

transboundary air issue on the continental, hemispheric, and global scales. Transported by the atmosphere, these substances contaminate the food chains in areas as remote as Canada's Arctic region.

Bilaterally, the Air Quality Agreement, signed in 1991 with the United States, committed Canada to cap national sulphur dioxide (SO₂) emissions at 3.2 million tonnes by the year 2000, and cap Eastern Canada SO₂ emissions at 2.3 million tonnes by 1994 until 2000. By 1994, Canadian industry had exceeded this target, reducing emissions to 1.7 million tonnes. The United States also committed to reducing SO₂ emissions by 40 percent from 1980 levels. Despite these successes, acid rain will continue to be a focus for action in the post-2000 era. As a result, Canada is considering further SO₂ emission reductions. The two countries have recently expanded the scope of the agreement to include transboundary ground-level ozone and are currently establishing a Regional Ozone Study Area to focus on mitigation strategies between Ontario and adjacent American states.

The proposed Canada-U.S. Virtual Elimination Strategy calls for elimination of those persistent toxic substances that contribute significantly to pollution of the Great Lakes Basin. An investigation on the deposition of persistent organic substances into the Gulf of Maine also took place in 1994. In October 1995, Canada, the United States, and Mexico agreed to a trilateral resolution on management of persistent toxic substances under the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation.

Internationally, the federal government, with provincial support, is active in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN-ECE) on atmospheric issues. In 1994, Canada signed the Second UN-ECE Sulphur Dioxide Protocol, which commits Canada to cap SO₂ emissions and to work toward critical loads (the level of acidic deposition that causes insignificant environmental harm). Canada will be participating in UN-ECE negotiations on a second NO_x protocol and on protocols on POPs and heavy metals.

Implementing a commitment made at the 1994 session of the CSD, Canada, in cooperation with the Philippines, hosted 100 experts from over forty countries in Vancouver, British Columbia, for the International Experts Meeting on Persistent Organic Pollutants: Toward Global Action. In seeking a solution to the POPs problem, the experts agreed that the available evidence warranted immediate action both domestically and globally. This conclusion was transmitted to the UNEP-sponsored Intergovernmental Conference on the Global Plan of Action on Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution, held in Washington, D.C., in November 1995. It contributed to the Washington Declaration on Protecting the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities.

Canada tracks airborne pollutants to improve early warning on industrial accidents and natural disasters. Canada provides this capacity through the Canadian Meteorological Centre in Montreal. This centre has been designated as a Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre specializing in atmospheric transport modelling for nuclear

New indicators on passenger transportation and energy consumption have been added to the suite of atmosphere-related indicators (e.g., acidic precipitation, air quality, stratospheric ozone depletion, and climate change). These provide objective, scientifically based information on environmental conditions and trends and will be available through Environment Canada's Green Lane.