

protection. This can only be achieved if nations establish global partnerships involving governments, their citizens, and key sectors of civil society.

## Agenda 21

Agenda 21 is a blueprint of action for global sustainable development into the 21st century that flows from the 27 principles of the Rio Declaration. Of key interest to Indigenous people is the perspective that sustainable development is a concept in which human and environmental concerns are interrelated. Unlike some regions of the globe, the Arctic did not receive specific attention in Agenda 21.

While Agenda 21 contains 40 chapters, all of interest to Indigenous peoples, it is Chapter 26, "Recognizing and Strengthening the Role of Indigenous People and Their Communities", that is specifically directed at Indigenous people. Three main objectives provide a platform for Indigenous peoples, in partnership with governments, to work together to build a common approach to the challenge of integrating environment and development issues.

Agenda 21 has adopted an ecosystem and regional approach to environmental management that complements the perspective of northern Indigenous communities. Other chapters of Agenda 21 relating to integrated resource management, consumption patterns, human resources, and environmental education offer guidelines that are useful in furthering the aims of sustainability in the Canadian North.

## PARTNERSHIP BUILDING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CANADIAN ARCTIC

### Strengthening Northern Indigenous Communities

The Government of Canada continues to make efforts, particularly in response to the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (1996), to empower Canadian Indigenous communities in respect of land and resource management, and is committed to resolving the outstanding land claims of Indigenous communities in northern Canada and to negotiate self-government arrangements. Gradually, these land claims and self-government efforts have been converging with sustainable development agendas.

*"As people who have lived in harmony with nature and close to the land for centuries, aboriginal peoples of Canada have developed an immensely valuable information base and expertise which can be shared with the rest of Canadian society...These facts, coupled with the general recognition that decision-making should involve people affected by the decisions, have made governments... aware of the need to work together with aboriginal peoples..."*

—Canada's National Report: United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1991

*Canada's commitment to sustainable development is based on seven guiding principles articulated in A Guide to Green Government: an integrated approach, continuous improvement, accountability, shared stewardship, an ecosystem approach, a precautionary approach, and pollution prevention.*