

BACKGROUNDER

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations has established a high-level Commission on Sustainable Development to guide implementation of Agenda 21, a comprehensive strategy for global action on sustainable development, and other agreements negotiated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali announced on December 4, 1992, that the Secretariat of the Commission will be located in New York in the new Department of Policy Co-ordination and Sustainable Development. The Department will be headed by Nitin Desai (India), who served as Deputy to Maurice Strong, Secretary-General of UNCED.

How the Commission Will Work

The Commission will be made up of high-level representatives of 53 states elected from the UN member states. Membership will rotate among governments and will be drawn equitably from various geographic regions. Canada will apply for membership to the Commission during the February 1993 organizational session of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), of which the Commission will be a subsidiary body.

The Commission will:

- monitor implementation of Agenda 21, recognizing that it is a dynamic document that could evolve over time;
- promote incorporation of the principles of the Rio Declaration and the Guiding Principles on Forests in the implementation of Agenda 21;
- 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;
- review and analyze relevant input from competent non-governmental organizations, and enhance the dialogue with non-governmental and independent sector groups; and
- work with other UN agencies to integrate principles of sustainability throughout the UN system.

Timetable of Meetings

The Commission will be formally established and its members elected at the organizational session of ECOSOC, February 2 to 5, 1993. An organizational session of the new Commission will be held in New York,