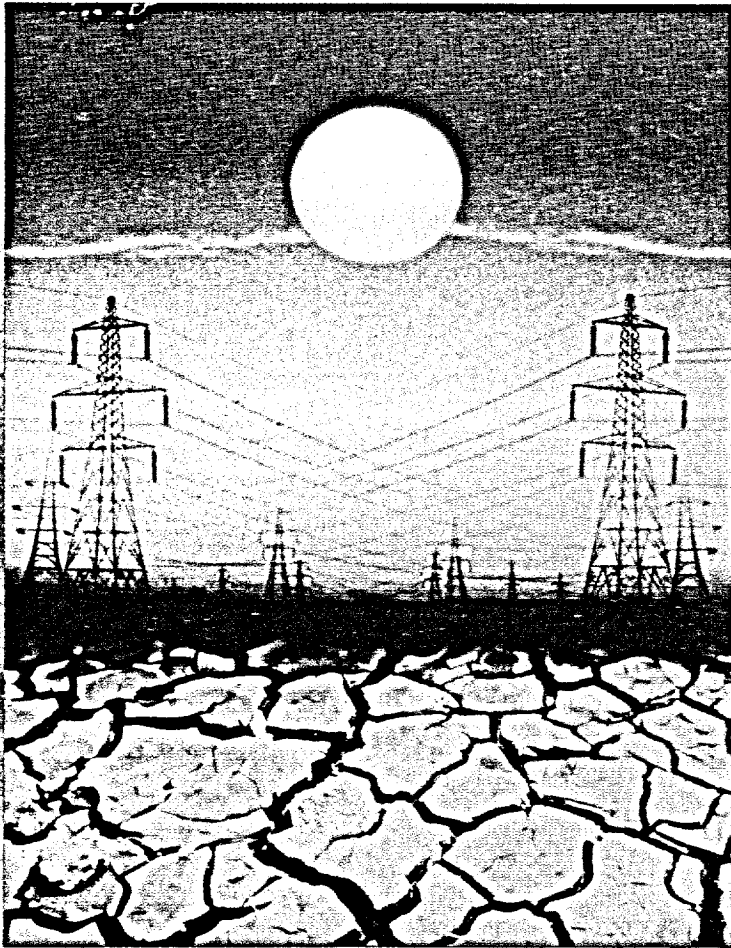


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# CANADA AND THE WORLD ENVIRONMENT

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External Affairs and  
International Trade Canada

Canada



# MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Canadians, we live in a country that has been specially blessed. We have more fresh water, more forests and more natural resources than most countries do. These have brought us many benefits, including one of the highest standards of living in the world. At the same time, however, we are responsible for managing these resources well — in the clear knowledge that while many are renewable, all are fragile.

Our responsibility is not just to ourselves but to everyone, everywhere. We live in a world in which environmental problems that occur in one country have an effect on many others. We just need to look at the impact of acid rain — or global warming — to realize that shared responsibility means we must work together to solve global environmental problems.

This booklet looks at international environmental issues and sketches out the role that we have been playing so far. It also looks to the future — at new areas of problems ahead where international action is essential.

Dealing with global environmental problems may be difficult, but it is imperative and it must remain an integral part of Canadian foreign policy. I hope that this booklet will contribute to an understanding of the challenges and opportunities for changes that lie ahead.

The Honourable Barbara McDougall  
Secretary of State for External Affairs

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Min. des Affaires extérieures

FEB 14 1997

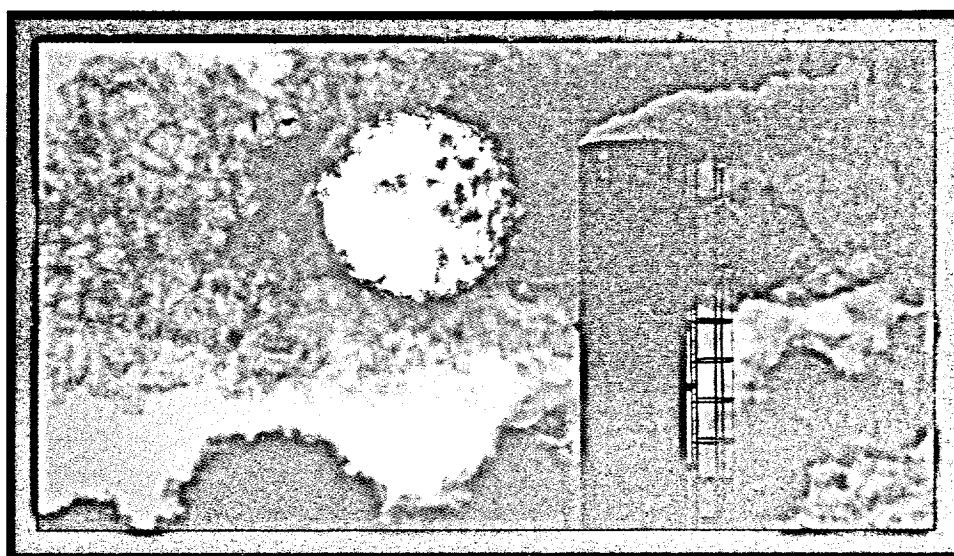
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## ENVIRONMENTAL INTERDEPENDENCE

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Protecting the environment is a Canadian priority. Public opinion polls consistently show that environmental degradation deeply concerns Canadians. This concern is being translated into action by governments, industries, non-governmental organizations, community groups, scientists and individuals across the country:

- There are over 1 800 active environmental organizations in Canada.
- A growing number of Canadian businesses are applying environmental codes of ethics and using cleaner technologies.
- Canadian families and individuals are making changes in their lifestyles to reflect concern for the environment.
- The Green Plan, one of the most comprehensive long-range environmental programs put forward in any country, was released by the federal government in 1990 after extensive consultation with Canadians.

