

remains the potential to live in harmony with the environmental attributes and capacities and to concurrently enjoy a healthy and materially satisfied standard of living. Agenda 21 may be considered only a first, albeit critical, step in fulfilling this potential.

Several fundamental assumptions or premises underlie Agenda 21 and they are identified in this report. These premises must be recognized if Agenda 21 is to be appreciated both for its weaknesses as well as for its strengths. The pre-eminent importance of economic growth, for example, in achieving global sustainable development pervades the document. Yet one may reasonably question whether the tenets of economic growth, as are currently accepted and promoted in Agenda 21, are in themselves environmentally unsustainable in the long-term. Other Agenda 21 premises are that:

- the promotion of sustainable development should be pursued at all levels;
- present social-political-economic norms and structures have the capacity to evolve into structures which are capable of promoting sustainable development and that the political will to move forward on Agenda 21 commitments will exist;
- Agenda 21 recommendations are adequate to assure the preservation of the global environment;
- international cooperation will be perceived as paramount and will be forthcoming in resolving environmental problems at global and regional levels; and
- the United Nations system will take the lead in moving the world toward sustainable development.

Hence, although the various premises inherent in Agenda 21 are not expressly articulated, they are nonetheless in need of acknowledgement and deserve scrutiny, as they ultimately seek to legitimize the magnitude and means of resource allocation called for in Agenda 21's many recommendations.

In reviewing the economic implications for Canada of Agenda 21 implementation, a number of cross-cutting themes become apparent and merit discussion. For instance, the importance of wealth transfer to developing countries, through direct financing as well as indirectly through trade liberalization and debt alleviation, is essential to enable these countries to implement their Agenda 21 commitments. However, it is equally important to bear in mind that close to 80% of the funding needed by developing countries (or some \$475 billion U.S. per year) is expected to come from developing countries themselves. For this reason, the indirect financing methods, such as those referred to above, combined with sound economic policies in developing countries, are necessary to help provide these countries with the financial flexibility they need to implement Agenda 21.