



International Cooperation Minister Susan Whelan tours the exhibit hall at the World Summit on Sustainable Development with Ryan Hreljac and representatives of Brazil.

like in these camps made up of tin shacks with no running water or electricity. It put this summit of world leaders in perspective for me.”

Youth interns at the Summit

Participating in the Summit in diverse roles were about 25 current and former interns from international youth programs sponsored by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Canadian International Development Agency, and Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) (see “Backpacks to briefcases,” p. 4). Alyson Slater interned for six months with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development in Geneva; she now works for the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)—an Amsterdam-based international NGO that encourages corporations to report on their environmental and social performance.

“The GRI stays as neutral as possible,” she says. “We bring companies together with government, labour and NGOs so they can find out exactly what their stakeholders want to know.”

A five-year consultation process culminated at the Johannesburg Summit with the release of the GRI’s 2002 *Sustainability Reporting Guidelines*. These feature 60 precise indicators for gathering and reporting information on everything from child labour practices to industrial effluent.

In the free time from her Summit duties with GRI, Alyson joined with another former intern, Dagmar Timmer, to organize a reception celebrating Canada’s internship programs. The event drew 25 interns, plus representatives of 20 host organizations from all over the world as well as the International Institute for Sustainable Development, a

Winnipeg-based partner of the internship programs. All told, about 60 people attended—including International Cooperation Minister Susan Whelan, who addressed the reception.

“We are going to continue to invest in young people, and to develop new approaches to innovation, learning and achieving excellence,” said Minister Whelan. “We remain committed to building advanced skills through career-related work experiences, and to helping youth continue advanced studies.”

“These youth programs are so beneficial,” says Alyson, “not just for our personal and professional lives, but also for Canada. There are interns working for the United Nations, NGOs and even in corporations, trying to push for more attention to sustainable development. I really think we are ambassadors for Canada.”

Summit achievements: the official . . .

Canada was pleased with the success of the Summit. There were three major outcomes: a Political Declaration and a Plan of Implementation, plus non-negotiated partnerships for sustainable development. Canada’s stated priorities were all met.

The negotiated texts, for example, reflect Canada’s focus on good governance as a precondition for sustainable development. In fact, Canada has set aside \$6 billion in new and existing resources over five years to establish the preconditions for sustainable development in Africa;

this is in accordance with the commitment to a new partnership with Africa undertaken last June by G8 countries at their summit in Kananaskis, Alberta. Where appropriate, the Johannesburg Summit fixed realistic targets for achieving agreed priorities. It also recognized the importance of public-private partnerships.



photo: Andrew Robinson

Former youth intern Alyson Slater, now on the staff of the Global Reporting Initiative, at the Johannesburg Summit