As citizens of one of the world's most beautiful countries, Canadians are especially aware of the extent of the ravages that pollution can bring. No one individual, group or government alone has the capability of bringing this blight under control. Only by mobilizing all available energies and pooling our resources can we effectively combat the deterioration of our environment.

(Prime Minister Brian Mulroney)

What defence has been to the world's leaders for the past 40 years, the environment will be for the next 40: an intractable exercise in national self-restraint, where gains depend less on what individual countries do than on whether many countries trust each other and will work together.

(*The Economist*, July 15, 1989)

But there is only so much we can do on our own. Environmental problems have no respect for national boundaries. Canadian environmental issues combine with those of our neighbours to give rise to regional problems; regional problems lead to global issues; and global environmental issues, in turn, have profound consequences for Canada's environment and economy. To ensure a healthy environment for Canadians, we must work together with other countries to ensure a healthy global environment.

Our health, economic prosperity and quality of life depend on international collaboration to maintain environmental quality. One example is acid rain. About half the pollutants that cause acid rain in Canada originate in the United States. On March 13, 1991, the Canada-U.S. Air Quality Accord was signed in Ottawa. Capping 10 years of effort by the Canadian government, environmental organizations and individuals in both Canada and the U.S., this agreement calls for both countries to reduce their emissions by 50 per cent, a target that Canada adopted for its own emissions several years ago.

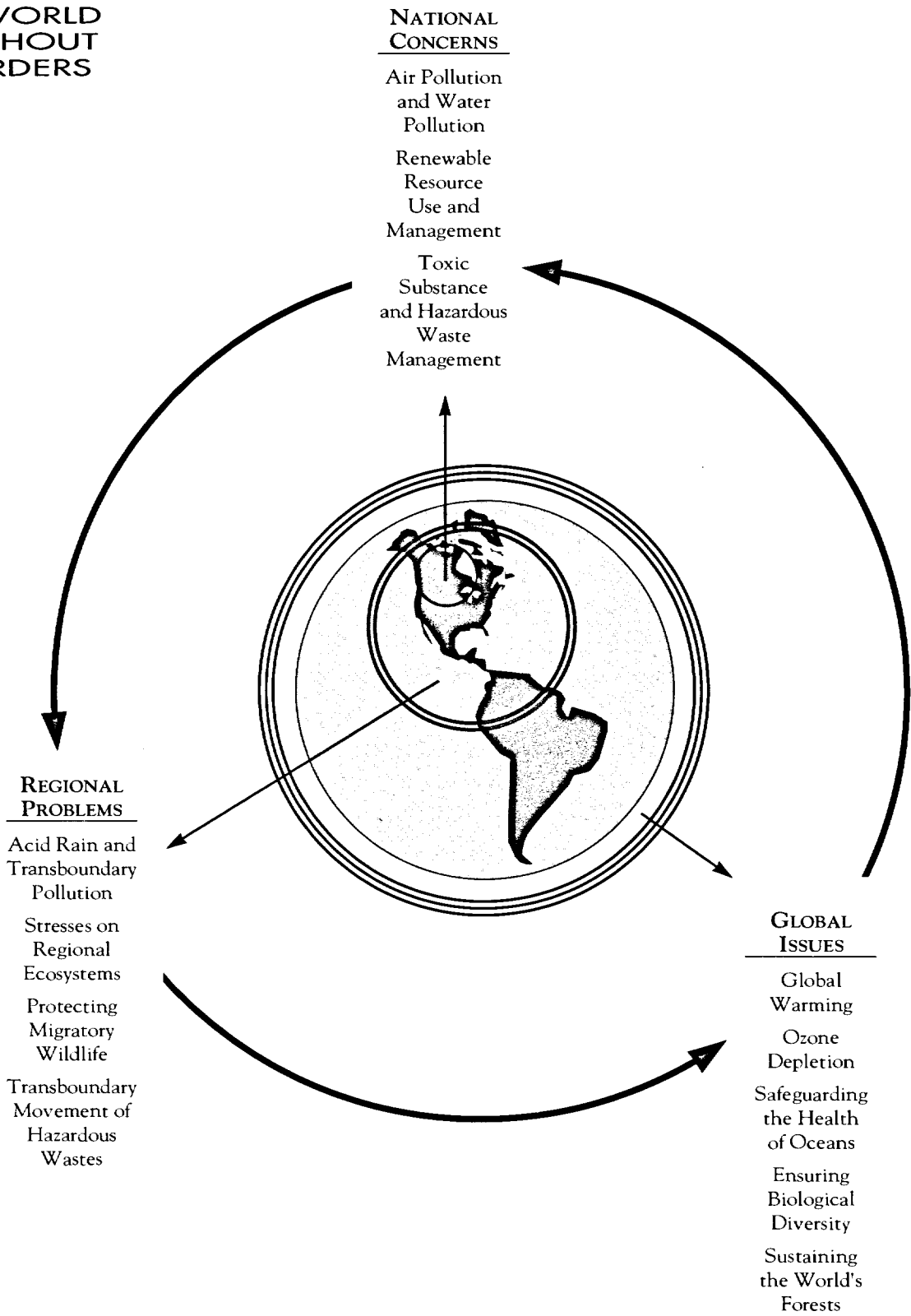
While Canada's acid rain problem can be resolved through collaboration with our neighbour, issues like global warming and loss of biological diversity involve virtually every country on earth. Progress in resolving these issues is complicated by the fact that developing countries have

difficulty financing the measures necessary to deal with them. However, we must find solutions to global environmental problems. The consequences for Canadians of not doing so are serious.

