

ENHANCING TRADE IN ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS AND SERVICES

In 1987, the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) captured the world's imagination with the concept of sustainable development or "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

An important aspect of sustainable development is using goods, services and technologies that can contribute to economic development while relieving stress on the environment. World markets reflect a growing demand for these products, which present a significant export opportunity for Canadians.

The environmental industry sector in Canada is valued at \$7 to \$10 billion annually and accounts for some 150 000 jobs. Many Canadian businesses are developing or using environmental technologies and products that could be exported. The federal government, through External Affairs and International Trade Canada and Industry, Science and Technology Canada, is taking steps to identify environmental opportunities around the world for Canadian business and to help Canadian suppliers take advantage of foreign markets.

Trade in environmental products is also being promoted through the Globe conference and trade show series. The Globe series, held in Vancouver, is a co-operative venture between a private-sector company and the federal government. Globe '90 involved over 3 000 delegates representing industries, governments, environmental groups and international environmental organizations from more than 70 countries. Largely due to the success of Globe '90, the series has become a biennial event and has been included in Canada's national environmental agenda — the Green Plan. Globe '92 is scheduled to take place in Vancouver from March 16 to 20, 1992.

While environmental protection offers trade opportunities, there is also a risk that trade disruptions and distortions might result from the inappropriate use of environmental restrictions. By promoting sustainable development at home and abroad, the Government of Canada works to prevent harmful disruptions in trade from taking place.

DEVELOPING A GLOBAL REGIME OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

To protect ourselves from threats to the global environment, we must join together with our international partners in formulating a fair and equitable regime of international environmental law. As well, because different environmental standards between countries can pose serious distortions in and obstacles to international trade, it is crucial that the countries of the world come to a common understanding and adopt common approaches to environmental problems.