

# ENVIRONMENT

Global environmental problems, such as climate change, ozone depletion, hazardous wastes, deforestation, desertification and marine pollution have become priority issues for both political leaders and the general public.

While previous summits have been instrumental in shaping international thinking on the environment, the Toronto Summit was a landmark meeting at which leaders committed themselves to urgent collective action on global environmental problems. The Toronto Summit has provided political impetus for an extremely active international environmental agenda over the past year, involving significant and growing international policy coordination on environmental issues.

A significant event on this agenda was the signature of the Declaration of The Hague on the Protection of the Atmosphere by 24 heads of state or government on March 11, 1989. Of the Summit countries, Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy and Japan are signatories. The declaration calls for developing, within the framework of the United Nations, new institutional authority to combat further warming of the atmosphere — either by strengthening existing institutions or by creating a new institution. The declaration also supports the negotiation of international conventions on the atmosphere, one of Canada's key objectives.

The process of reviewing and strengthening the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer has been launched by the U.K. Ozone Conference (hosted by Prime Minister Thatcher in March 1989) and by the first meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Montreal Protocol (Helsinki, May 2-5, 1989).

Other important developments include the negotiation of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes, signed by 34 countries in Basel on March 22, 1989; the conclusion of the Protocol on Nitrogen Oxides at Sofia on November 1, 1988; and the decision taken at the 43rd UN General Assembly to convene in 1992 a UN conference on environment and development.

An important policy question at the Summit of the Arch will be the integration of environmental considerations into economic decision making. The concept of sustainable development, as outlined in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), could

well form the basis for a new era of economic development.

Priority issues for discussion at the Summit are the atmosphere, deforestation and the protection of the marine environment.

## *Atmosphere*

International discussion and broader awareness of the climate change problem was stimulated in June 1988 at the Toronto Conference on The Changing Atmosphere: Implications for Global Security. In February 1989, Canada hosted an international follow-up meeting of legal and policy experts to work toward a global umbrella framework convention for the protection of the atmosphere. Canada is also an active participant in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Canada actively promotes the development of a comprehensive international response to climate change through full utilization and strengthening, at least initially, of the existing network of international institutions, including the United Nations Environment Program, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and OECD/International Energy Agency (IEA) energy-environment work. A top priority for Canada is the conclusion of a framework convention on climate change. In this regard, UNEP, in collaboration with the WMO, should begin preparations on an urgent basis for an international convention on climate change with negotiations starting as soon as the report of the IPCC has been released, and not later than October 1990. Canada has also urged the OECD and the IEA to accelerate their energy-environment work with emphasis on increased energy efficiency and conservation, development of non-fossil fuel technology to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (particularly with respect to the transportation sector), and nuclear power.

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer has been reviewed in light of scientific evidence that the original provisions of the protocol are insufficient to halt the depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer. In February 1989, Canada pledged to accelerate the national program to phase out controlled chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) by announcing an 85 per cent reduction by 1999. Canada will look for progress by the Summit countries toward a common target of reduction of controlled CFCs, with the ultimate goal of a complete ban.