

PART III, SECTION IV

MANAGING FRAGILE

ECOSYSTEMS: SUSTAINABLE

MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Chapter 13 of Agenda 21 responds to the need to manage land use in mountain regions and their watersheds carefully. Canada does not generally face population pressures in its mountain regions. Nonetheless, economic activities in mountain regions have come under increased scrutiny.

Mountain Ecosystems

As noted in the section on land use, there is a growing reliance on integrated land use and resource management planning. This helps ensure that development in Canada's mountain ecosystems is environmentally sustainable. Watershed planning is one such mechanism, traditionally used at the community level and now increasingly used at a regional level.

The development of sustainable development strategies in Canada has resulted in new policy initiatives in the resource development sectors. These, in turn, should have a positive influence on the sustainability of development in mountain ecosystems. For example, as the section of this report on forests makes clear, that sector has made many changes. Similar provincial strategies have focused attention on mining issues, including improved techniques, waste disposal practices, and rehabilitation of old or abandoned mine sites. As well, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE), together with two provincial round tables, initiated a dialogue in 1992 that resulted in a code of ethics for tourists and the tourism industry.

Protected Mountain Areas

The establishment and management of protected areas is integral to sustainable development. Mountain areas are well represented in Canada's national parks system and