

## **A LANDMARK RESOLUTION ON COMBATING EROSION**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR and the Council of Ministers of the USSR have adopted an important resolution 'On Urgent Measures to Protect the Soil From Erosion by Wind and Water'. The relevance of this resolution is explained by the major spread of soil erosion in many farming units in the steppe and forest-steppe zone, resulting in poor or unstable harvests.

The resolution draws the attention of experts and the general public to such threatening natural phenomena as dust storms, soil erosion by water and mud flows. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR and the Council of Ministers of the USSR have demonstrated in their findings that these phenomena cause significant damage and they "consider combating soil erosion by wind and water to be a critical national goal in the strategy of the Party and the Government aimed at further development of the agricultural industry in the country". In full accord with this assessment, the Councils of Ministers of the Union republics, certain ministries, agencies, organisations and scientific establishments have been requested to take a series of administrative, agronomical, forest improvement and hydraulic engineering steps and some additional measures to enhance the crop yield of farmlands. These steps include, among other things, stabilisation and afforestation of sands and other lands not suited to agriculture, growing forest shelter belts, afforestation of gullies, ravines and shorelines of rivers and ponds, afforestation and grassing of mountain slopes, etc. The resolution provides specific figures for planned erosion prevention and other related actions for the three-year period of 1968–1970 and determines the responsibilities of different agencies in tackling the challenge of protecting the land against erosion.

The scholars focus particularly on the section of the resolution on the task of educating specialists in forest improvement, which includes advanced training of executives and specialists of farming enterprises at existing departments of universities, as well as another section that rules to establish a National Research Institute of Land Resources.

The resolution implies proactive involvement of forest management agencies in combating soil erosion. Obviously, this work requires every forestry engineer to be well-trained in forest improvement. This must be factored into the curriculum by making sure that the forest improvement discipline gets enough class hours, a separate term paper, examination and graduation project. That is an imperative of our era implied by the resolution 'On Urgent Measures to Protect the Soil From Erosion by Wind and Water'.

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