1. **Given that human-sourced carbon dioxide emissions are the principal contributor to increasing atmospheric levels of greenhouse gases, and given that society's use of energy is the largest factor in this CO_2 generation, the Committee concludes that Canadian energy policy-making must have as its most immediate focus the more efficient and conserving use of energy. Coupled with the more effective use of energy is the need for fuel substitution away from high-carbon fuels and for the commercial availability of technologies for exploiting carbon-based fuels with less environmental impact.**

The Committee has concluded that the federal government should adopt targets against which to measure Canada's progress in reducing emissions of carbon dioxide. One such target is that proposed at the 1988 Toronto climate conference — a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by the year 2005, compared with the level of CO_2 emissions in 1988. Given projections of future energy use in Canada by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and by the National Energy Board, this target implies a reduction of close to 50% in the carbon dioxide emissions that would otherwise prevail in 2005 in the absence of action to constrain emissions. The Toronto conference suggested that half of this reduction could be achieved through energy conservation and improved efficiencies in energy use, with the other half achieved through substituting alternatives for the high-carbon fuels used today.

Several industrial countries have already moved beyond the Toronto proposal. For example, West Germany has adopted the target of reducing CO_2 emissions by 25% in 2005 from 1987 levels; Denmark and New Zealand will attempt to reduce CO_2 emissions by 20% in 2000 from 1990 levels. Canada's support of the objective of stabilizing carbon dioxide emissions at 1990 levels by 2000 is not a sufficient response. Given the opportunities in this country to use energy more efficiently and effectively, the Committee concludes that the Toronto target — a 20% reduction in the 1988 level of CO_2 emissions by 2005 — is the minimum that Canada should strive for as an interim goal. The City of Toronto itself, in Canada's largest metropolitan centre, has declared "an official commitment to the 20% reduction of the 1988 levels of carbon emissions into the atmosphere within the City of Toronto by the year 2005".

The Committee understands that a 20% reduction in the 1988 level of global carbon dioxide emissions would not be sufficient to stabilize the concentration of this gas in the atmosphere. Although the manner in which carbon cycles through the atmosphere, the oceans and the biosphere is not well understood, historical observations of the rising atmospheric concentration of CO_2 suggest that roughly half of the carbon released to the atmosphere through human activities remains there. Apparently then, CO_2 emissions