- Further depletion of the ozone layer threatens human health and could damage the agricultural and forestry industries.
- Increases in global warming are likely to have major economic and environmental impacts on Canada. They include possible flooding of towns and cities on our east and west coasts, increased drought, a higher risk of forest fires, lower water levels in the Great Lakes, soil degradation and damage to fish populations.
- Pollution of the oceans and declines in fish stocks threaten the livelihood of thousands of Canadians and the economies of whole regions.
- Loss of biological diversity threatens our access to species of plants and animals that may be necessary to develop new products and technologies.
- Worldwide deforestation amounts to approximately 17 million hectares annually. Forest loss on this scale affects planetary recycling of such vital elements as carbon, nitrogen and oxygen and is a major contributor to global warming.

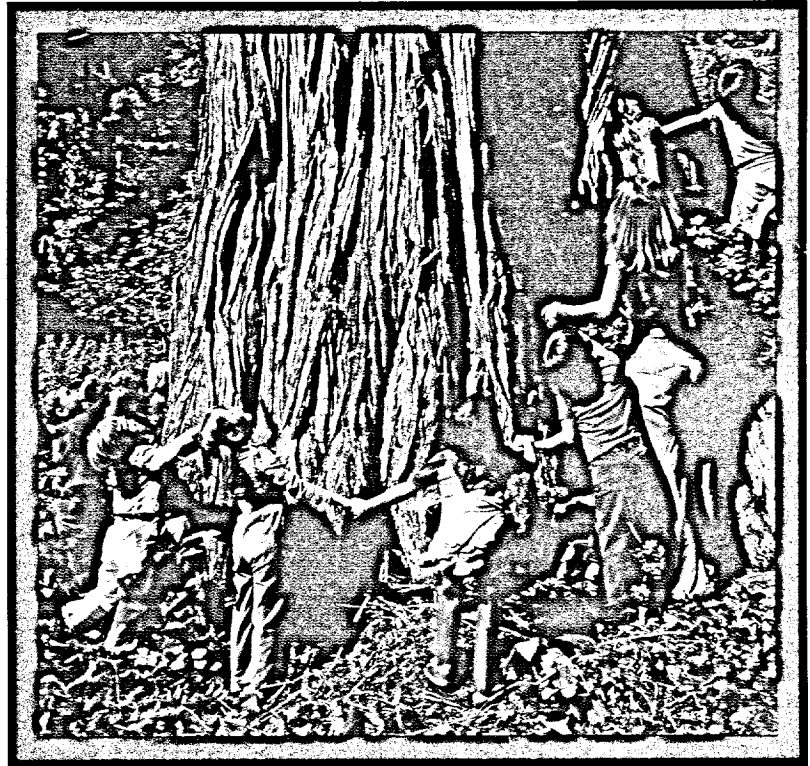
On a more positive note, taking action to protect the global environment presents Canadians with certain advantages. Export and trade opportunities will result from growing international demand for goods, technologies and services that help protect and improve the environment. Canadians can contribute to a healthier world and gain international goodwill by being in the vanguard of those who are providing solutions to world environmental problems. At the same time, curbing pollution at home through more efficient use of resources will help improve the competitiveness of Canadian industries.

**A WORLD  
WITHOUT  
BORDERS**





## THE ENVIRONMENT: A CORNERSTONE OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY



In developing Canada's international environmental policy, departments and agencies within the federal government collaborate with their provincial and territorial partners. At the federal level, External Affairs and International Trade Canada plays a leading role, along with Environment Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), in forging a Canadian strategy on the global environment.

Canada is the only country that belongs to all three of the Group of Seven industrial democracies, the Commonwealth and La Francophonie. It was a founding member of the United Nations and is a strong supporter of the UN system. In all of these forums and elsewhere on the international stage, Canada is working with other countries to protect the world environment in ways that ensure continued domestic and global economic development.

This has been our approach since 1972, when the world's first major international conference on the environment was held in Stockholm. Canada played an important role in the conference, with a Canadian, Maurice Strong, serving as Secretary-General. Twenty years later, Canada is once

again a key player in an environmental conference, this time in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which will take place in Brazil in 1992. The most significant environmental event of the decade, UNCED will also be chaired by Mr. Strong and will involve the discussion of many proposals and ideas developed and elaborated by Canada in conjunction with our international partners.

Canada's Green Plan states that achieving global co-operation, understanding and progress on environmental issues is a cornerstone of our foreign policy.

The increased prominence of regional and global environmental issues makes it imperative for Canadians to strengthen international co-operation and to forge new international partnerships — bilateral and multilateral — so that those issues can be addressed effectively ... Indeed, finding lasting solutions to the increasing scope and complexity of environmental issues will demand greater international co-operation than ever before.

In laying this cornerstone of our foreign policy, Canada is guided by a number of priorities and objectives based on Canadian needs and interests.

