

Sustainable Development in April 1997 on key forest policy issues.

NEXT STEPS—A LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT FOR FORESTS

Committed to promoting sustainable forest management worldwide, Canada is working closely with other countries to improve the state of the world's forests. One of the best ways to accomplish this is by addressing all forests and all forest values in a comprehensive manner, preferably through a legally binding international instrument.

Clearly, there is a need to continue the forest dialogue on outstanding issues beyond the IPF. Canada contends that real progress can only be made through the establishment of an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, recognizing that it will take time to reach agreement on what should be contained in a convention on forests.

As evidenced by the discussions of the IPF, North-South partnerships, rather than polarization, have become the norm. Further, our collective understanding of sustainable forest management has improved, especially with the development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management for implementation at national, regional, and international levels. The global community now has a firmer grasp of many of the complex and interconnected issues and, in view of such progress, is ready to translate verbal commitments into action. Canada is convinced that the best way to move to this next stage is through a dedicated, legally binding instrument for forests.

Benefits

An Integrated and Comprehensive Forest Agenda

The global forest community now clearly recognizes the need to address all forests and all forest values in a balanced and