

task, for an effective set of standards will require the development of sustainable development criteria, methodologies, economic instruments, indicators, and the perfecting of environmental audits and full-cost accounting. When this plan comes to fruition it will not only serve as a practical guide to sustainable development in all aspects of Canadian life, but it will also symbolize to other nations Canada's commitment to sustainable development. The Committee recognizes the immense nature of this task and strongly commends those who would undertake this initiative.

There have been previous UN conferences on renewable energy, the human environment, and desertification. These conferences resulted in reports and recommendations; however, there was little follow-up and even less in the way of tangible results. This situation should change with the establishment on 9 December 1992 of the UN-affiliated Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Canada supported the proposal that the commission meet at a high level, preferably at the ministerial level, to ensure that the commission has political influence. The General Assembly established that the commission will be made up of high-level representatives. The mandate of the CSD was determined at the General Assembly on 5-25 November 1992. It will:

- monitor implementation of Agenda 21—recognizing that it is a dynamic document which could evolve over time—and sustainable development activities in the UN system;
- consider implementation of Agenda 21 by Governments, on the basis of information provided by them, including problems relating to financial resources and the transfer of environmentally-sound technology;
- review commitments made by donor countries in Agenda 21, including the provision of new and additional financial resources and the transfer of technology on favourable terms; and monitor progress made by States in reaching the target of giving 0.7% of GNP in Official Development Assistance to developing countries;
- review and analyze relevant input from competent non-governmental organizations, and enhance the dialogue with non-governmental and independent sector groups.²³

The Committee heard that, while regionalized sustainable development is possible in developed nations, the achievement of sustainable development at the global level is precluded until the crippling poverty of the Third World is alleviated. As Tim Draimin said:

Sustainability requires our building partnerships with the world's poor. For them, in the short term the economic realities are paramount. An approach is needed that combines environmental protection with sustainable economic models capable of providing basic well-being for the economically disenfranchised. We ignore the marginalized at our collective peril.²⁴

²³ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, *Press Release*, "Assembly Establishes Commission on Sustainable Development, Takes Action to Ensure Effective Follow-Up to Rio," New York, 16 December 1992.

²⁴ *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Environment*, Issue No. 46, 17 November 1992, p. 13.