

FOREWORD

At the invitation of the Government of Canada, more than 300 world experts – leaders in science, law and the environment; ministers of government; economists; industrialists; policy analysts; and officials from international agencies assembled in Toronto, Ontario, Canada from June 27-30, 1988 to consider the threats posed by the changing global atmosphere and how they might be addressed. They came from 46 countries and quickly arrived at a consensus that the concerns about the effects of atmospheric change – greenhouse gases, ozone-layer depleting substances, toxics, smog and acid rain – are justified and that the time to act on the problems is now. The Conference was the first direct response to the call for action of the UN's World Commission on Environment and Development. It was also the first comprehensive meeting between specialists on the issues at hand and high-level policy-makers. The significance of the event was underscored by the participation of Prime Ministers Mulroney of Canada and Brundtland of Norway, the participation of Ministers McMillan and Masse (Canada), Salim (Indonesia), Nijpels (Netherlands), Cissokho (Senegal), Luttenbarck Batalha (Brazil), Harilla (Morocco), by Senator Wirth (United States) and by ambassadors from Algeria, Canada, The Maldives, and Sweden.

The message from the Toronto Conference was clear. The Earth's atmosphere is being changed at an unprecedented rate, primarily by humanity's ever-expanding energy consumption, and these changes represent a major threat to global health and security. Sound policies must be quickly developed and implemented to provide for the protection of the planet's atmosphere. That message and an agenda for action are embodied in this Statement of the Conference's conclusions and recommendations. The Statement builds on important preceding conferences and workshops, and draws heavily from ideas and discussion of the Conference's 12 Working Groups. Its careful reading is recommended to all decision-makers seeking solutions to the problems of climate change.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on the Conference Statement Committee. These colleagues, who worked long and difficult hours in drafting the Conference Statement and who also served as advisors on Conference planning over the past two years, are J. P. Bruce, G. Goodman, J. Jaeger, G. A. McKay, J. MacNeill, M. Oppenheimer, and P. Usher. Dr. Jaeger also produced the main background paper to the Conference. In addition I must thank the Conference General Chairman, Canada's Ambassador to the United Nations, Stephen Lewis, for his important contributions to the final draft of the Statement.

My thanks also go to the many international experts who wrote the theme papers that provided background to the Conference discussions, to the chairpersons and rapporteurs who so skillfully managed the Working Group sessions, to those who assumed special speaking assignments, and to persons and groups who prepared special reports for Working Group discussions and for general consideration by the Conference. Finally, I extend my deep gratitude to all who participated in the Conference – delegates, observers, media and staff – and thereby contributed to its outstanding success. Their collective efforts constitute a landmark in confronting one of humankind's biggest challenges.

I believe the Conference will prove to have been an important step forward in reconciling environmental, societal and developmental goals. We still have a long way to go. However, I am confident that the Toronto Conference gave us the right agenda and conviction to act. It also provided an opportunity to share our views with world leaders from many disciplines – scientific, social and political.

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Conference Director