

## International and Regional Co-ordination and Co-operation

As a result of recommendations arising from the North American Workshop on Environmental Information hosted by Mexico in October 1993, Environment Canada took the lead in a working group to develop a framework for sustainable resource use and management. This includes documentation of ecosystem approaches applied or tested in Canada, the United States, and Mexico; application of common criteria for ecosystem classification and harmonization; development of a North American ecological map and description; and a state of the environment profile using a protected areas theme.

International development agencies such as IDRC support the efforts of developing countries to address land use issues. For example, they are conducting research to find better ways to address pressures on land resulting from local population growth.

## Challenges and Next Steps

The relationship between the environment and the economy is very clear in land use debates. One major challenge is the management of urbanization, especially its effects on agricultural and other biologically productive land. As cities continue to grow, land use conflicts will become more acute if they are dealt with through traditional approaches and ways of valuing land.

Problems and issues associated with traditional approaches to land use planning include the need for more provincial direction that does not interfere with local autonomy; settlement and resource land use planning; relationships among provincial, regional, and local land use planning and program implementation; and co-ordination and integration of existing programs and policies. When combined, these problems and issues point to the need for a strategic approach to land use planning.

The Federal/Provincial Committee on Land Use is taking an important next step. It has initiated a Perspective on Land Issues in Canada process to answer the following questions.

- What are the major land use issues facing the country over the next decade?
- What are the broad options for resolving the issues?
- What roles does and should land use planning play in the implementation of sustainable development?

The Committee will seek input from various sectors of Canadian society. It will hold a forum during the summer of 1995. This is expected to help set the stage for still more progress toward the goals of Chapter 10.

*The Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) is a co-operative agreement of the eight Arctic countries. The strategy is being implemented by these governments in co-operation with Indigenous peoples and complements a number of other international initiatives to foster scientific co-operation in the Arctic. It identifies shared circumpolar environmental problems and actions that each country is committed to take to protect the Arctic environment. The AEPS deals with such areas as oil pollution, persistent organic contaminants, heavy metals, radioactivity, acid deposition, and underwater noise. Canada is currently acting as custodian of the AEPS and is responsible for hosting the third Ministerial Conference scheduled for the spring of 1996.*