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REPORT FROM THE AMBASSADOR FOR THE ENVIRONMENT • 2002

Honourable Gilbert Parent, PC



I look back with pride at the number of environmental and sustainable development milestones Canada has reached in the past year, both nationally and internationally. As Ambassador for the Environment, I have been fortunate in participating in the progress of many of our achievements and seeing them come to fruition.

My report contains the highlights of a productive period, during which the World Summit on Sustainable Development took place in Johannesburg, the Prime Minister brought about Canada's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and the Species at Risk Act came into effect.

The WSSD was a valuable exercise on many fronts. It brought together representatives of 189 countries to review the sustainable development efforts of nations with regard to Agenda 21, formulated at the Earth Conference in Rio 10 years ago. Tough negotiations ensued and concluded with the presentation of a Political Declaration and a Plan of Implementation which incorporated many decisions on trade and financing which had been arrived at in Monterrey, Mexico, and Doha, Qatar.

The multilateralism of the WSSD was not restricted to the countries present. It included input from ENGOS, NGOs, civil society and, best of all, business and industry. Type II partnerships, those that advocate alliances among all sectors of civil society, were not only proposed but also formed.

Canada's strong presence and leadership played major roles at WSSD, most particularly the presentation of Industry Canada's Sustainable Cities Initiative, the addition of a human rights clause to the universal health access negotiations and the Prime Minister's astute statements.

While visiting local environmental projects in and around Johannesburg, I was grateful that Canada has committed to funding the African Process. South Africa, one of the most advanced countries on that continent is itself in dire need of help, to say nothing of the needs of its neighbouring nations.

At home, I continue to be impressed by the environmental technologies we already have. Zenon Environmental, in Oakville, Ontario, has a water treatment and conservation technology that can solve water problems in Canada and worldwide. Hydrogenics, in Mississauga, Ontario, is a fuel-cell company that will lend its expertise to the creation of a hybrid hydrogen/electric bus that will be tested in Manitoba. Springhill, Nova Scotia, has opened a paint recycling plant.

In Europe, Austria is successfully promoting commercial and residential wood pellet and wood chip heating systems. Brazil's new government has pledged to save the rainforests of Amazonia, and local initiatives are being taken to remediate coal mines and contaminated waterways. Toyota of Japan has a seven-seat gasoline/electric hybrid van on the market and is developing a hydrogen/ electric hybrid.

Now that Canada has ratified the Kyoto Protocol, our goals must be to find the best ways to implement it in order to meet its targets of greenhouse gas emissions reductions. Many corporations are already taking a lead. TransAlta has bought VisionQuest Electric; a traditional energy company now owns wind farms. Suncor and Enbridge, traditional energy giants, are partners in the Sunbridge Wind Farm in Saskatchewan. Ontario Power Generation has a new wind farm in Kincardine, Ontario.

The European Union has over 20,000 megawatts of wind power. Although we lag behind that number, we are catching up as government incentives and private-sector vision spur on the industry. The proposed Nai Kun Off-Shore Wind Power project in the Hecate Strait, off the Queen Charlotte Islands in B.C., would alone add 750 megawatts of wind power to Canada's present capacity.

Wind and solar power, hydro power, urban greening and environmentally efficient architecture and construction are all helping to reduce the country's toxic emissions. In Canada and around the world, solutions are being sought for the recycling of solid, electronic and hazardous wastes and their disposal, as well as for solutions to clean air, water and soil. These solutions will be found. Our roles as a nation, corporations and individuals are to each do our share in implementing not only the Kyoto Protocol but all manner of behaviour which can result in a sustainable, clean and healthy environment.

My work is to continue to monitor environmental innovations and follow the progress of sustainable development in Canada and abroad. I will then report to Cabinet on my findings.

Together, as well as individually, we can and must make a difference.

Hilbert Parent

Conferences Attended as Speaker and/or Participant

American Council on Renewable Energy, Washington, D.C.

