

Canadian Youth Perspectives on Sustainable Development

We are deeply convinced that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework for our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people.

(The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, World Summit for Social Development, March 1995)

INTRODUCTION

Several youth organizations and many young people took part in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in June 1992. They united to ensure that the UNCED process addressed issues that were important to them, such as poverty and overconsumption. Most important, these young people wanted to have a voice in decisions that would affect their future.

Youth represent the future, but they also have a contribution to make today. Many young Canadians are active in the work of sustainable development. They are working in partnership with other youths and sectors of society, encouraging society to look at new and more sustainable ways to live.

They are making their voices heard.

Sustainable development relates to professional and personal issues. Professionally it means sensitizing and educating others about what it means in policy and practice. Personally, we all have to change our behaviour. (Carla Doucet, CSD IV Youth Co-Representative)