

the turn of the century, even with increases in production capacity.

Abroad, Canadian companies, while adhering to host country legislation, have based their operations on Canadian environmental quality standards and regulations in the absence of detailed country-specific regulatory requirements. As risk management should take full account of differing climatic and environmental conditions, each host nation needs to develop its environmental protection legislation in accordance with the particulars of its environment and ecosystems.

## **THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT**

**C**ommercial mining/minerals and metals activities occur in more than 150 countries. All countries are dependent on imports of minerals and metals products for their industrialization, including equipment to implement the technologies for sustainable development, and for consumer goods that enhance quality of life. At the same time there is a mounting need for countries and governments around the world to collaborate in the development of solutions to environmental concerns and other challenges.

International efforts toward the sound management of minerals and metals are evolving. Traditionally, these substances have been covered under the rubric of chemicals. Canada's perspective is that the international community needs to recognize that minerals and metals possess roles and behaviours in the environment that are often much different than that of organic chemicals. Canada will seek to ensure implementation of international regulatory and related approaches for managing products and materials that exhibit risk factors of concern while allowing for the safe production, transportation, use, reuse, recycling, or disposal of mineral and metal products and raw materials. The Canadian government also proposes consideration of an integrated mechanism at the international level that will provide for the full range of appropriate instruments from legally binding agreements to government-sponsored non-regulatory approaches to voluntary industry initiatives.