

The first trend is the expanding effort to develop dialogue and consensus, wherever possible, among these groups. The resulting consultative forums can be a crucial source of advice for policy makers on a wide range of legislative, policy, and program issues. These forums also permit representatives of major groups to find common ground among themselves.

The second trend is the growth of coalitions among major groups. Such coalitions allow groups to work together on issues of common concern and pool resources and expertise. In a time of limited funds for many organizations, this is a particularly effective way of taking action.

Financial Resources and Mechanisms

Canada believes that strong and mutually beneficial economic relations between developed and developing countries support sustainable development. Canada intends to liberalize access to its markets for least developed countries and help its developing country trading partners find ways to take advantage of Uruguay Round opportunities.

Official development assistance (ODA) will continue to be an essential part of meeting Agenda 21 priorities. Canada will continue to direct most of its ODA to low-income countries and to sectors where it will be most effective in encouraging self-sustaining, environmentally sound development.

Canada strongly supports efforts to reform United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the promotion of global sustainable development.

Environmentally Sound Technology

A strong environmental industry sector has grown up in Canada. The federal and some provincial governments have developed strategies aimed at assisting companies to identify and respond to domestic and international demands. These activities contribute to achieving overall sustainable development objectives. Pollution prevention technologies and processes are subsectors in which Canadian researchers and companies are particularly active.

Governments have established a number of means of facilitating environmental technology companies to identify opportunities and act on them, including the transfer of technology to developing countries. Similar means are available to help transfer Canadian expertise in environmental policy and programming.

Combating Poverty

Although Canada is an affluent country, it has a growing number of people with low incomes. Many of the programs and policies developed to assist persons with low income are changing to focus more on assisting them to become more employable.

To comply with increasingly stringent regulations and to satisfy consumer demands for green products and services, the Canadian pulp and paper industry is leading the development of a zero effluent technology that aims at virtual elimination of harmful discharge into water bodies. The effort by government and industry research institutes to focus on innovative, clean-process technology is another example of Canada's commitment to shift from end-of-the-pipe control to pollution prevention. Environmentally sound technologies and know-how make such a shift possible and help improve the competitiveness of Canadian industry in national and international markets.