

emissions trading, credits for joint projects and for financing emission-reduction projects, greater participation by developing countries, a compliance regime, and such technical issues as how to measure the contribution of forests to the reduction of greenhouse gases.

Forests

At the G-8 Denver Summit in 1997, leaders called on all countries to make a long-term commitment toward achieving sustainable forest management worldwide and to immediately implement recommendations put forward by the now-disbanded Intergovernmental Panel on Forests under the direction of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. Leaders also requested that G-8 forest experts develop an action program complementing existing processes and strengthening some current activities. This action program, which will be presented by G-8 foreign ministers, deals with activities within G-8 countries, work being done in developing countries under bilateral assistance programs, and existing intergovernmental processes, in particular the new Intergovernmental Forum on Forests. In the year 2000, the forum will make a recommendation on the merits of negotiating an international forest convention. Canada strongly favours such an effort, believing strong, legally binding commitments would bring effective action to implement sustainable forest management.

Freshwater resources

The quality and quantity of freshwater resources have emerged as major environmental, economic and social concerns, particularly in the developing world. Globally, water use is increasing at more than twice the rate of population growth. About one-third of the world's population lives in countries that are experiencing moderate to high stress on their water supplies. Water shortages, along with pollution, are causing widespread public health problems, limiting economic development and causing serious environmental degradation.

Identified as a critical issue at the 1997 Denver Summit, the protection of freshwater resources has been the focus of a number of international meetings this year. At the April 1998 session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, countries discussed measures for developing a comprehensive international plan to address sustainable freshwater management. Canada, with a strong capacity in managing freshwater resources, will continue to play an active international role, particularly in the developing world.