

- promote more effective means by which the international community governs forest issues based on the principles of open, participatory and transparent decision making; and
- improve co-operation and co-ordination in financial assistance and technology transfer to help developing countries manage forest resources more effectively.

These steps would ensure economically and environmentally sustainable global trade in forest products and would contribute to the health of the world's forests.

Canada's position of strong advocacy of a forest convention enjoys the full backing of all Canadian provinces and territories, as well as many Canadian forest stakeholder groups, including industry and labour.

Despite significant progress since the 1992 Earth Summit on a common approach to the management of the Earth's forests — a resource vital to the well-being and prosperity of future generations — they continue to be destroyed and degraded at alarming rates in many parts of the world. From Canada's perspective, reversing this trend and achieving sustainability requires urgent action and long-term political commitment by all countries. Five years of voluntary action have not made a significant enough impact. Strong, legally binding commitments would ensure real action on promoting sustainable forest management.

Climate change

A major result of the Rio conference was the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change whereby developed countries committed to aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2000. Current climate change discussions centre on completing negotiations for a legal instrument for commitments on greenhouse gas emissions after the year 2000. Further action will be taken in Kyoto, Japan, in December 1997, at the Third Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

An agreement at Kyoto is essential, given the international consensus that human activities have a discernible influence on the global climate. This influence can result in harmful impacts on ecosystems, with potential consequences for food supply, water resources and human health. It is projected that Canada, as a northern country, will experience greater temperature changes with climate change than most other regions of the world.