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The Ways to Solve Ecological Problems in Azerbaijan at the Beginning of the XXI Century

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Abstract

Since the 1990s years, after the Republic gained its independence, the natural resources and environment of Azerbaijan has been in hard condition. For eliminating the ecological tensivity of the Republic, several plans and projects were put up and carried out. At last the positive results were obtained.

Keywords: ecological problems, environmental protection, oil pollution, biodiversity, desertification, action plan, state programs.

Introduction

Like all countries of the world, Azerbaijan also confronts environmental problems of different character. Preserving of ecological balance, rational use of resources, and protection of water, air and earth from pollution in our planet is universal problem. Undoubtedly, the solution of these problems is one of the strategic challenges standing in front of Azerbaijan, too. Planned and long-term action plans, a large amount of state investments are required for coping with that challenge. It should be noted that, the protection of ecological balance did not predominate during the Soviet reign in Azerbaijan[4]. As well as the grievous problems which our country faced after gaining independence did not allow paying particular attention or making investments to ecology. In the last century as a result of using uncomplicated technologies 30000 or 35000 hectare areas were polluted with oil, consequently severe ecological aftereffects occurred in capital Baku, the coastal areas of the Caspian Sea, Sumgait and other places. But, in recent years the beginning of rapid economic development gave an opportunity to the solution of ecological problems and environmental protection become one of the main priorities of the state for the first time during some decennials. Today Azerbaijan is busy for solving the ecological problems from the past (Soviet period). During the last 8-10 years the large scale of state programs, great projects which required billions of manats directed to the improvement of the environmental situation was carried out. Such kind of large scaled actions are carried out for the first time during last decennials in Azerbaijan' history and these actions show their results now.

Base of the ecological programs implemented in Azerbaijan during the recent 10 years has been put in 2003. That year President of Azerbaijan had approved 2 national programs "On ecologically sustainable social-economic development" and "On restoration and increasing of forests", further during 2003-2004 the following 3 state programs "Efficient usage and

development of natural stone stock in Absheron peninsula”, “On efficient usage of summer-winter pasture and greeneries and prevention of desertification” and “On development of hydrometeorology in Azerbaijan Republic” and all these programs are implemented so far.

The five-year plan which is the turning point for the solution of Republic’s environmental problems has great importance. But the most important step done in this direction is considered “Complex Action Plan for 2006-2010 on improvement of ecological conditions in Azerbaijan Republic [www.webcity host...] [8]

Projects directed on improvement of ecological conditions, including cleaning of polluted lakes from oil spills and sewerage waters around Baku city, its drying are reflected in “New State Program on socio-economic development of Baku city and its settlements”, approved in 2011. The International Pesticide Forum was held in Azerbaijan, Gabala in 2011. More than 120 experts who came from more than 40 countries participated there. The capacious information exchange among these Forum countries organizations and donors made the determination of all state institutions and private sectors together [www. Timeturk.com] [6].

In ensuring of ecological balance for the capital of Azerbaijan, the Caspian Sea has a separate role. But unsettling of legal status of the Caspian Sea restricts the multilateral actions for prevention it from pollution, protection of rare fauna [5]. Despite of it Azerbaijan is a country that spends large investments, creates necessary infrastructure on unilateral form for protecting the Caspian Sea from pollution, especially takes the measures in direction of saving sturgeon, one of the rare fish species of the world from perishing. These activities have become wider in recent few years.

Concrete activities are implemented in direction of realization of tasks provided in Decree of the President of Azerbaijan signed in June 20, 2007 “On some measures for protecting of the Caspian Sea from pollution” for improvement of ecological situation in the Caspian. Basing on this decree, modulus type local waste water purification devices were installed on the coasts of the Caspian Sea, meeting the international standards. The same devices consist of equipments made in Italy, USA, Germany, Taiwan, Turkey, and France and were completed in modulus in Turkey. These devices if we take into account oil removing equipment, in general has a capacity of cleaning of 4070 m³ of waste water.

Part of the devices has been installed in the Absheron peninsula’s settlements of Bilgah, Buzovna and Mardakan and already five stations of the system of protecting of the ecological environment of the Caspian Sea carry out activity. Thanks to it polluted waters are cleaned from ingredients having negative impact on environment and human health (including in some cases from bacteria of intestine at rate of 2,3 million pieces per litre and organic pollutants exceeding the norm for 100 times) and are flown to depth of water of 250-300 meters. Monitoring carried out showed the reduction of level of pollution of water of the Caspian Sea within a short time. It is necessary to note that about 1 billion manats were spent for creation of infrastructure for purification of polluted waters flown to the Caspian just in 2010. Water purification works at present are continued in the direction of Sumgait city. Azerbaijan is only country among Caspian littoral states that implements complex measures on cleaning of pollution in sea and its water area. Continuing of these measures in the next years will result with more cleansing of the Caspian water area and Absheron peninsula will be removed from sources of polluting of the Caspian Sea.