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### Foreign Policy Priorities for the Environment

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- strengthening international institutions
- developing international partnerships
- enhancing trade in environmental goods and services
- developing a global regime of environmental law

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### Objectives

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- slowing global warming
- stopping ozone depletion
- sustaining the world's forests
- ensuring biological diversity
- safeguarding the oceans
- protecting the Arctic
- governing transportation and trade in hazardous wastes

## PRIORITIES

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### **STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

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When the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment took place in Stockholm in 1972, there existed no organization to co-ordinate international efforts on the global environment. As a result of the Stockholm Conference, the UN General Assembly established the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Today, with the emergence of issues like the greenhouse effect and depletion of the ozone layer, institutions such as UNEP need to be strengthened and supported by all countries.

Canada has always been a strong supporter of the United Nations and its related agencies. Our reputation as an actor on the international stage is being upheld in part through our commitment to international environmental efforts. The Green Plan indicates that, over the next six years,

Canada will increase its funding of key international institutions needed to promote multilateral solutions to environmental problems. These include:

- the United Nations Environment Program, which, as the principal environmental agency within the United Nations, promotes international co-operation in matters relating to the environment and advances multilateral negotiations on priority issues;
- the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), which facilitates worldwide co-operation on meteorology and climatology services;
- the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), which promotes international co-operation on the conservation, protection and management of nature; and
- the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which help maintain world cultural and natural heritage sites and protect the marine environment.

### **DEVELOPING INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Canada recognizes that protecting the global environment is a shared responsibility and that all countries must be partners in solving world environmental problems. For example, partnerships between rich and poor countries must be strengthened to ensure that developing countries are able to follow environmentally sustainable development paths. The full participation of developing countries in international agreements to curtail carbon dioxide emissions, promote sustainable forestry or conserve the oceans and their living resources requires financial and technological help from the developed countries.

A prime example of this is the Multilateral Fund, established under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The Montreal Protocol provides an international framework and timetable by which countries have agreed to substitute more benign chemical products for chlorofluorocarbons and other substances that damage the ozone layer. But it is expensive to make these substitutions — an expense that developing countries can hardly afford. The Multilateral Fund, set at US\$ 240 million for the first three years, will enable these countries to participate in international efforts to protect the ozone layer by helping them acquire the necessary technologies.

Canada's contribution to the Fund has already been approved at \$15 million over three years, including support to establish the UN Secretariat for the Fund, which will be located in Montreal. Canada will support similar funding arrangements under future international environmental agreements.

1972 TO 1992

TWO DECADES  
OF CANADIAN  
INVOLVEMENT

			<u>MONTREAL PROTOCOL</u> Controls on ozone-depleting substances	
		<u>TORONTO CONFERENCE ON THE CHANGING ATMOSPHERE</u> Advancement of international dialogue on climate change	<u>HOUSTON SUMMIT</u> Prime Minister Mulroney calls for action on land-based sources of marine pollution	
<u>ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (ECE)</u> Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution	<u>MONTREAL PROTOCOL</u> Action taken to limit substances that deplete the ozone layer	<u>DAKAR RESOLUTION ON THE ENVIRONMENT</u> Environment included as permanent priority of La Francophonie on Canada's recommendation		<u>UN CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT &amp; DEVELOPMENT</u> New framework for North - South environmental co-operation



STOCKHOLM 1972  
Canada Key Player:  
Conference chaired by Canadian Maurice Strong; established United Nations Environment Program  
Strong first Secretary-General

REPORT OF  
THE WORLD  
COMMISSION ON  
ENVIRONMENT  
AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
Canada made a major contribution to the Commission

TORONTO  
ECONOMIC  
SUMMIT  
Canada puts environment on agenda

THE HAGUE  
DECLARATION  
Common resolve expressed to take action on climate change

NOORDWIJK  
DECLARATION  
Emission targets to combat climate change were investigated

PARIS SUMMIT  
Environment a central concern

LANGKAWI  
DECLARATION  
Major statement issued by Commonwealth leaders on need for urgent global action on the environment

LONDON SUMMIT  
Participants committed themselves to concrete results from UNCED

Other ways to co-operate with developing countries are being put in place. The World Bank, working with UNEP and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), is creating a Global Environment Facility (GEF). This Facility will provide resources to deal with problems such as protecting the ozone layer, biodiversity and international waters and combatting global warming. Canada supports the GEF concept and has been involved in its planning from the start.

Political change in Central and Eastern Europe has led to new initiatives on the environment. The Environmental Protection Centre for Central and Eastern Europe has recently been established in Budapest as a source of information and assistance to address the region's critical environmental problems. Canada is a founding member of the Centre and contributes financially to its activities and projects.

### **Bilateral Partnerships**

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Geography dictates that our single most important environmental partner is the United States. Both Canada and the United States have established institutions and mechanisms to minimize the detrimental effects we have on our shared environment.

Co-operation on acid rain, as mentioned above, is one example. Improving water quality in the Great Lakes is another. The International Joint Commission (IJC), the first of many Canadian-American bilateral organizations to be formed, was established in 1912 to deal mainly with the conservation and development of water resources around the Great Lakes. The IJC developed the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, signed by both countries in 1972 and expanded twice since then. Based on the idea that improving water quality requires that the whole ecosystem of the region be considered, the Agreement commits Canada and the U.S. to a range of measures to restore and maintain ecosystem integrity in and around the Great Lakes.

Another area of Canada-U.S. environmental co-operation is in the protection of migratory bird populations. Since early in this century, bird habitats have been altered by agricultural activities and urbanization in both countries. Efforts to protect bird habitats have given rise to the Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds, established between the United States and Canada in 1916 and recently extended to include Mexico. The 1986 North American Waterfowl Management Plan went a step further by bringing together governments and private interests to help manage and protect approximately 2.5 million hectares of waterfowl habitat.

