

And between our coasts thousands of our lakes and trees are dead because of acid rain. Until acid rain is curtailed even more of our forests and water will die.

Acid rain and natural resource depletion are not problems unique to Canada, no more so than damage being inflicted on our planet's atmosphere. The combined effects of climate change, ozone depletion and transboundary air pollution such as acid rain could wreak havoc around the world.

While the prospects are grim we can take at least some comfort from the fact that the message of the World Commission on Environment and Development is now widely accepted.

More and more nations agree that environmental degradation poses a serious threat to sustained economic development and ultimately to global security. With it has come the growing recognition that governments and multilateral organizations must find effective means to maintain and enhance the quality of our basic ecological support systems.

We must harness the needed expertise whenever we can.

The OECD has a special responsibility in this regard. Its proven analytical capacity should be utilized to refine the concept of sustainable development. Such a framework would enable government and industry to implement policies and programs that are environmentally sound.

My colleague, the Minister of Finance has made some practical and innovative suggestions for how the OECD could undertake this work.

The OECD also has a role in broadening the dialogue on the environment through, for example, organizing a multisectoral advisory board on sustainable development. Such an approach, as experience in Canada shows, could promote the kind of exchange that can produce innovative but pragmatic proposals to respond to the challenges of sustainable development.

Canada would like to see a link established between the 1991 OECD Environment Committee Ministerial and the OECD Ministerial Meeting that same year. Such a link would give a focal point to new OECD environment and economy activities, and symbolize the integration of environment and economy issues within the OECD.