

- (10) **establish a dispute settlement mechanism** based on negotiation and mediation for the legally binding provisions contained in the agreement;
- (11) **focus attention on cross-sectoral factors** contributing to deforestation and forest degradation, leading to enhanced coordination and integrated plans of action;
- (12) **enhance and coordinate efforts to improve the scientific knowledge base** needed for sustainable forest management and disseminate that knowledge effectively; and
- (13) **provide for the effective participation of all interested parties, within the intergovernmental structure of a conference of the parties,** in the elaboration, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the legally binding instrument.

CONCLUSION—1997 IS A YEAR OF OPPORTUNITY

Canada has taken many steps to put its forest policies and practices on a sustainable footing. All partners in the forest sector will continue to work toward improving sustainable forest management at home and worldwide.

The fifth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development in April 1997 and the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in June 1997 offer an opportunity to move the forest agenda forward by launching negotiations for an international forest convention. The extensive review by governments and civil society of progress in implementing UNCED commitments makes 1997 a critical year for environment and development issues.

The year 1997 provides a unique opportunity for the international forest community to demonstrate its collective resolve to take a decisive step toward achieving sustainable forest management worldwide. This must be in the form of an agreement to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in 1997 for an international forest convention.