Joint efforts in dealing with common resource management and environmental problems will continue. For example, between 50 and 60 per cent of the smog in the Windsor-Quebec City corridor comes from U.S. sources. The Canadian government is working with the United States on an agreement to address this problem through improvements to the Transboundary Air Quality Agreement.

The United States is not our only bilateral partner. We have a long history of co-operation with countries with whom we share environmental resources such as migratory species, as well as exchanges of science and technologies that apply to environmental protection. Environmental co-operation agreements with the Soviet Union, Mexico, Germany and the Netherlands are already in place. The Green Plan strengthens Canada's commitment to bilateral environmental relations, with special consideration accorded to developing countries and the countries of Eastern and Central Europe.

Through its Official Development Assistance (ODA) program, Canada supports environmental initiatives in the Third World. Poverty takes its toll on the environment, and involving developing countries in the search for equitable solutions to global environmental problems is crucial.

Environment has been a growing priority in Canada's aid efforts in recent years, as our thinking regarding sustainable development has taken shape. CIDA is working to revise its policy and implementing strategy on environment and development, based on the five key aspects of sustainable development — not only environmental, but also economic, social, political and cultural.

Canada has made substantial contributions to protecting or improving the environment in many parts of Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific, with CIDA focusing on institution-building, human resource development and support for non-governmental organizations. Canada financially supports developing country participation in important environmental conferences and negotiations, and contributes significantly to programs to help these countries improve their capabilities to undertake important scientific research and monitoring.

### Environmental Indicators

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Canada is working with its international partners to develop indicators of environmental quality and the state of natural resources. These indicators will help governments and businesses make decisions to protect the environment and conserve natural resources for future generations. As a result of an initiative by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney at the G-7 Paris Summit in 1989, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has developed environmental indicators to help decision-makers around the world develop strategies to promote sustainable development. At a meeting of OECD Environment Ministers in early 1991, a commitment was made to continue their development and systematic use.

At home, Canada has introduced a set of pilot environmental indicators and launched a study of natural resource accounts. These projects are part of the federal government's effort to prepare a draft environmental accounting framework to be in place by 1993.

## **ENHANCING TRADE IN ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS AND SERVICES**

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In 1987, the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) captured the world's imagination with the concept of sustainable development or "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

An important aspect of sustainable development is using goods, services and technologies that can contribute to economic development while relieving stress on the environment. World markets reflect a growing demand for these products, which present a significant export opportunity for Canadians.

The environmental industry sector in Canada is valued at \$7 to \$10 billion annually and accounts for some 150 000 jobs. Many Canadian businesses are developing or using environmental technologies and products that could be exported. The federal government, through External Affairs and International Trade Canada and Industry, Science and Technology Canada, is taking steps to identify environmental opportunities around the world for Canadian business and to help Canadian suppliers take advantage of foreign markets.

Trade in environmental products is also being promoted through the Globe conference and trade show series. The Globe series, held in Vancouver, is a co-operative venture between a private-sector company and the federal government. Globe '90 involved over 3 000 delegates representing industries, governments, environmental groups and international environmental organizations from more than 70 countries. Largely due to the success of Globe '90, the series has become a biennial event and has been included in Canada's national environmental agenda — the Green Plan. Globe '92 is scheduled to take place in Vancouver from March 16 to 20, 1992.

While environmental protection offers trade opportunities, there is also a risk that trade disruptions and distortions might result from the inappropriate use of environmental restrictions. By promoting sustainable development at home and abroad, the Government of Canada works to prevent harmful disruptions in trade from taking place.

## **DEVELOPING A GLOBAL REGIME OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW**

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To protect ourselves from threats to the global environment, we must join together with our international partners in formulating a fair and equitable regime of international environmental law. As well, because different environmental standards between countries can pose serious distortions in and obstacles to international trade, it is crucial that the countries of the world come to a common understanding and adopt common approaches to environmental problems.



Canada has played an important part in negotiating conventions and protocols to protect the oceans and the ozone layer, as well as to control air pollution, international movements of hazardous wastes and trafficking in endangered species. Further efforts are needed to strengthen international law on other environmental issues, including climate change, biological diversity, forests, control of land-based marine pollution, pollution of the Arctic and other important areas.

One major contribution to this effort is the success achieved by Canada and other countries in regional agreements negotiated within the framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). The 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, strengthened by specific implementing protocols on sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, was a significant milestone in curbing sources of air pollution. ECE countries have also negotiated an important convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in the transboundary context.

Canada's long-term goal is to work with others to build a new global environmental regime among nations, rich and poor, north and south, which rests on a sound body of international law and is based on the understanding that we must work together to ensure a prosperous common future. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will be crucial in this endeavour.

### **Participating in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development**

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In June 1992, Brazil will host the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which is likely to be the most significant international conference on environmental issues in many years. The Conference will mark the 20th anniversary of the historic Stockholm Conference, which represented a pioneering effort in the development of a global environmental outlook. Also known as the "Earth Summit," UNCED will focus the world's attention on the critical relationship between the environmental and the economic health of the planet and will provide an opportunity to advance international efforts on climate change, biological diversity, management of the world's forests and oceans, and other environment and development issues. The conference will be a summit of unprecedented proportions, involving up to 160 heads of government.

