



Youth delegate Severn Cullis-Suzuki, daughter of environmentalist David Suzuki, at the Johannesburg Summit. Ten years ago at the Rio Summit in Brazil, Severn (then aged 12) received a standing ovation for her impassioned speech about the need to save the world for future generations.

The Summit endorsed, among other things, the Millennium Development Goals for eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development; these emerged from the 2000 UN Millennium Summit. In addition, Johannesburg set out new targets and actions in areas such as sanitation, the sound management of chemicals, and restoring and maintaining fish stocks. On the difficult issue of renewable energies it reached a compromise, with delegates

committing to increased use but not setting concrete goals or time lines. Finally, Canada successfully lobbied for the Plan of Implementation to give due attention to the issue of human rights and women's health.

However, one of the most significant steps for Canada was Prime Minister Chrétien's announcement that the government would put the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol to a vote in Parliament by the end of the year. He also pledged to expand Canada's national parks and marine conservation system—and took the first steps toward doing so in an announcement on October 3.

In his address to the Summit, the Prime Minister emphasized that wise environmental stewardship is a universal obligation reflecting a rising global awareness that clean air, clean water and safe food are universal needs.

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

—*Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Report), 1987*

“The consensus here in Johannesburg will help us create a cleaner and healthier world for our children and for generations to come,” said Mr. Chrétien. “Sustainable development is about the very destiny of our planet.”

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For many delegates, the lasting outcomes of the Summit will be the friendships, alliances and networks they formed.

“For African NGOs, it's such a wonderful opportunity to work with global NGOs and have access to new information resources,” says Roxanne Breton, an HRDC intern who worked as South Africa liaison of Leadership for Environment and Development International, a worldwide network based in London, U.K. “The same goes for the global NGOs, who get a different kind of knowledge

about development from actually being here in Africa.”

Justin Friesen learned plenty from his trip—enough for several essays. He kept a journal, which will appear on his Web site (www.justinvision.com). He also met with the official Canadian delegation to the Summit, and described his

own experiences at one of the daily delegation meetings.

Recalling his presentation to world leaders on issues ranging from climate change to clean water, Justin was optimistic. “I think they really understood this time—finally!” he says. 🍁

For more information on the Johannesburg Summit and Canada's role in sustainable development, visit: www.wssd.gc.ca

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