

The Defender' Assessment of the RA Ministry of Nature Protection Activities in 2011

The revealed problems and registered achievements during 2011 in the area of responsibility of the RA Ministry of Nature Protection are presented below, but not exhaustive.

Shortcomings and problems identified

- Damage to the environment done in the result of activities of people and first of all economic entities is very concerning. Only according to the official data of 2011, 5 cases of environmentally harmful activities were revealed, when there was not any positive conclusion on investigation of environmental impact.
- Destruction of green spaces in the Republic of Armenia did not stop, particularly usage of forests (forest lands) for the implementation of various economic activities- moreover without a proper assessment of appropriate resources and estimation of environmental impacts. Cases of illegal logging continued, which weren't protocoled by the corresponding structures of the Ministry and corresponding administrative proceedings were not launched.
- One worrying issue, which coincides with mining and has environmental impact, is continuously increasing wastes and tailing as a result of the mentioned activities. The Ministry did not properly deal with analysis of lands (tailing, piles of metal mines) in the territory of Armenia broken and degraded as a result of mining industry.
- In certain cases the Ministry failed in the organizational process of informing the society about planned changes of life environment. And in some cases draft legal acts were not discussed with public institutions.
- During 2011 the "Hot Line" service of the RA Ministry of Nature Protection registered 36 calls. Such a low ratio evidences both about low level of awareness of the society, and lack of confidence towards the Ministry.

Positive Developements

- The stable rising tendency of the lake Sevan level has been preserved, and public beaches were set up at the lake.
- Construction activities of the small Hydro Power Station on the river nourishing waterfall "Trchkan" are suspended, and the waterfall has been included into the list of monuments of nature of Armenia as a hydrographic monument of a special aesthetic value.
- Some projects for the improvement of forest area were implemented in Armenia with the support of several international donor organizations.

**Karen Andreasyan,
Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia**

The list of the identified positive developments, gaps and shortcomings is not exhaustive.

The introduced Chapter (4) of the HRD Annual Report 2011 is available in full at http://pashtpan.am/pages/downloadPdf/file_id/608.

The HRD Annual Report 2011 was developed based on the complaints received by the Staff of the Human Rights Defender, legislation analysis, trustworthy and non-disclaimed publications in press, reports of the international and local organizations as well as information received during the interviews with field specialists and human rights defenders.