

CHAPTER SIX

MONITORING PROGRESS AND REVISING THE STRATEGY

6.1 Our final chapter is brief but, the Committee believes, essential and important. Efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as those embodied in the National Action Strategy on Global Warming, must be sustained over several decades. Priorities, and public and governmental attention, are apt over time to move to other issues. We have the "lost decade" of the 1980s as evidence of this in regard to energy conservation. Not merely is the present concern over global warming likely to diminish, especially if initial efforts appear to be bearing fruit, the strategies and options themselves will necessarily vary over time. In the Committee's view, an essential ingredient of success will be the existence of a continuing mechanism (or, preferably, several mechanisms) for monitoring the progress that is made and the opportunities that will arise for revising and improving the strategy for limiting greenhouse gas emissions.

6.2 To some extent this need has already been recognized and accepted by the federal government. The Green Plan indicates that the Action Strategy will include the following:

- an annual report to Parliament on progress in meeting energy efficiency objectives
- publication of detailed information on Canadian energy consumption by end-use
- publication of a discussion paper in spring 1991 on the use of economic instruments to achieve environmental objectives, including tax and emissions-trading options
- an inquiry into the environmental impact of electricity generation options
- annual reports on the state of the Canadian climate, beginning in 1991
- a volunteer network across the country to detect climate change, in place by 1996.¹

6.3 The relevance of, and need for, these commitments should be evident from the preceding chapters of our report. They do not, however, go far enough. It is not difficult, for example, to envisage a situation in which, whatever political party is in power, the enthusiasm of Environment Canada for an effective limitation strategy is not shared equally by other key departments. It was with this in mind that we made, and now reiterate, two recommendations in our interim report. The Committee believes that they have a wider relevance beyond the immediate issue of global warming, as Canada endeavours to move to a sustainable development path. Global warming is, however, by its diversity and enduring character an excellent demonstration of the need for these recommendations.

6.4 The Committee recommends that the Minister of Environment have the responsibility and authority to develop policies, programs and regulations that span the full range of activities of the federal government, analogous to the