A. Ledovskikh stressed that since 2005 the growth in hydrocarbon reserves exceed the annual rate of extraction. In total during the period 2005-2011, the production of oil and condensate amounted to 3.2 billion tons, and the increase in reserves 4.7 billion tons. Natural gas production was 4.2 trillion m³, and the increase in reserves 5.4 trillion m³.

In 2012 12.5 billion rubles from the federal budget will be spent on exploration for oil and gas (compared with 8.7. bln in 2011). This work will be carried out on 156 sites - 80 of them are new. The increase in forecast resources category D1 is planned to be 6000 million tons of standard fuel.

Trutnev noted that an absolute advantage of the work of the Federal Agency for Subsoil is achieving expanded reproduction of the main types of subsoil resources, including hydrocarbon materials. Among the important tasks for the future is to increase the efficiency of development of the continental shelf of the Russian Federation.

Source: Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

Russian Government Award

By decree № 146-r of February 6, 2012 of the Government of the Russian Federation, the work "Development and implementation of the state geographically distributed system of space monitoring of the environment" received the Russian Government Award 2011 in the field of science and technology. The title "Laureate of the Russian Federation Government Award in the field of science and technology" was awarded to:

Vasily Asmus, director of the Research Centre for Space Hydrometeorology "Planet"; **Valery Solovyov**, head of department; **Alexander Uspensky**, chief scientific officer; the employees of that agency; **Sergey Avdyushin**, chief scientific officer of the Institute of Applied Geophysics named after Academician E.K.Fedorov; **Alexander Bedritsky**, advisor to the President of the Russian Federation; **Valery Bondur**, director of Research center for aerospace monitoring; **Valery Dyadyuchenko**, deputy head of the Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring; **Valery Stasenko**, department head of the same service; **Mikhail Novikov**, chief designer of on-board information systems of the Scientific and production corporation "Space systems for monitoring, information management and electromechanical systems" named after A.G.Iosifyan; **Viktor Sadovnichy**, rector of Moscow State Lomonosov University.

The work is dedicated to the creation and use (1992-2010), in accordance with government regulations, of the state geographically distributed system of space monitoring in the European (Moscow-Obninsk, Dolgoprudny), Siberian (Novosibirsk) and Far East (Khabarovsk) satellite centers "SRC" Planeta "the federal level, of the Roshydromet implementing a closed continuous technological cycle of planning, receiving, processing, archiving, and providing consumers with satellite information to solve the tasks of ecology and environmental management, hydro-meteorology and geophysics, control of emergency situations, and the study of global changes on Earth and in its climate.

As a result of scientific and technological research, for the first time requirements have been formulated, the concept and architecture developed and a system created and put into operation that implements cross-cutting technology of satellite data based on the latest achievements of science. The combination of powerful modern equipment for receiving satellite data (40 systems), developed methodological and mathematical software, global and local networking (more than 900 servers and computers in a single network), updated databases and data archives have made it possible to take the complex and resource-intensive process of working with satellite information to a new level of efficiency. At the same time the maximum degree of harmonization of the system elements has been achieved, as well as their high level of reliability, adaptability of interfaces, which has provided for the first time, inter alia, access to operational data with global coverage of foreign satellites.

The system by volume of data (over 280 GB / day), received from 16 foreign and domestic satellite earth observation, the spectrum of tasks and range of information products produced (more than 120 species per day), the size of the data archive, which has the status of State Fund of the Russian Federation, the number of consumers (more than 460) of the federal and regional level is the largest in Russia and one of the largest in the world, and in coverage the operational monitoring of the Earth's surface space (more than one fifth of land), is the biggest in the world. In the combination of qualities that meet world standards, the system has no analogues in Russia and is used as a base state system to inform federal authorities, as well as fulfill the obligations of Russia in the international exchange of data.

The development and commissioning of a geographically distributed system of the new generation is a significant achievement of national science and technology and a large contribution to the development of Russian economy on the innovative route. The total economic impact created by the use of the system is about 12 billion rubles a year.

Source: The Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring

Sustainable development on the agenda

One of the structural units of the Public Chamber (PC) of the Russian Federation is the Institute for Sustainable Development. On February 2 employees of the institute gathered for a meeting to determine the activities for the new year.

On the agenda were the traditional issues: the transition from raw materials to innovation economy, the priorities of sustainable development, energy efficiency, modernizing the economy, climate change mitigation, all measures that would fit the growing needs of the population for the natural features of the planet.

"There is now awareness of the necessity to move away from raw materials-based economy and move on to one based on innovation; now this should begin to be embodied at the level of political decision-making," said **Vladimir Zakharov**, head of the PC's Institute for Sustainable Development. "Statements on the transition to "green" economy have been heard from the top leadership of the country, but I see no implementation of the proposals into political solutions."

According to the environmentalist, about thirty regions have established institutions for sustainable development, somewhere only nominally, however, people are interested in discussing the topic. Among the most "advanced" in understanding environmental problems, as usual, are the Republic of Tatarstan, Altay territory, and Tomsk region.

According to a member of the Institute, professor **Gennady Yagodin**, effective introduction of various ideas into the human consciousness, including environmental ideas, takes place in school, but there, attention is not given to this issue, and the environment thus remains "left out of the equation."

Gennady Yagodin described how the so-called family project on energy conservation can be implemented, where the whole family is involved in the process of saving energy, together with the school child.

"The president has repeatedly given instructions to explore the environmental issue in the schools", said Gennady Yagodin, "but receiving formal replies with no relation to real changes in this area."

He also highlighted the environmental themes' unpopularity at all levels, and quoted the American scientist Dennis Meadows, saying that the term "sustainable development" just isn't sexy enough. Perhaps, the media think so too, and therefore, lament the environmentalists, the topic does not become popular and journalists do not contribute to its actualization.

Sergei Bobylev, professor of the Faculty of Economics of Moscow State Lomonosov University, said that declarations and intentions more and more often disagree with actions. "This is a major problem in the environmental field in Russia," noted Sergei Bobylev.

The environmentalists have no choice but to continue working even in this farce-like atmosphere, to continue to draw attention to environmental problems and propose solutions in order to preserve the earth for future generations.

Source: Press service of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation
