

auspices of Canada's Auditor General.¹⁶ Built on the international UNCED consensus the office of Commissioner reflects Canada's commitment to sustainable development as a guiding principle for public policy. The Canadian government also affirmed sustainable development as a key building block of international human or comprehensive security in its foreign policy. Human security, as Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy acknowledged, includes support for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, good governance, sustainable development and social equity.¹⁷

Notwithstanding advances in rhetoric marked by such declarations neither sustainable development or foreign policy have been major domestic and foreign policy emphases in budgetary terms or in public outreach for the Liberals since taking power in 1993. The Liberals have systematically reduced their environmental priorities and international development spending from the commitments made in their first "Red Book" election platform and weakened the bureaucratic and policy mechanisms for implementing sustainable development at home and abroad.¹⁸ Some of Canada's most problematic interpretation and implementation of sustainable development in foreign policy has been in APEC countries such as China where it sees huge market potential for Canadian exports and job creation. Another problem is policy coherence between and among different federal departments or agencies. The government has no clearly articulated vision of sustainable development and provides no firm directives to its Departments or Agencies, despite Canada's CESD, the new office governed under the Auditor General Act and reporting to the House of Commons. Finally, the recent environmental "Harmonization Accord" has devolved or downloaded even more environmental responsibilities to the provinces, against the recommendations of Parliament's Standing Committee on

¹⁶ A Guide to Green Government (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1995); and Report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development to the House of Commons (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services, 1997).

¹⁷ Notes for an address by the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to a meeting of the National Forum on Foreign Policy, 96/57 "Canada's Foreign Policy in a Changing World," December 13, 1996 (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade), p. 1.

¹⁸ Argued well in Luc Juillet and Glen Toner, "From Great Leaps to Baby Steps: Environment and Sustainable Development Under the Liberals," in Gene Swimmer, Ed., How Ottawa Spends 1997-98, Seeing Red: A Liberal Report Card (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1997), pp. 179-209.