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The world is facing an environmental crisis of unparalleled magnitude. Nature is sending us an urgent message that we ignore at our peril. The signs of this crisis are all around us: shortages of timber, exhausted soil, desertification, depleted fish stocks, seals dying in the North Sea, beluga whales washing ashore in the St. Lawrence River. Some even maintain that we have reached a point where the survival of humanity is at risk.

— Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, speaking to the General Assembly of the United Nations on September 29, 1988.

The global environment that everyone has always taken for granted is heading into a period of historic change. For the first time, humans have the power to change the environment on a global scale and they are using that power.

In recent years, one world leader after another has agreed that if environmental problems are not checked they will pose a threat to humanity as grave as that of nuclear war. Furthermore, the World Commission on Environment and Development — the Brundtland Commission — has said that humanity must adopt styles of development that are "environmentally sustainable."

"Sustainable development" will demand reform of energy production and consumption, farming, forestry, smelting, and petroleum and chemical manufacture, all of which

In the words of Monique Landry, Minister for External Relations and International Development: "Management of the environment is inevitably management of the future."

have a serious environmental impact. This concept calls for lower consumption of raw materials and of energy per capita and per unit of production. It will likely lead to different forms of consumption.

Global atmospheric changes such as the thinning of the ozone layer and the "greenhouse effect" show that no country is an island. All countries must co-operate as never before to find sustainable lifestyles at a planetary level.

This issue of *Canada Reports* outlines some of the environmental problems facing the world and some of the solutions that have been found in the past. It is not easy reading. The prognosis is grim unless people change their ways. But humanity must and will rise to the global challenge.



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