

aboriginal peoples to the land and its living resources, is a fundamental aspect of contemporary aboriginal cultures. It is diffused through almost every aspect of their spiritual life. Aboriginal people therefore have much to offer by way of factual knowledge about the environment, the identification of environmental concerns and assisting the industrialized world in reordering its relationship to the planet and its living and non-living resources.

Past patterns of planning and implementing mega-development projects involving little or no consultation with the aboriginal people affected are being continued across the country. Aboriginal people continue to experience devastating impacts to their lifestyles and cultures as a result of such projects and other development activities. Nevertheless, Canada has yet to resolve the fundamental question of how competing, and often incompatible, land and resource uses and value systems should be resolved. At a minimum, governments must give serious consideration to the role of aboriginal people in achieving sustainable development.

## **19. Housing**

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of adequate housing to the challenge of substantially improving the quality of life for aboriginal people in Canada. The critical need for adequate housing on and off reserve continues to be one of the most difficult problems facing aboriginal people and government. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is currently reviewing its on-reserve housing program and a report is expected by June of 1990. An Indian Affairs program for off-reserve housing was eliminated in 1985.

A 1984 on-reserve housing study provides information on housing conditions before the significant increase in the status Indian population due to amendments to the *Indian Act* in 1985. (Additional housing funds have been allocated since 1985 to deal with increased pressure on the housing stock as a result of these amendments but the adequacy of these funds and access to them has been a point of considerable controversy.)

The Department's 1984 study assessed the adequacy of housing in terms of three major dimensions: physical condition, crowding, and