

viewed the UNCED as an opportunity for all countries of the world to set specific goals for addressing issues such as climate change and biodiversity. However, as the meeting in Rio demonstrated, the developing countries have their own particular set of concerns pertaining to the relationship between development and the environment. Having undergone less and more recent industrialization, they have not generally subjected their national environments to as much stress as have many of the developed countries. Furthermore, being comparatively poorer, they frequently place a relatively higher priority on the immediate problem of overcoming poverty than of achieving environmental goals. For these reasons, they are reluctant to undertake commitments that could slow their development opportunities in order to pursue an agenda that many of them believe is primarily that of the developed countries.

The developing countries are also concerned about the threat of "green protectionism," trade protectionism in the guise of protection of the environment. They fear that protectionist interests in developed countries could usurp otherwise valid environmental goals in order to erect barriers to imports from the developing countries. In addition, many smaller countries are concerned that larger countries could infringe on their sovereignty by forcing them to adopt environmental priorities other than their own.

In spite of differences such as these, it is evident that developed and developing countries share a number of common objectives in their pursuit of sustainable development. These include the need to secure sufficient financial resources from both domestic and foreign sources; the necessity of ensuring adequate flows and full utilization of the appropriate environmental technology; and the desire to develop and implement transitional rules that will facilitate the restructuring of industries in developing countries. In a similar vein, the special circumstances of the economies in transition (i.e., Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union) require individual consideration.

Notwithstanding the apparent "north-south" cleavage, the UNCED succeeded in demonstrating the importance of gaining a better understanding of the trade and environment interface, and more particularly, the implications of this interface for development. The Conference also recognized the complexity of the relationship and the importance of the ongoing work of the GATT in this area.

Canada was a key player at Rio. The constructive role of the Canadian delegation, and its efforts to incorporate the interests of as broad a range of stakeholders as possible in the negotiations leading up to the UNCED were widely recognized. Canada's Prime Minister was the first major world leader to announce a commitment to sign and ratify, by the end of 1992, both the Climate Change Convention and the Biodiversity Convention.

In Rio, Canada also succeeded in placing the issue of overfishing on the international agenda. The UNCED nations accepted a number of principles intended to govern the conservation of the high-seas fisheries. They also agreed that an international conference focusing on this question would be held in 1993. In preparation for that conference, Canada will host a preparatory meeting in St. John's, Newfoundland in January 1993.

The Statement of Principles on Forests that was developed at Rio is the first step toward a definition of sustainable forest practices and the establishment of rules that will encourage individual nations to take action to preserve their forest resources. Canada will work