

CONSULTATIONS

As emphasized in the Guide to Green Government, Canadians want to be consulted before governments make decisions that could affect their lives and well-being. With this in mind, the Department presented various drafts of Agenda 2000 to the private sector, voluntary and community-based organizations, provincial governments, aboriginal groups, other government departments and individual Canadians.

Their comments on the strategy helped to broaden the perspective on many issues and underscored the need for clearer integration of the social, economic and environmental sustainable development factors included in the strategy, as well as more defined areas of responsibility for program implementation.

It should be noted, however, that this is only the first step in an ongoing process. While Agenda 2000 addresses as many of the issues as is feasible at this time, the Department recognizes that incorporating sustainable development considerations will take time, involving changes at many levels, as all areas of the public and private sectors come to a fuller understanding of the issues and their inter-relationship.

The consultation process on Agenda 2000 began within the department in 1995 and was extended in 1996 to include other government departments. In 1997 the process was further broadened to include the business sector, aboriginal groups, provincial governments, academia, voluntary and community-based organizations and the general public. This was achieved through interactive participation at various public and government fora, as well as the receipt of written submissions and input through the Department's Sustainable Development Internet web site.

Interactive consultations included:

- (1) a one-day conference in February 1997 in Ottawa co-hosted by the Department and the Canadian-based International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). Sixty representatives from the private sector, the academic community, voluntary/community groups and non-governmental organizations participated;
- (2) a February/March strategy presentation at three western universities by the Department's Coordinator of Environmental Assessment and Stewardship;
- (3) an April breakfast meeting in Vancouver hosted by the Department and coordinated by the University of British Columbia. One hundred representatives of the private sector, academia and special interest groups participated. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, presented Agenda 2000 for review;
- (3 a) a morning seminar after the breakfast meeting. The fifteen participants included academics and representatives of both industry and environmental groups;
- (4) numerous meetings with the International Trade Advisory Committee (ITAC) and the Sectoral Advisory Groups on International Trade (SAGITS).