

The feeling among the Soviet and foreign participants was one of alarm: the area of the forests is shrinking and their condition is getting worse. Industrial pollutants are causing impoverishment of the species composition, the structure and the productivity of the forests. This may adversely affect the state of the biosphere as a whole. "I was shaken by what I saw on the Kola Peninsula", said Assistant Professor Bengt Neilgard of Lund University in Sweden. "The northern forests of the USSR are in danger. Precipitation of heavy metals and sulphur dioxide is poisoning the trees, animals, insects and birds. Nickel is a toxic element. It is mutagenic and carcinogenic. The impression I formed is that the people of Monchegorsk are not yet aware of the extent to which their environment has been affected. Nowhere in Europe have I seen such widely affected tracts of forest."

The forum of forest scientists, in the opinion of its participants, made for a useful exchange of ideas, thoughts and hopes for the preservation of the forested zone of the plant.

The "Belomorsk Declaration" supports the drafting and adoption of an international convention and placing the issue of the preservation of northern forests on the agenda of the United Nations World Conference on the Protection of the Environment, to be held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

The symposium appealed to international organizations, governments, national scientific institutions and private funds to support the idea of implementating a plan for the northern forests, and also to redouble their efforts with respect to the conservation, rational use and regeneration of the northern forests - an important factor in achieving a stable environment in the interests of human survival.