

He noted that only American participants in the February World Bank mission expressed specific interest in water quality issues and projects.

He pointed out that the National Pollution Abatement Fund (NPAF) could eventually be the repository for all bilateral funds concerning tendering, procurement, and management for environmental projects, and that preference would be given to Canadian firms for such projects if Canada contributes funds to the NPAF.

He noted that the World Bank is planning a seminar on Environmental Impact Assessment in Moscow to be held at the end of May or early June, concerning oil and gas sector issues such as recovery of associated gas, pollution prevention from world development projects, protection of indigenous peoples, and health and safety issues, especially in the Tyumin Region.

Concerning the project component dealing with the Lake Baikal Region, in which the government of Canada has a particular interest, he noted that the statute establishing the Lake Baikal Commission has not yet been finalized, but that Alexander Yablokov, President Yeltsin's senior advisor on ecology, may become the head of the commission. Mr. Yablokov has not yet accepted the appointment, and according to his senior advisor, he may not be the final candidate.