

Witnesses before the Committee were consistent in their praise of the manner in which consensus and the Canadian agenda were achieved. As Tim Draimin told the Committee:

Canada provided important leadership in the UNCED process leading up to Rio. . . . Canada set an example by encouraging NGO access to the process, sharing information, and allowing for important participation in policy development.<sup>16</sup>

This praise was echoed by Janine Ferretti:

The involvement of NGOs in the UNCED process at the national level by the Canadian government and at the international level by the UN system has set new standards for more open policy-making. We can't go back; we can only go forward.<sup>17</sup>

Nicole Senécal, Vice-President, Policy Branch, Canadian International Development Agency, said of the Canadian delegation to Rio:

. . . we led the way by including individuals from NGOs, the business community, and other major groups, including women and indigenous people, in our delegation.<sup>18</sup>

The Committee is in agreement that the participation of all sectors of Canadian society not only strengthens the decision-making process but through increased accountability also ensures a higher level of ultimate success.

## **Recommendation No. 2**

**The Committee recommends, as Canada embarks upon the transition to sustainable development, that the Rio Way (transparency, inclusiveness and accountability) become established as the fundamental basis for decision-making and policy development.**

During the introductory portion of the Committee's hearings a number of individuals, both witnesses and a Committee member, expressed concern that a national body no longer exists to coordinate the follow-up to Rio. In preparation for UNCED, the National Secretariat coordinated the activities of CIDA, External Affairs International Trade and Commerce, and Environment Canada, and facilitated NGO input through the Canadian Participatory Committee. The National Secretariat was officially disbanded 20 November 1992. As Tim Draimin reported to the Committee:

Important institutional changes and reform need to come about if existing institutions are to promote sustainability effectively. At the national level, the federal government must be able to guarantee ongoing inter-ministerial policy coordination. It is distressing to watch both the dissolution of key structures, such as the UNCED interdepartmental working groups, and the departure of key personnel, without the emergence of any meaningful replacement coordinating structures. The coordination vacuum, if allowed to remain, will undermine the sustainability agenda.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Environment*, Issue No. 46, 17 November 1992, p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11-12.