

In stressing the international element of Canadian policy-making, the Committee accepts the view that environmental problems are ultimately irremediable if we cannot solve the problem of poverty that afflicts so many of the Earth's inhabitants. Much of the global population lives in conditions of hunger, disease, illiteracy and conflict. The developing world as a whole is labouring under a crushing burden of external debt. Until the human condition can be substantially improved, the prospects for successfully addressing global environmental concerns are vanishingly small.

This Committee endorses the conclusions and recommendations contained in the June 1990 report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade, entitled *Securing Our Global Future: Canada's Stake in the Unfinished Business of Third World Debt*. In particular, we agree with the basic finding of that study: "The primary long-term goal of action on Third World debt must be sustainable human development in the debtor countries."

In its more detailed analysis, the Committee considered strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions at the sectoral level in Canada. Although the bulk of this study and the detailed recommendations arising from it will be presented in the comprehensive report to follow, the Committee does want to express several general conclusions at this time.

First, it is apparent that our use of electricity will have a major bearing on Canada's future emissions of greenhouse gases. Electricity accounts for a growing fraction of Canada's end use of energy, a development seen in other industrialized countries as well. This is a function of its versatility in use, its versatility in production and its cleanliness at the point of use (although not necessarily at the point of production). Given the rising importance of electricity in our energy system, and the tremendous variability across Canada in the means by which it is generated, policy-making in this area faces particular challenges.

In keeping with the Committee's philosophy that the principal issue of concern is the manner in which energy is used, it is apparent that Canada's electrical utilities have a major part to play in any strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Several utilities have taken important steps to modify the demand for electricity within their service areas and to introduce new technologies that improve the process of producing, transmitting and consuming electricity. The Committee applauds these initiatives and encourages other utilities to follow suit.