

Actions to Date

Canada's follow-up to UNCED is moving forward on several tracks. Central to this is a process characterized by transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability in reaching consensus on issues affecting the environment.

Domestic

(a) Major Groups and Individuals

Implementation of sustainable development is the responsibility of all Canadians. Individuals, institutions and major groups have been encouraged to participate in that challenge. Major groups have pursued many initiatives within their own areas of expertise. However, a focus of Canadian work has been the creation of mechanisms that bring representatives of major groups and other interests together to address significant issues that affect all Canadians.

(i) Round tables

One response has been the creation of round tables on the environment and the economy at the federal, provincial/territorial, and local levels. While they vary in their makeup and function, they share the goal of promoting the principles and practices of sustainable development by building consensus among representatives of important groups and sectors. They are forums where decision makers can candidly discuss environment-economy issues and make recommendations directly to government and private-sector leaders. There are now more than 100 local round tables across Canada. Most of the provincial/territorial round tables are engaged in developing, or have completed, sustainable development strategies for their jurisdictions.

A good example of the success of round tables is the work of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) in seeking a consensus on sustainable forestry practices. Its Forest Round Table brought together representatives of all main groups with an interest in Canada's forests, such as labour, business, environmentalists, academics, indigenous peoples and governments. The members worked intensively over 18 months and put together a set of common principles to guide the future of Canada's forests. Each participating group is working on an action plan outlining the contribution it will make in support of these principles.

(ii) Projet de société

In November 1992, representatives from every major sector of Canadian society, including business, governments, and community, environmental and international development organizations, convened to find ways to engage the broadest possible spectrum of Canadians in meeting the UNCED challenges and to set a common course

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) has established the Earth Enterprise project to foster a support network for eco-entrepreneurs and to encourage them to take advantage of business opportunities that contribute to sustainable development. The project addresses sustainable development opportunities in markets, technologies, financing, and new business practices. It encourages fundamental change in business operation, including sourcing materials, waste management, and relationships with employees. This project has involved about 1000 people in Canada, the United States and Mexico.