

According to Minister Jean Charest, the focal point for coordination of UNCED follow-up at the federal level continues to be the cabinet committee on the environment, in cooperation with the cabinet committee on foreign policy and defence and also the cabinet committee on economic and trade policy.<sup>20</sup> Cabinet coordination, however, does not integrate provincial and NGO activities.

A multi-stakeholder "Post-Rio Follow-Up" meeting was held in Ottawa, 5-6 November 1992. This meeting, chaired by George Connell, chairperson of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE), was convened to consider how Canada could sustain the momentum UNCED had created, and to make recommendations on Canada's Post-Rio priorities. The need for a national organization to coordinate Canada's Post-Rio activities was recognized as a national priority. Toward this end, the federal government, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME), the NRTEE, IDRC and IISD agreed to financially support a working group called *Projet de Société : Planning for a Sustainable Future*. Project goals include an analysis of Agenda 21 and preparation of a report to the stakeholders on the progress of Canadians in meeting the commitments made at UNCED. The project participants are working toward defining a process that will carry on from UNCED to establish an inclusive and effective approach to sustainable development. The Committee recognizes the need for such an organization and commends the efforts of all involved in this worthy task.

One of the underlying themes of *Canada's Green Plan* is the need for all Canadians to be environmentally responsible in their decision-making. "We face problems today because our past decisions did not adequately reflect environmental considerations."<sup>21</sup> Janine Ferretti stated that the federal government is still making financial decisions without consideration of the environmental impact, and described the government's recently announced program to upgrade and expand Canadian highways and airports as such a decision. Janine Ferretti suggested this funding could have been allocated, with the same potential for job creation, to the expansion and improvement of energy-efficient transit systems. It is obvious if Canada is to truly embark upon a course leading to sustainable development, then more than lip service must be paid to environmental decision-making.

The problem of integrating environmental considerations into economic decision-making was also addressed at the multi-stakeholder "Post-Rio Follow-Up" meeting. The development of a National Sustainability Plan was identified as a major priority. The *Projet de Société: Planning for a Sustainable Future* has accepted the task of developing and drafting a sustainability plan for Canada. As outlined by Janine Ferretti, this plan:

... should have as its focus the economic and the ecological renewal of Canada through sustainable development. It should be a framework for concrete action, and it should help guide and direct the activities and actions of every sector of Canadian society, . . . and it should also articulate priority areas for action. . . The plan should be a primary instrument for guiding and directing domestic and foreign policies, and should apply the primacy of sustainability to national economic and social programs.<sup>22</sup>

The Committee would like to broaden this vision of a National Sustainability Plan to embody a set of sustainable development standards against which all decision-making and actions, present and past, can be judged. The Committee appreciates that this will be a formidable and long-term

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Issue No. 45, 16 November 1992, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Environment Canada, *Canada's Green Plan*, 1990, p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Environment*, Issue No. 46, 17 November 1992, p. 16-17.