

SUMMARY

In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro brought together virtually all the world's countries. Among its major achievements was Agenda 21, an ambitious plan of action on environment and development issues. After UNCED, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was created to monitor progress toward achieving that plan. The CSD has requested that countries submit national reports on their activities since UNCED. The examples contained in these reports are meant to help member countries share information on progress made and future actions required. They will highlight some of the lessons learned and the challenges ahead.

General Trends in the Implementation of Agenda 21

Canada's approach to sustainable development reflects the diversity of our setting, our people, and our political and economic systems. Canada draws on that diversity as we work to build sustainable communities and a sustainable economy. We have based our approach on three beliefs: a sound economy is linked to a healthy environment; everyone has a personal responsibility for action; and everyone shares a responsibility to build partnerships for action.

Canada proposed a "quick-start" action agenda at UNCED. In meeting that agenda, we have endeavoured to pursue our commitment to a process that is open and inclusive. It is a process in which all sectors of Canadian society are responsible for taking action. This means that governments, the business community, non-governmental organizations, institutions and communities are working together to meet the commitments we made at UNCED.

Consensus Building

Canadians and the organizations that represent them have been taking action within their own fields of concern. People are also coming together to find co-operative means of tackling problems. Round tables on the environment and the economy are one means of working together. They exist at all levels of government in Canada and work toward reaching consensus on critical sustainable development issues.