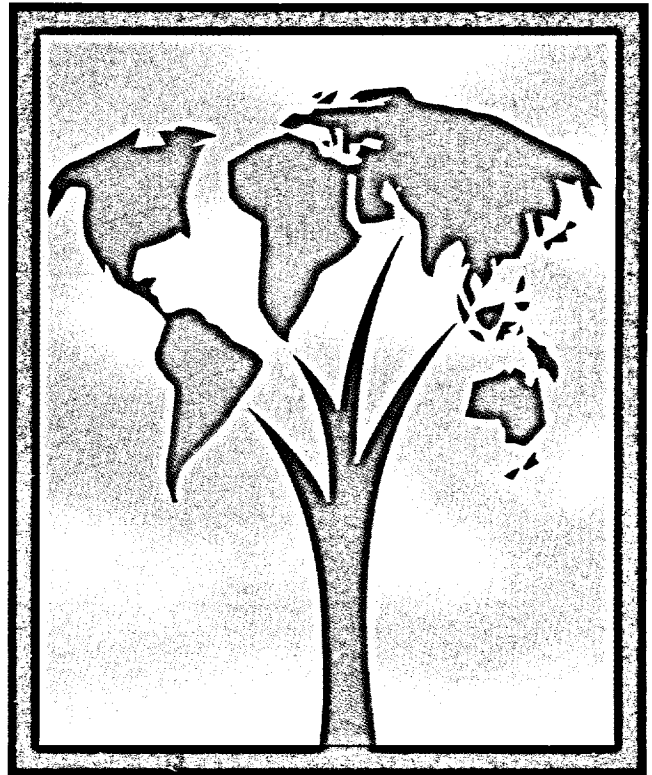
Canada is ready for 1992.

- An interdepartmental committee on UNCED, co-chaired by External Affairs and International Trade Canada and Environment Canada and consisting of 20 federal departments and agencies, has been formed to co-ordinate the federal government's preparations.
- Special issue groups have been established to draft Canadian positions on topics to be discussed at the Conference.

- A national secretariat is assisting Canadians to participate in the conference. Consultations are taking place with provincial and territorial governments as well as environment, development, business, industry, labour, church, university, women's and indigenous peoples' organizations.
- Canadian youth groups have been asked by the UN to help organize the participation of international youth.
- Canada is helping prepare studies to define the issues that will be discussed at the Conference, as well as assisting delegates from developing countries to participate.

## OBJECTIVES

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Canada is playing an important role in protecting the world environment. Our overall objective is to work with other countries to address the environmental challenges facing the international community in the most effective ways possible while preserving our national economic interests. Specifically, our efforts will be directed toward the following key international objectives.

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### **SLOWING GLOBAL WARMING**

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Global warming, sometimes referred to as “the greenhouse effect,” poses a major threat to Canadians and to the economy. Certain gases, including carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide, methane and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), insulate the atmosphere, trapping heat from the sun as it warms the earth. As a result of man-made production of these gases (known as greenhouse gases) in extremely large quantities, it is expected that the earth will undergo significant increases in temperature over the next 50 years.

Global warming could affect many of our economic activities, including agriculture, forestry, navigation, infrastructure, fishing and tourism. At the same time, because we produce considerable

amounts of carbon dioxide in our industrial, transportation and energy related activities, any international agreement to curtail emissions of greenhouse gases could have an impact on our economy. The federal government is working with its international partners to address the global warming issue in a way that takes into consideration our long-term economic and environmental interests.

- Canada hosted the Conference on the Changing Atmosphere in Toronto in the summer of 1988. Bringing together scientists, environmentalists, government officials and business representatives from around the world, the Toronto Conference helped set the agenda for international action on global warming.
- Canada is aggressively pursuing an International Framework Convention on Climate Change, with the hope that negotiations will be completed in time for countries to sign at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992.
- Canada has already made a commitment to stabilize emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases at 1990 levels by the year 2000 and has pledged to eliminate controlled CFCs by 1997. The National Action Strategy on Global Warming, developed by the federal government in co-operation with its provincial partners and announced in the Green Plan, provides a framework for addressing the global warming issue within Canada.

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### **STOPPING OZONE DEPLETION**

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The stratospheric ozone layer acts as a barrier against ultraviolet radiation, overexposure to which is known to cause skin and eye cancers, reduce crop yields and kill the phytoplankton that are at the base of the marine food chain. The costs, to both our health and our economic welfare, of allowing too much ultra-violet radiation to reach the earth's surface are extremely high. Protecting the ozone layer is essential to safeguard the health of Canadians and the ecosystem that serves as the foundation for our economy.

- Canada has been at the forefront of international efforts to control CFCs and other chemicals that deplete the ozone layer. Canada played a leading role in the negotiation of the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.
- At a conference held in London in June 1990, Canada was the first nation to ratify a strengthened protocol calling for the phase-out of CFCs by the year 2000 and other major ozone-depleting substances by 2005. Since then,

Canada has committed to adopting an even faster schedule for eliminating these chemicals, promising to phase out CFCs completely by 1997.

- The Montreal Protocol Secretariat is located in Montreal.

## **SUSTAINING THE WORLD'S FORESTS**

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Forestry is vital to our economy. Canada is endowed with approximately 10 per cent of the world's forests, and the export value of our forest products is higher than that of any other country. Each year, forestry generates over \$44 billion in economic activity and accounts for 1 of every 15 Canadian jobs.

Forests are also essential to environmental quality; they play a key role in the planetary recycling of carbon, nitrogen and oxygen and help stem global warming by acting as "carbon sinks." Forests influence temperature and rainfall, regulate the quality and quantity of freshwater systems and are responsible for a large portion of world economic activity. As home to innumerable plant and animal species, loss of forests is a major cause of reduction in biological diversity.

