

CONCLUSION

Solving environmental challenges will require more than mere technological innovation. It will require a fundamental restructuring of the way we live and think. Increasingly, it is apparent that environmental problems, such as those articulated in the 1987 Bruntland report, must be dealt with as part of the larger issue of global economic development. This sentiment was reinforced throughout the workshop discussions. Several trends became apparent, trends which were identified by both Canadian and Japanese participants. The importance of technological innovation, for example, seems to have become overshadowed by the necessity to make technology available and affordable to the developing world. At the same time, the global cooperation necessary for joint action on environmental issues is hindered, even in the UNCED process itself, by economic and political realities.

Countries, particularly those in the developing world, are increasingly required to choose between the need for economic development, compounded by rapid population growth, and environmental protection. Yet, ironically, the experience of Japan shows that with sufficient financial resources and political and industrial will, these two options do not have to be mutually exclusive.

Clearly, it is not sufficient to lament the loss of tropical forests as CO₂ sinks and advocate remedial action without in some way compensating the countries whose immediate economic development may depend on the development of those forest resources. It is not reasonable to expect developing countries to sacrifice the potential for economic growth that may improve the lives of their citizens in order to meet environmental standards set by the developed world, particularly if developed countries are not willing to make similar sacrifices.

While the magnitude of the problem may be quite different, in many ways the current economic debates in Canada mirror the development process that is going on in the developing world. Access to capital for environmental protection technology, an increasing awareness of the need for international competitiveness, and the challenges being raised by free trade talks with the United States and Mexico are issues with which Canadian industries must deal. They are the same kinds of issues which developing countries must address.

North-South economic issues will be part of the UNCED process, and