

Preface

At its eighth session in the spring of 2000, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) will be reviewing global progress made with respect to Chapter 10 of Agenda 21, "Integrated Approach to the Planning and Management of Land Resources". For Canada — the world's second largest country in land mass — the issues associated with the sustainable development of land resources are intimately entwined with Canadian history, in addition to being pivotal to its future well-being. As a contribution to the land use dialogue, Canada has prepared a series of six monographs describing its experience and the challenges that remain in the integration of sustainable development.

Agriculture and forests will be particular themes at CSD 8. Canada is world famous for its prairie wheat, and sustainable agricultural practices, both within Canada and internationally, have global implications. Canada presents its experiences in its first monograph on sustainable agriculture. As with the prairies, images of vast Canadian forests and the rugged Canadian Shield rich in minerals are familiar Canadian icons. For this session of the CSD, Canada has updated monographs on forests and on minerals and metals originally prepared for the five-year review of Agenda 21 in 1997.

Canada, along with its circumpolar neighbours, faces extraordinary challenges in the sustainable development of its Arctic regions and is working to this end directly with its Indigenous peoples and territorial governments, including the newest territory, Nunavut, which came into being on April 1, 1999. Along with fellow members of the Arctic Council, Canada is looking for means to ensure that the world has a better understanding of the impact of southern activities on the vulnerable Arctic environment. In this regard, a monograph addressing sustainable development and Indigenous peoples in the Canadian Arctic has been prepared.

Key to successfully implementing sustainable development policy is a clear understanding of the issues to be addressed. The role of science cannot be underestimated in this search for understanding. In this regard, Canada has developed two additional monographs. One provides an overview of the applications of earth sciences to the gathering and interpretation of scientific information to contribute to policy development. In the other, Canada concludes its monograph series for CSD 8 with a review of its experiences of an ecosystem approach to the development of sustainable development principles.

This monograph explains the concept of the ecosystem approach to resource management and how it is being applied in Canada. An ecosystem approach is fundamental to the management of marine and terrestrial ecosystems and their coastal interface. However, as the focus of Chapter 10 in Agenda 21 is managing land sustainably, integrated land use planning and management is featured and terrestrial ecosystems are covered in more depth than marine. Decisions concerning the environment and management of land