

Preface

At its ninth session in the spring of 2001, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) will review progress made by member countries with respect to sustainable energy development and transportation systems as outlined in Chapters 7 and 9 of Agenda 21 and the Energy, Transport, and Atmosphere section of the Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21. The Programme of Work for CSD 9 also includes information for decision making and participation, as well as atmosphere and international cooperation for an enabling environment as key cross-sectoral themes for review and action. As a contribution to the CSD 9 dialogue, Canada has prepared a series of three monographs relating its experiences and challenges on energy, transportation, and information for decision making.

Energy is necessary to most forms of economic and social activity. Canada is an energy-rich nation, with substantial resources of oil, natural gas, coal, and uranium, as well as renewable energy sources such as hydro, wind, solar, and tidal power. While energy will continue to fuel economic activity and social development in Canada and other nations, its production and consumption will also present environmental challenges. The first monograph in this CSD 9 series, *Energy and Sustainable Development: A Canadian Perspective*, examines the issue of energy and sustainable development from both domestic and international standpoints. It describes Canada's efforts to improve the efficiency of energy production and use and to develop and promote alternative fuels and processes that minimize environmental impacts. The monograph confirms Canada's commitment to work with other members of the global community to foster energy options for sustainable development worldwide.

As a vast trade-dependent and modern country with a challenging climate and rugged terrain, Canada must be able to rely on a sustainable transportation system—one that is safe, efficient, and environmentally friendly. The second monograph in this CSD 9 series, *Sustainable Transportation: The Canadian Context*, describes the state of transportation in Canada and highlights Canadian activities that are moving us toward a more sustainable transportation system.

Access to pertinent and reliable information—social, economic, and environmental—is critical to good decision making related to sustainable development. *Information for Decision Making in Sustainable Development*, the third in the CSD 9 series, illustrates the work Canada is doing on many fronts to improve the quality of, and access to, the information needed by citizens, businesses, and governments to make better decisions and take action to support sustainable development. From grassroots community awareness to sophisticated analysis for high-level policy development, Canada is meeting the challenge to bridge the data gap and improve the availability of information.