- spoke on Canada's renewable energies and technologies

Delhi Sustainable Development Summit 2002, New Delhi, India

- spoke on governance structures and processes for sustainable development

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Fifth National Métis Youth Conference, Vancouver, British Columbia

- keynote speech on Canada's preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and Canada's environmental priorities

First World Renewable Energy Policy and Strategy Forum, Berlin, Germany

- spoke on Canada's renewable energy policies, incentives and projects

Fourth International Congress on Environmental Planning and Management in Urban Centres, Florianopolis, Brazil

- delivered a presentation on Industry Canada's Sustainable Cities Initiative

GEF Panel of Parliamentarians on the Global Environment, Beijing, China

- attended the ministerial segment on progress of the WSSD's Plan of Implementation

2002 Global Wind Power Conference and Exhibit, Paris, France

- spoke on Canada's rapidly growing wind power development and chaired a plenary session

Globe 2002 Conference and Exhibition, Vancouver, British Columbia

- opening speech at the British Columbia pavilion
- focus on renewable energies, climate change, governance and waste disposal

2002 International Children's Conference, Victoria, British Columbia

- spoke at the opening ceremonies

International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, Vancouver, British Columbia

- dinner speech on Building a Sustainable Future

International Technology for Environment Protection Exhibition and Conference 2002, Shanghai, China

- spoke on Canada's commitment to renewable energies and clean technologies

North American Conference on Green Purchasing, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

- delivered Canada's keynote address

Sixth Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, Geneva, Switzerland

- head of Canadian delegation
- delivered Canada's country statement
- spoke for Canada at the roundtable on electronic waste

Third Meeting of the Global Forum on Sustainable Development, Graz, Austria

- spoke on the history of Canada's rural electrification and its parallels in today's developing nations

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Third Regular Council Session of the Canada-Chile Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, Santiago, Chile

- represented Canada in policy discussions on key regional, national and global issues
- shared updates on Chilean and Canadian environmental priorities and their status
- signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Canada's behalf on climate change
- met with the Council's Joint Public Advisory Committee

United Nations Forum on Forests, New York, New York

- delivered Canada's statement, a strong call for action on the many pressing global forest issues

Speeches

Dennis Morris High School, St. Catharines, Ontario

- spoke to students about the Kyoto Protocol and Canada's environmental priorities

M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai, India

- delivered the Millennium Lecture on Canada's sustainable development priorities

Nipissing University, North Bay, Ontario

- spoke to students about the Kyoto Protocol and its implementation

North Bay and District Canadian Club, North Bay, Ontario

- spoke about the Kyoto Protocol and its implementation

Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario

- spoke to faculty about environmental higher education
- spoke to students about the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and Canada's environmental priorities

Royal Niagara Military Institute, St. Catharines, Ontario

- spoke about renewable energies and the WSSD

St. Joseph's College, Rensselaer, Indiana

- spoke about Canada's environmental commitments

Sustainable Campuses Conference, University of Waterloo, Ontario

- spoke about Canada's sustainable development priorities and the Kyoto Protocol

Tongji University, Shanghai, China

- spoke to faculty and post-graduate students from the Environmental Sciences and Engineering Department about Canada's commitments to sustainable development

Participation at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg, South Africa

Preparatory

Second Industry Session of the WSSD consultations, Ottawa, Ontario

- opening and closing remarks

Second WSSD Preparatory Committee Meeting, New York, New York

- presented Canada's country statement
- delivered Canada's intervention: "Pollution Prevention: An Essential Element of Sustainability"

Fourth WSSD Preparatory Committee Meeting, Bali, Indonesia

- member of the Canadian delegation
- delivered Canada's interventions at stakeholder sessions
- spoke at the Indonesian People's Forum
- spoke at the Corporate Social Responsibility Forum
- participated in the United Nations Environment Programme private sector event
- addressed the NGOs in the Canadian delegation

Summit

- member of the Canadian delegation
- attended plenaries
- intervened in health negotiations, emphasizing Canada's strong position on universal access to health services, human rights and the correlation between health and environmental factors
- met with local and international NGOs and toured Nasrec, site of the Civil Society Forum
- met with NGOs and toured the WaterDome, site of local, national and international water projects and technologies
- attended the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives Forum, where Industry Canada presented its Sustainable Cities Initiative
- attended the Equator Initiative Awards presentations
- chaired a panel on Transitioning to a Clean Air Economy at the Parliamentary Workshop on Clean Air and Clean Water, organized by Parliamentarians for Global Action
- attended the Business Action for Sustainable Development Lekgotia Business Day
- participated in UNESCO and the South African Ministry of Education's Educating for a Sustainable Future: Action, Commitments and Partnerships event