The world's forests are disappearing at an alarming rate. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, about 17 million hectares of forest are lost annually, mostly in tropical regions. Over three decades, this is equal to an area the size of India.

- Recognizing the seriousness of international deforestation, Prime Minister Mulroney joined with others at the 1990 G-7 Summit held in Houston to call for an instrument to promote sustainable development and conservation of the world's forests. Because of its importance for Canada's economy, Canada favours the development of an international instrument on forestry through the United Nations process. Multilateral efforts are now under way to bring forward a global statement of principles for the conservation and sustainable development of the world's forests. Canada will ensure that this safeguards our national interest as well as the world's forests, while helping promote Canadian competitiveness in this vital sector.
- Canada is taking part in international initiatives to promote sustainable forestry practices. Our international aid agency, the Canadian International Development Agency, has long been one of the leading supporters of international forestry programs such as the Tropical Forestry Action Program, which has succeeded in more than doubling the amount of foreign assistance to sustainable forest management in developing countries.
- At home, the Canadian federal and provincial governments are forging partnerships with industry to manage our forest resources in a way that maintains their future productivity and capacity for regeneration.

## **ENSURING BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

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The destruction of forests, wetlands, rivers and other ecosystems by humans is driving countless species of plants and animals to extinction. Though it is difficult to establish exact figures, it is believed that the human-caused rate of extinction is hundreds or even thousands of times the natural rate. The losses are especially serious in the tropical forests, which cover only 7 per cent of the earth's surface but are home to between 50 and 80 per cent of plant and animal species. Even in Canada, some 175 animal and plant species are known to be at risk.

Conservation of biological diversity goes well beyond the question of preservation for aesthetic or for moral reasons; it is important for our health and our economy. Species loss directly threatens the natural resources upon which sustainable development depends. Genetic material from plant and animal species (many of which have yet to be discovered) are the foundation for the agricultural, pharmaceutical and other biotechnology-based industries. About one-quarter of the pharmacological products in use in North America contain ingredients derived from wild plants. Providing adequate food supplies for a growing world population will increasingly depend on agricultural researchers' access to the widest possible variety of genetic resources for developing better varieties of crops and animals.

Ensuring biological diversity requires a combined effort on the part of all countries.

- International negotiations are taking place under the auspices of UNEP for a convention on the conservation of biological diversity. Canada supports this concept and will pursue international efforts to develop such a convention.
- Canada is party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which controls the trade of some 48 000 listed plants and animals and the products derived from them. With 96 countries participating, CITES protects endangered species from over-exploitation through trade by means of a system of import and export permits.
- Protecting habitat is the key to maintaining biodiversity. Canada has joined in a number of international agreements that apply this principle, including the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (the World Heritage Convention) by which natural and historical areas of outstanding value are permanently protected; the United Nations Biosphere Reserves Initiative, which preserves examples of all the earth's major ecological systems; the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention); the International Tropical Timber Agreement, which provides a framework for regulation of trade in tropical timber; the Tropical Forest Action Program, which encourages sustainable forestry practices in tropical countries; and the International Tropical Timber Organization, which promotes sustainable use and conservation of tropical forests and their genetic resources.

- Canada's National Wildlife Policy, adopted by the Wildlife Ministers' Council of Canada in 1990, seeks to maintain and enhance the health and diversity of Canada's wildlife in fulfilment of our responsibility to the rest of the world and to future generations of Canadians.

## **SAFEGUARDING THE OCEANS**

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Oceans cover over 70 per cent of the planet's surface and play a critical role in maintaining its life support systems, in moderating climate and in sustaining life. The health of the oceans is particularly vital for Canada. We have the longest coastline of any country in the world, and the sea supports more than 140 000 Canadian jobs and \$8 billion-worth of economic activity every year.

According to the Brundtland Commission, the world's oceans are in trouble: "Huge, closed septic tanks, they receive wastes from cities, farms and industries via sewage outfalls, dumping from barges and ships, coastal run-off, river discharge, and even atmospheric transport." In addition to pollution, living resources from the sea are also under threat from over-



exploitation. Major fish stocks in the waters over continental shelves, which provide 95 per cent of the world's fish catch, are now at risk as a result of overfishing. This poses a grave threat to Canada's fishing industry and the thousands of people who depend on it for a livelihood.

Because the seas belong to everyone, no one country can solve these problems by itself. Reclaiming the health of our oceans requires an international effort.

- Canada is a strong supporter of multilateral efforts to stem overfishing. Since 1989, the federal government has worked hard to make members of the European Community aware of the serious, long-term consequences of overfishing in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) Regulatory Area. Along with other NAFO countries, Canada has begun to control overfishing in the region.

- Canada was a key sponsor of a UN resolution to reduce the harmful practice of driftnet fishing and remains committed to implementing a moratorium on all large-scale ocean driftnet fishing. Other multilateral agreements through which Canada helps sustain ocean fisheries include the International Convention for the High Seas Fisheries of the North Pacific; the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean; the Convention on the Future Multilateral Co-operation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries; and the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.
- At the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Canada is committed to pursuing four specific objectives to ensure fisheries habitat protection and sustainability:
  - developing an international sustainable fisheries strategy;
  - building an international framework for controlling land-based sources of ocean pollution;
  - strengthening provisions of the London Dumping Convention to combat ocean dumping; and
  - establishing a global ocean observing system.
- Pollution of the oceans results partly from dumping of wastes at sea. The London Dumping Convention was established in the mid-1970s to protect the marine environment from this source of pollution. Canada has long been a supporter of this international agreement and recently backed a resolution to ban the ocean disposal of industrial wastes by 1995.
- The dumping of wastes at sea is only part of the problem. Over 80 per cent of marine pollution comes from land-based sources. Canada is leading efforts to address land-based sources of marine pollution. At the 1990 Houston Economic Summit, a Canadian-sponsored initiative was adopted to develop a comprehensive international strategy. This was followed by a meeting in Halifax in May 1991, at which experts from around the world gathered to help prepare a framework for reducing pollution from land-based sources.
- To set a good international example and ensure protection of our own coastal waters, the federal government is implementing a five-year Ocean Dumping Plan. This includes stronger regulations prohibiting ocean disposal of industrial wastes and a national research and information program to help reduce the discharge of plastics and other debris into the marine environment.



