

Introduction

In 1995, the *Auditor General Act* was amended to require federal departments and agencies to table sustainable development strategies in Parliament every three years. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) worked to integrate sustainable development (SD) principles into Departmental policies, programs and operations within the framework of two previous strategies: *Agenda 2000* tabled in December 1997, and *Agenda 2003*, tabled in February 2001.

Agenda 2006, A Sustainable Development Strategy for the Departments of Foreign Affairs and International Trade builds on the strengths of these two strategies and sets out the two Departments' intentions for advancing SD in the 2004-2006 period. It seeks to achieve four goals: (1) Ensure greater integration of SD in Departmental policies, programs and operations (2) Ensure that Canada's commitment to SD is evident in our bilateral, regional and multilateral relations (3) Promote international security, respect for human rights, good governance and the rule of law as prerequisites for sustainable development (4) Implement the two Departments' priority commitments related to the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg 2002.

Agenda 2006 has been shaped by input from both internal and external consultations. It has also been influenced by the strategic objectives and priorities of the former DFAIT. SD supports *the promotion of Canadian values and culture abroad by advancing human rights, good governance and adherence to the rule of law*. It also *enhances Canadian prosperity and employment* by contributing to long-term economic growth and Canada's reputation as a responsible trading partner. SD contributes to the *protection of our security within a stable global framework* by reinforcing accountable and transparent institutions, social stability and economic inclusion. Promoting SD contributes to a positive image of Canada abroad and supports Canada's

international trade objectives by the positive effect that trade and investment can have on human rights, environmental protection and labour standards.

Agenda 2006 acknowledges the value of partnerships in making progress on SD. It also reflects recent recommendations of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development on the need to: explain the changes between the 2nd and 3rd strategies, explain the fit of the strategy with other departmental plans and priorities, focus on new initiatives and indicate their long term outcomes, and improve upon previous performance measurement standards.

By its very nature, SD is an ongoing process. For that reason, this strategy will not be a static one. New targets will be incorporated when appropriate, based on annual progress reports, research and changing circumstances, including those related to the operating relationship between the two Departments.

While ideally new initiatives should only be included where due consideration has been given to their economic, social and environmental impacts, some of the initiatives contained in the Strategy deal mainly with just two of these three pillars. They have been included because of the importance of the initiatives in furthering SD, the reality that environmental impacts often take into account social considerations such as health, and the expectation that eventually we will "get there".

As a document of change, *Agenda 2006* is expected to influence the work of the two Departments' over 7,000 personnel operating in Canada and at 270 missions and satellite offices abroad in 180 countries. Their impact on SD, as individuals and in their professional capacity, should not be underestimated.