Ubuntu Village (site where participating countries displayed their environmental and sustainable development policies and technologies)

- participated in the opening ceremonies
- announced Canada's renewal of the mandate of the International Model Forest Secretariat, based in Ottawa
- announced the establishment of the Regional Model Forest Centre for Latin America
- presented Canada's position on the African Process for the Development and Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa
- outlined Canada's serious concerns regarding the disastrous effects on its North at the Arctic Council's Early Warnings and Sustainable Solutions: Climate Change and the Arctic Council event, emphasizing Canada's leadership in signing and ratifying the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

Visits Related to Environmental Projects, Sites and Technologies

Agri-Plas, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

- recycles plastics into plastic wood
- requires no maintenance and removes plastics from landfills
- the wood has the strength of natural wood, greater durability and no toxicity

Altonorte Copper Smelter (owned and operated by Noranda), Antofagasta, Chile

- an environmentally responsible copper smelter

Atlantic Wind Test Site, North Cape, Prince Edward Island

- eight wind turbines generate 16.6 million kilowatt hours of clean electricity per year
- a three-megawatt turbine will be installed in 2003
- by Phase III, wind turbines will produce 10 percent of P.E.I.'s electrical energy needs

Biovillage, Pondicherry, India

- an IDRC (International Development Research Centre)-aided model facility for sustainable farming

Criciuma, Santa Catarina, Brazil

- remediation projects focusing on coal mines and contaminated waterways

The Greenhouse Project, Johannesburg, South Africa

- encourages city dwellers to grow plants and vegetables on their balconies
- environmental education facility for young children

Lin'an Model Forest, Lin'an, China

- Lin'an, like model forests worldwide, has a mandate to sustain and promote sustainable forest management and education
- the Lin'an Forest area is home to over 2,000 species of trees

Mountain of Hope, Soweto, South Africa

- reclaimed garbage dump in formerly crime-riddled neighbourhood

Ontario Power Generation, Nanticoke, Ontario

- considered a major polluter, this coal-fired generating plant continues to greatly improve its emissions reduction program

The Paint Recycling Facility, Springhill, Nova Scotia

- eliminates the need to dump Nova Scotia's unused paint into landfills, sewers and waterways

Promolong, Pretoria, South Africa

- an organic gardening project

Rooftops, Johannesburg, South Africa

- an inner-city housing cooperative

Rural Knowledge Centre, Pondicherry, India

- an IDRC-aided project to provide access to electronic information such as weather reports for sustainable fishing

Solid Waste Plant, Springhill, Nova Scotia

- a landfill/composting facility which pre-sells all its recycled and composted materials

SORTEC, Hannover, Germany

- uses fully automated technology in a plant that sorts all solid wastes mechanically

Waste Watch Facility, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

- sorts recyclables from solid waste and composts the rest

Zaldivar Copper Mine (owned and operated by Placer Dome)

Antofagasta, Chile

- an environmentally responsible copper mine which extracts and processes copper

Zenon Environmental, Oakville, Ontario

- has a unique membrane technology for water treatment and conservation domestically and worldwide

Meetings with Representatives of Governments, ENGOs, NGOs, Industry, Commissioners

Abitibi Consolidated
Acting Director General of the
International Department of
China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Advisory Committee on Protection
of the Sea
AIM PowerGen Corporation
Amec Urbis
Arise Technologies
Assembly of First Nations
Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs,
China
Atlantic Council for International
Cooperation
Austrian Bioenergy Centre
Austrian Energy Agency
Ba-shi Group
BP Solar
Brandt Engineering Products
British High Commission
Business Action for Sustainable
Development
Canadian Ambassador for
Circumpolar Affairs
Canadian Ambassador to Austria
Canadian Ambassador to China
Canadian Ambassador to Denmark
Canadian Ambassador to Germany
Canadian Ambassador to Indonesia
Canadian Ambassador to the Office
of the United Nations and the
WTO
Canadian Ambassador to the United
Nations for Disarmament
Canadian Chemical Producers'
Association
Canadian Commissioner of the
Environment and Sustainable
Development
Canadian Consul General for
Shanghai
Canadian Deputy Consul General
for Shanghai
Canadian High Commissioner
to South Africa
Canadian Institute of Child Health
Canadian Plastics Industry
Association
Canadian Secretary of State
(Asia-Pacific)
Canadian Secretary of State
(Latin America and Africa)
Caucus Working Group on
Environmental Technologies
CO2e.com
Commissioner of the Environment
of Ontario
Confederation of Indian Industry
Consul General of Trinidad
Cuban Ambassador
Cummins Westport
Danish Ambassador
Danish Wind Turbine Manufacturers
Association
Dazhong Transportation (Group)
Co. Ltd.
Delphi Group
Deputy Director of the Shanghai
Foreign Academic Relations
and Trade Commission