Besides the cleaning of the oil-polluted soils, the keeping of harmful materials in the factories is prevented. The prevention of the pollution of the environment was not priority problem in the past times during oil production. But policy of Azerbaijani president directed on elimination of ecological problems had changed the attitude to it. Now it was assigned to oil producing companies to avoid pollution of environment. This problem for has been turned to one of the basic priorities for Azerbaijan State Oil Company. The main direction of “Ecol Engineering Services” CJSC’s activity plan is the improvement of ecological situation in Azerbaijan, especially in the field of oil industry.

One of measures directed to improve the ecological situation in Azerbaijan and provide the long-term ecological safety in the country was adoption of State Programs on alternative and renewable energy sources for the first time.

Order of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic has been signed about affirming in 2004 of the "The State Program on using of alternative and renewable energy sources in Azerbaijan Republic", programs on using of alternative and renewable energy sources already give its yield and first wind electric station was launched in the territory of the Gobustan region of the country in 2011.

One of the most important ecological projects implemented in Azerbaijan in recent years is building of the plant based on the newest technologies for burning household wastes in Baku [www.timeturk.com]. This plant is considered to be the biggest plant of this type according to capacity of production in the Eastern European and CIS space. This plant being built with application of 4G technology will meet all severe requirements in the field of protection of environment in EU.

One of the important stages for the improvement of ecological situation in Azerbaijan is year 2010 has been declared as "Year of Ecology" by President Ilham Aliyev. This campaign has allowed involving the wider community for environment problems, strengthening by all state and public institutes of ecological measures. Millions trees have been planted in the frame of Year of ecology in the capital and other big cities, regions, social discussions have been held on environment problems and other initiatives have been realized.

Ecology and Natural Resources Ministry co-organized with Environmental Program of UNO in 7th of July in Gabala with the presence of ecology and environment ministers and deputy ministers of 30 countries in the region of East Europe and Central Asia, was held the international conference on the biodiversity.

According to the local office of APA, the Minister of Ecology and Environmental Sources Husein Bagirov who participated in the conference gave detailed information about the doing works on protection and development of biodiversity.

According to the minister's speech, Azerbaijan can be added to the list of countries which took serious steps for reaching the objectives of Biological Biodiversity Convention. H. Bagirov emphasized that specially protected natural territories convene about 4, 5 % of the republic's territory in 2003, but now that figure was increased to 10,1 %. During the last 3 years reforestation activities were held in the area of 32211 hectare.

Azerbaijan Republic has the richest natural resources in the Caucasus Region. Azerbaijan has a particular place among the world countries for its biodiversity. Many species of animals and plants are collected there. The large number of plant species found in the world infiltrate in a small area like Azerbaijan.

About 4500 spices of supreme, spore flowering-plants grew in Azerbaijan are combined in 125 groups and 920 varieties. The plant spices found in Azerbaijan form the amount of 66 % of plants which grew in the Caucasus region. Besides the spices of plants widespread in the Caucasus and other regions, there are about 240 endemic plant spices characteristic to the small regions of Azerbaijan.

The wildlife in Azerbaijan is colorful related to the diversity of natural condition. 104 species of mammals, 394 species of birds, 10 species of amphibians, 54 species of reptiles, 1 species of round-mouth, 101 species of fish and more than 25000 invertebrates are known in the territory of Azerbaijan Republic. "The Red Book" of Azerbaijan Republic is the state document about the condition of the rare and endangered wild animals and plant species. The present "Red Book" consists of 6 parts.

The environmental director of Europe bureau of UNO's Environmental Program Cristof Buyve mentioned that the future factors must be took into consideration for maintaining all systems, in his speech in Gabala. According to him, we must create a foundation to the future generations for the understanding of this wealth. Cristof Buyve considered that, the year 2010 declared "The Ecology year" in Azerbaijan coincide with "The Biodiversity year" in the world and it is a significant event. The video speech of the team leader of UNO's Green Agriculture Pavan Sudkewin was heard.