## **PROTECTING THE ARCTIC**

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Canada's northland comprises 40 per cent of our total land mass, almost 70 per cent of our marine coastline and more than 30 per cent of our freshwater resources. While physically far removed from industrial pollution, the circumpolar regions are at the mercy of the more densely populated parts of the earth. Air and ocean currents carry pollutants such as PCBs, dioxins and pesticide residues to the north, where they accumulate in the food chain. This poses a serious threat to the traditional economies of people living in the north, as well as to Arctic ecosystems.

The Canadian Arctic is part of the larger circumpolar region, where we are neighbours with the U.S., the U.S.S.R., Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. In order to secure a safe future for the Arctic, Canada is building partnerships with its northern neighbours.

- Over the past two years, Canada and the other circumpolar countries have worked toward an international Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy. At a meeting held in Finland in the summer of 1991, the Strategy was signed by cabinet ministers representing the eight circumpolar countries. In a joint declaration, the ministers committed to an action plan on pollution in the Arctic. Canada has proposed an Arctic Council to co-ordinate action among the eight circumpolar countries and has offered to establish the secretariat for this council in Canada.
- In order to protect the Canadian Arctic effectively, the federal government has brought forward a national Arctic Environmental Strategy as part of the Green Plan. The five-year Strategy is founded on long-term partnerships with northern governments, non-governmental organizations, native people and the public. Its major elements include cleaning up contaminants in the north, managing waste, improving water quality and protecting Arctic ecosystems. In addition, an Arctic Marine Conservation Strategy has been developed by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans to protect the Arctic marine environment.

## **GOVERNING TRANSPORTATION AND TRADE IN HAZARDOUS WASTES**

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Every year, between 300 and 400 million tons of hazardous waste is generated around the world. While it poses an obvious environmental hazard if not carefully managed, much of this waste can be transported safely from one country to another and recycled for industrial use. This presents an important economic opportunity for Canadian industries. In order to take advantage of this opportunity, while ensuring protection of the environment, it is necessary to develop international laws to ensure safe transportation and trade in hazardous waste.

- Canada signed the Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (the Basel Convention) in March 1989. The Convention establishes a framework to ensure that trade in hazardous waste does not harm the environment or human health. It also prohibits exports to and imports from countries that are not party to the Convention.
- The Basel Convention complements a Canadian federal law that ensures that any wastes entering Canada have been approved by a competent Canadian authority and are handled in accordance with strict standards.
- Hazardous waste presents an opportunity for those countries that are able to recycle these substances in a way that is both environmentally sound and profitable. Canada will ratify the Basel Convention as soon as regulations are drafted that permit responsible Canadian industries to take advantage of recycling opportunities while ensuring strict environmental and health safeguards.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



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The increasing prominence of global environmental issues presents the international community with an enormous challenge. To address problems like global warming, ozone depletion and threats to biological diversity, the countries of the world must work together and work quickly. We have only a limited amount of time to establish the laws and strengthen the international institutions that are necessary to ensure our mutual environmental security.

The stakes are high. The costs to Canada's economy of failing to resolve these issues are difficult to calculate, but they would certainly have an impact on each and every Canadian. While the price of acting now is significant, it is small compared with the damage to our health and the health of the environment that could result if we fail to act.

Canada is working on two fronts; at home, we are preventing pollution and conserving resources by building partnerships between governments, businesses, interest groups and consumers and by taking initiatives like the Green Plan to encourage sustainable economic development. On the

international front, we are helping to strengthen international laws and institutions needed to ensure effective solutions to our shared problems. By working together with our international partners — in the United Nations, the Group of Seven, the Commonwealth and La Francophonie — Canada is playing an important role in establishing a global regime to protect the environment.

There is reason to be optimistic. In recent years, people around the world have gained a better understanding of the environmental problems that we face together. We know that protection of the environment must take place at the same time as do improvements in economic conditions and that a strong economy and healthy environment are mutually reinforcing. Technologies are being developed that can help the world achieve economic development while putting less stress on the environment. Diplomatic initiatives such as the upcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development are focusing the world's attention on instruments of international co-operation that will enable us to achieve sustainable development.

Canada has a special role to play. We are a major participant in the negotiation of international environmental agreements; our scientists are contributing to a better understanding of ecological issues; and our industries have already begun to provide a range of environmental goods and services to an international market where these are increasingly in demand. Our reputation for supporting international co-operation, our technological and scientific resources and our efforts to promote environmental protection at home make Canada's contribution significant.

Protection of the global environment is an enormous challenge. At the same time, it presents an unprecedented opportunity for international collaboration. Canada is committed to meeting this challenge by working closely with its international partners. Only by working together can we protect our environment and ensure mutual prosperity for generations to come.

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