

towards this goal should begin urgently, and clearly UNEP (as well as the WMO and the IPCC), must play an important role. An urgent question to be addressed at this session of the Governing Council is the timing and focus for the negotiation of the convention. In this process UNEP has been vital in its conceptualizing, coordinating, codifying and catalyzing role.

We as a community, have already acted together to address major global environmental problems. For example, countries recently agreed in Helsinki on the need to strengthen the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. As well, countries agreed in Basel on a Convention to Control the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal. These two instruments, which reflect the international political will to address global environmental problems, could well serve the international community as useful benchmarks for addressing other issues. These various conventions are all important elements which reflect the broadening of the international environmental dialogue.

However, the wide range of global environmental problems will require more such efforts. For these reasons, Canada supports the UN initiative to convene the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development.

For this conference to be successful in terms of realizing concrete results, we believe the preparatory process will be crucial. As I have stated earlier, it is important that regional conferences take place prior to the 1992 conference. Canada will be an active participant at the Economic Commission for Europe regional conference. We note that the Latin American and Caribbean region is also preparing a similar meeting. I sincerely hope other regions are planning to hold their own conferences, since they will have substantial input to the outcome of the 1992 conference.

We have come a long way since the historic 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment which gave birth to this organization. Environment and economic development, once thought to be competing solitudes, are now recognized as being inseparably linked. In all parts of the world, we are learning that a development process which does not respect environmental priorities is ultimately self-defeating. Such a process serves only to increase for future generations land degradation and resource depletion. This in turn creates the vicious poverty cycle which fuels increased environmental degradation. This can lead to devastating social and economic upheaval for the international community in the coming century.