

the Government has been reviewing its own approach to precaution in the context of regulating for health, safety, environmental protection and resource management.

The Government expects to release a discussion paper entitled "A Canadian Perspective on the Precautionary Approach/Principle." Exercising precaution is an inherent part of Canadian regulatory policy and practice in a wide range of areas, including environmental protection, health, food safety, and resource management. The Government will be actively seeking the views of Canadians on the matters raised in the paper. As well, the Government will make the paper widely available internationally and will provide a copy directly to the European Commission. The Government will consider comments from international sources as well as from Canadians. Canadian officials intend to meet directly with Commission officials to compare their approaches to the issues raised concerning the exercise of precaution in situations of threats of serious or irreversible harm and significant scientific uncertainty. In light of the planned consultations in Canada, coupled with an international community that does not appear ready to move beyond the definition of the precautionary approach contained in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development¹, the Government believes that the best approach is to continue discussions of the issues in appropriate international forums as well as bilaterally with our key trading partners.

¹ "In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation."