

As part of our support of the Brundtland Commission, Canada organized the Global Climate Change Conference, in Toronto, in June. It set a new standard of international cooperation and information exchange and Canada has made it clear that we are willing to organize other conferences to accelerate international research and cooperation.

We have made significant improvements to the Canada-U.S. agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality. We are working closely with the Province of Quebec to clean up the St. Lawrence River under a program that will identify and remove toxics from its waters, rehabilitate polluted sites and wetlands, and create a unique marine park to ensure protection of beluga whales and other endangered species and environments.

We tried hard to get an agreement with the United States on the control of acid rain, and we are disappointed that the Reagan Administration could not agree to a specific schedule of targets and timetables. The acid rain issue is of paramount importance to Canada, and will be at the top of our agenda with a new President and Congress.

Nationally, this country submitted itself to cleaning up acid rain in our own house. We now have the toughest auto emission standards in the world. Until recently, the largest individual sources of acid rain in North America were right here in Canada. That is no longer the case. In fact, thanks to successful cooperation with our provinces, Canada is well ahead of scheduled 1994 emission-reduction targets. The reality remains that, with acid rain as with other environmental issues, it is not enough to have the commitment of one country alone.

At some times in the past, that would have been seen as an obstacle to progress. Today I think it is an opportunity because the international system is working better, and because the international system is beginning to work now on a much broader agenda.

Let me quote a speech that was delivered to the General Assembly of the United Nations last month.

"Faced with the threat of environmental catastrophe, the dividing lines of the bipolar ideological world are receding. The biosphere recognizes no division into blocs, alliances or systems. All share the same climate system and no one is in a position to build his own isolated and independent line of environmental defense."

The speaker was Edouard Shevardnadze, Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union.