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Deputy Minister of Energy and
Climate Change of Quebec

Deputy Minister of the Environment
of Nova Scotia

Development Alternatives, India

Development Cooperation Program,
Canadian International
Development Agency, India

Director General of the Austrian
Economic Chamber

Director of Chemical Units, United
Nations Environment Programme

Director of Trade and Environment,
World Trade Organization

Director of WWF (World Wildlife
Fund), Austria

Dow Canada

Dutch Ambassador

Eco Savers Coupon Book Programme

Electric Vehicle Association

Environmental Probe Ltd.

Enwaves

European Representative,
International Institute for
Sustainable Development

Evergreen

Executive Director for Health and
Environment, World Health
Organization

First Nations Equity Inc.

Forest Alliance

Forest Products Association

Fraser Basin Council

Friends of Red Hill Valley

German Ambassador for the
Environment and Biotechnology

German Ministry for the
Environment, Nature Conservation
and Nuclear Safety

High Park Advocacy Group

Hungarian Ambassador

India-Canada Cooperation Office

India-Canada Environment Facility

Indian Ministry of Environment
and Forests

Indonesian Minister of the
Environment

International Joint Commission

Inogen Corporation

J. Walter Thompson Canada

KWB

Latvian Ambassador

Lieutenant-Governor of British
Columbia

Lieutenant-Governor of Pondicherry

Minister of the Environment and
Labour of Nova Scotia

Minister of the Environment
of Alberta

Minister of the Environment
of British Columbia

Minister of the Environment
of Ontario

Minister of the Environment
of Prince Edward Island

Minister of the Environment
of Quebec

Ministers of Health and the
Environment of the Americas

Model Forest Network Secretariat

M.S. Swaminathan Research
Foundation

Mumbai Municipal Officials

Nai Kun Off-shore Wind Power
Project

Nanjing Jin Ling Bus Corp.

National Youth Round Table
for the Environment

- Natsource LLC
- Niagara Parks Commission
- NPC Chair of the Environment
and Resource Committee, China
- Oasis Investment Group
- Ontario Power Generation
- Pondicherry Minister of Industries,
Commerce, Science, Technology,
Environment and Health
- President of the Union of Coal
Mining Industries,
Santa Catarina, Brazil
- Press Institute of India
- Redleaf Enterprises Group (China)
- Regional Director, South Asia,
International Development
Research Centre
- Renewable Energy Development
Group
- R.J. Burnside and Associates Ltd.
- RRB Consultants and Engineers
Pvt. Ltd.
- R.V. Anderson and Associates
- Scouts Canada
- Secretary-General of the
Inter-Parliamentary Union
- Secretary-General of the Ministry
of Agriculture, Forestry,
Environment and Water of Austria
- Secretary-General of the Science and
Technology Committee of the
Shanghai Construction and
Management Commission
- Shanghai Economic Commission
- Shanghai Special Commission
- Shanghai Transportation
Administration
- SheerKnowledge Inc.
- SORTEC
- South African Ambassador
to the United Nations
- Spanish Ambassador
- Speaker of the National Parliament
of Austria
- Speaker of the Nova Scotia
Legislature
- Sri Lankan Minister of the
Environment and Natural
Resources
- Sunwin
- Swiss Ambassador for the
Environment
- U.K. Environmental Policy
Department
- U.K. Minister of Energy
- UMBERA
- U.N. Special Rapporteur on
Toxic Waste
- URBAS
- Vestas Wind Systems A/S
- Vice-Minister of the State
Environmental Protection Agency,
China
- Weyerhaeuser China Ltd.
- WETV, The Green Channel