

Canada has played an important part in negotiating conventions and protocols to protect the oceans and the ozone layer, as well as to control air pollution, international movements of hazardous wastes and trafficking in endangered species. Further efforts are needed to strengthen international law on other environmental issues, including climate change, biological diversity, forests, control of land-based marine pollution, pollution of the Arctic and other important areas.

One major contribution to this effort is the success achieved by Canada and other countries in regional agreements negotiated within the framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). The 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, strengthened by specific implementing protocols on sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, was a significant milestone in curbing sources of air pollution. ECE countries have also negotiated an important convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in the transboundary context.

Canada's long-term goal is to work with others to build a new global environmental regime among nations, rich and poor, north and south, which rests on a sound body of international law and is based on the understanding that we must work together to ensure a prosperous common future. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will be crucial in this endeavour.

Participating in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

In June 1992, Brazil will host the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which is likely to be the most significant international conference on environmental issues in many years. The Conference will mark the 20th anniversary of the historic Stockholm Conference, which represented a pioneering effort in the development of a global environmental outlook. Also known as the "Earth Summit," UNCED will focus the world's attention on the critical relationship between the environmental and the economic health of the planet and will provide an opportunity to advance international efforts on climate change, biological diversity, management of the world's forests and oceans, and other environment and development issues. The conference will be a summit of unprecedented proportions, involving up to 160 heads of government.

Canada is ready for 1992.

- An interdepartmental committee on UNCED, co-chaired by External Affairs and International Trade Canada and Environment Canada and consisting of 20 federal departments and agencies, has been formed to co-ordinate the federal government's preparations.
- Special issue groups have been established to draft Canadian positions on topics to be discussed at the Conference.