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prevent soil erosion; preserve water quality; and serve a cultural and spiritual role, especially for aboriginal people. Canada, therefore, has a large stake in the long-term health of forests, as do many other countries. Therefore, we will pursue assertively, in close cooperation with a variety of allies, internationally agreed rules on sustainable forest management, ideally embodied in an International Forests Convention. This will assist Canada to ensure and to expand its access to forest product markets, and to better support other, particularly developing, countries, in their efforts to manage their forest resources sustainably.

We will promote regional environmental standards consistent with sustainable development and enhanced competitiveness by actively supporting the implementation of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation. The Government will also implement the recently-approved Environmental Industries Strategy, aimed at increasing these industries' growth rates and exports, while responding to the Government's objective of a clean environment. The Strategy will support Canadian industry, fund new initiatives to develop and commercialize innovative environment technologies, and improve access to domestic and global market opportunities for environmental companies. The Government will also undertake environmental assessments in conformity with the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

Canada has a particular role in defending and developing the Arctic environment, an area where international cooperation is vital and is just beginning. Through enhanced international cooperation and national commitment, demonstrated through our recent appointment of the Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs, we will seek to slow the process of global climate change and to protect and improve the Arctic environment and the health and livelihoods of the region's inhabitants.

With our partners, we will also explore means of improving international governance on environmental issues. The current structure of institutions significantly involved in this field includes the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, the UN Environment Program and other UN agencies, the Global Environment Facility, the World Bank, the IMF, the regional development banks, the WTO and a host of others. The scope for consolidation to improve efficiencies and effectiveness across these organizations will be assessed.