The issues related to the protection of biodiversity in the region of Central Asia and East Europe, the main topics on the plane of region and country are analyzed in the conference with the presence of the environmental ministers and deputy ministers of Macedonia, Germany, Georgia, Romania, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Turkmenistan, Bulgaria, Turkey, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Russia and other countries.

As a part of the conference, on the themes of “Green Economy”, “The Economy of Ecosystems and Biodiversity”, “Specially Protected Areas and Ecological Grid, Reducing of Poverty in the Surrounding Communities” and “The Strategy Plan and Objectives of Biodiversity after 2010: The Priorities to Europe Region” 3 round tables were held.

The 7th of May in 2010, with the attempt of IDEA (International Dialogue for Environmental Action) and with the organizational support of Haydar Aliyev Foundation and Haydar Aliyev Center the summit was held in the Haydar Aliyev Center on the topic of “Biodiversity of The Caucasus”.

The First Lady of Azerbaijan and the President of Haydar Aliyev Foundation Mehriban Aliyeva and the vice-President of the Foundation and the founder and CEO of IDEA Leyla Aliyeva took part in the conference.

Leyla Aliyeva spoke about the importance of protecting the nature in the early ages and she said that IDEA joins young people around itself. She mentioned that, the protection of environment not only in our native country but also in the whole region and the projects on the protection of flora and fauna are carried out by IDEA. Among them “The great 5 of Caucasus” which paid attention to the protection of the 5 endangered animals – brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), antelope (*Gazella subgutturosa*) and Caucasian leopard (*Panthera Pardus saxicolor*) is of great importance.

Leyla Aliyeva emphasized that more than 3 million trees are planted and the classes are created at schools within the projects implemented. The other important qualities of IDEA are the presentation of projects in literary and creative form.

The founder and CEO of IDEA mentioned that, the restore and protection of endangered species is the main objective of us. We are working together on this issue in a number of international organizations. The membership of Azerbaijan to the Organization of Protecting Environment is a joyous case.

As the result of some actions done by state in direction of improvement of water supply of population of Azerbaijan with ecologically clean water the installation of modulus type water purification devices begun in 2007-2008 Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, and in 100 settlements in many of them these devices are already used by population. In view of positive results of supply of the population with drinkable water thanks modulus type water purification devices according to Order of the President of Azerbaijan Republic signed in 2008 these works were continued and 2 million manats were allotted for installation of modulus type water purification devices in the Kur and Araz Rivers banks and in 200 residential areas.

One of the important projects made and being made in the direction of ecology in Azerbaijan is projects aimed at supply of capital and other residential areas with ecologically clean drinkable water. And Oguz-Qabala-Baku water pipeline, the construction of which begun in 2005 and ended in December, 2010 is considered as a historical event in the direction of solution of the problem of drinkable water faced by capital Baku, Absheron peninsula during years. About 1 billion manats from the State Budget have been spent for carrying out of this project. The ultimate goal of the water-piping project Oghuz-Qabala-Baku is supply of water to Baku from underground water sources of Oguz- Gabala with 5 cubic metres per second and so to provide the population with high quality, clean water from ecological point of view. According to estimations after completion of works of reconstructing of the water distribution networks in Baku and surrounding settlements this pipeline will be able to provide 75 % of the capital population with drinkable water [www.azer.balasi] [7].

Desertification is one of the modern problems. We speak excitedly about the decaying of biodiversity as well as the colors of biodiversity and nature. [Hasan Aliyev] [4].

Several measures are held for preventing desertification. Most of our scientists did many works gave their suggestions for preventing the desertification of the biggest winter grazing Ceyrancel-Acinohur and other territories. [Ahmedova] [1]. In 2004, in this territory The State Reserve of Eldar Pine was created in the territory of 1686 hectare, which Eldar Pine increases its territory in the rocks in a naturally. [Sevda Ahmedova] [1]. In the last 10 years the number and area of reserves and game reserves are increased by the state.

Implementation of large scale works during last few decades in Azerbaijan on direction of solution of environmental problems, the public policy directed on improvement of the ecological situation are important composition part of the long-term development strategy. Because without healthy environment there cannot be a healthy man that organizes the base of the development but from other side pell-mell exhausting of the natural stocks, problems arisen at result of violation of balance in the nature create a danger for future generations.

Result

In the last 20 years the ecological condition in Azerbaijan has improved. The large scale of investments was spent for the replacement of old technology equipment with new ones in the large cities, the preparation of implements of great projects by the government, the public environmental awareness, the improvement of the Caspian Sea and its coasts' ecological condition. As a result many achievements were obtained in the ecological condition of the Republic.

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