

CANADA GOES GREEN

Last December, Canada announced its wide-ranging Green Plan for a healthy environment — a plan the government promises will be second to none in ensuring clean air, water and land for all Canadians. It commits the government to sustainable use of renewable resources, protection of Canada's special spaces and species, and the preservation of the integrity of the North. More than 100 initiatives are outlined in the plan, ranging from the creation of five new national parks by 1996 to the introduction of a drinking water safety act.

More than 10 000 Canadians Consulted

The Green Plan is the result of massive consultations that encouraged more than 10 000 Canadians to present their views on environmental issues. A series of workshops was held in 17 cities as well as information sessions in more than 40 cities and towns. Recommendations were received from representatives of the provinces and territories, municipalities, industry, unions, environmental groups, youth, aboriginal people, academics, religious organizations and concerned citizens. In the end, the Green Plan adopted some 80 per cent of the more than 500 recommendations that emerged from the consultations.

But consultation is far from over. Later this year, for example, Canadians will be invited to respond to a discussion paper on the use of economic instruments to achieve environmental objectives. These submissions

will help develop a set of national environmental indicators. The government also promises to review the Green Plan with Canadians every year to ensure that the document remains flexible and responsive to new priorities.

Forging Partnerships to Preserve the Environment

Consultation and co-operation, then, are at the heart of the Green Plan. The plan recognizes that restoring and protecting the environment is the concern of every citizen, and its provisions will strengthen existing environmental partnerships and build new ones. Through the extension of the Environmental Partners Fund, for example, communities are encouraged to become involved in clean-up and protective efforts. Indian communities will be assisted in preparing environmental action plans; the Youth Advisory Council on Environment and Development will give advice on programs geared to young people; and Canada's environmental groups will receive more funds for co-operation and exchange of information. The plan will also give Canadians information they may need to make environmentally sound choices in their daily lives.

The importance of co-operation with the private sector in protecting the environment is recognized. Canada cannot

With the Green Plan, Canada has committed itself to becoming a truly "environmentally friendly" country.

