

The province of Ontario has the highest level of recycling in the world thanks to its "blue box" program. Residents of municipalities that include 80 percent of the province's more than 10 million people have received these boxes to encourage them to separate recyclables such as glass, metal cans and newspapers. Studies show that more than 90 percent of people with blue boxes use them regularly. An important element of this program is the support it receives from Ontario Multi-Material Recycling Inc., an industry organization that includes grocery suppliers and packaging and soft drink manufacturers.

actions to move Canada closer to the goal of sustainable development. Examples included the establishment of the IISD and the development of round tables on the environment and the economy, an initiative discussed later in Part I.

The essence of sustainable development is that a healthy environment and a productive resource base can bring about lasting economic benefits. Economic prosperity can ensure the capacity to support wise resource management and to protect environmental quality. It can support the development of the technologies needed to mitigate and prevent pollution and to improve human health. Economic prosperity can make it easier for all sectors of society to incorporate environmental considerations into decision making. Our task is to ensure that it does.

(b) Trends in Public Attitudes

There is growing recognition among Canadians that the economy and the environment are two sides of the same coin. Current public opinion research indicates that Canadians are deeply concerned over the quality of the environment.

Moreover, a very large majority believes that a strong and growing economy is compatible with, if not dependent on, a clean environment.

UNCED coincided with, and probably contributed to, an increasingly global perspective on the environment among the Canadian public. We believe that long-term solutions can be achieved only through global co-operation and local actions. Furthermore, opinion research indicates that 1993 was the first time that a majority of Canadians ascribed primary responsibility for environmental protection to individuals, as lifestyle changes are now seen as the key to solving environmental problems.

(c) Canada's Priorities at UNCED

At UNCED, Canada proposed a "quick-start" action agenda for international progress on sustainable development. We urged all countries to develop their own national sustainable development plans and strategies. We called for the expeditious signing, ratification and implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (Canada ratified both conventions in December 1992, becoming the first developed country to do so.) We encouraged developed countries to help developing countries make the transition to sustainable development on three related fronts — aid, trade and debt. Canada renewed its commitment to the United Nations, to the establishment of the CSD, and to other multilateral institutions. We urged states to work toward a global agreement to prevent overfishing on the high seas and toward establishing criteria, ideally through a global convention, to achieve the conservation and sustainable development of the world's forests.