

## New Course Charted For Foreign Policy

**O**n February 7, 1995, the Government of Canada released *Canada in the World*, its new foreign policy framework. This issue of *Global Agenda* focusses on the important role that environment and sustainable development issues play in Canada's contemporary foreign policy.

In recent years all countries have had to reassess their foreign policy directions. The Cold War has given way to a different world. Economic goals have taken on higher priority. We have come to understand the importance of issues such as a healthy environment and sustainable development to the achievement of global security and prosperity.

*Canada in the World* sets out Canada's foreign policy priorities in a changing world. The paper is

the result of a long consultation process. This process included hearings and a report by a Special Joint Parliamentary Committee and a National Forum on Canada's International Relations.

The Statement says "the Government has decided to focus Canada's foreign policy on three key objectives:

- promoting prosperity and employment;
- protecting our security, within a stable global framework; and
- projecting Canadian values and culture."

These objectives are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. They are intended to guide decisions on priorities and the allocation of increasingly limited resources.

Environmental and sustainable development issues play a significant role in these three objectives.

### Prosperity and employment

*Canada in the World* recognizes that sustainable development contributes to economic health. The Government will take steps in the new World Trade Organization to promote compatibility between our international trade and environmental obligations. It will also seek to ensure a positive relationship between international

to manage sustainably the environment and the economy.

### Security

The new policy highlights Canada's belief that security involves far more than the traditional military and political relationships. As the document notes, "Sustainable development [is] a precondition for human security." It underlines the impact of environmental degradation on security. The purpose of Canada's development assistance is to support sustainable development in developing countries in order to reduce poverty and contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world.

### Canadian values and culture

Canadians believe in a set of values and have cultural traits that have given us the stability and prosperity we wish for others. We believe that values such as a respect for the environment are as beneficial in the international setting as they are at home.

This new approach to foreign policy is built on a broad consensus found within Canadian society. Canadians are proud of the role we play internationally. We understand the value of international co-operation based on open economies and societies in an interdependent world. The foreign policy framework set out in *Canada in the World* reflects that conviction and our commitment to the environment and sustainable development. 🍀

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## Canada in the World - Issues in Focus

The Government's Foreign Policy Statement and its response to the recommendations of the Special Joint Parliamentary Committee reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy cover a number of issues that involve the environment and sustainable development.

### Towards the Sustainable Use of Forests

Forests play a critical role in the environment and are an important contributor to the economic well-being of Canada and of many other countries. The Government's Statement reaffirms our commitment to internationally agreed rules on sustainable forest management, ideally through an International Convention on Forests.

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*We are entering a new phase in international relations and Canadian foreign policy. We face many challenges, but we are building from a foundation of strength. We have strong values, strong institutions, strong traditions and a committed and knowledgeable public.*

*Canadians have every reason to be optimistic as to their future. The Government is confident that Canada will continue to do its fair share for the world, and that the community of nations will continue to look to Canada for our unique contribution to global governance.*

*Canada in the World,  
Government Statement, p. 51*

Such rules would provide a standard against which consumers, producers and governments could measure forest practices. They would also help us support developing countries' efforts to manage their own forests more effectively.

### Protection of the Arctic

Protection of the Arctic environment has become a focal point of Canadian foreign policy and is given prominence in *Canada in the World*. The Statement stresses the importance of international co-operation among circumpolar countries. All Arctic countries share a desire to protect their fragile environment and to develop sustainable economies for northern peoples. The Statement reiterates Canada's efforts for an Arctic Council with the powers to deal with the issues facing the Arctic.


Canada also recognizes that many of the pressing environmental threats to the Arctic have distant sources and causes. Our work on issues such as climate change, the long-range transport of air-borne pollutants and the dumping of low-level radioactive waste will continue to take into account the impact of these issues on the Arctic.

### Preserving the World's Fisheries

Fisheries are under pressure around the world. The virtual closure of the fishery for most commercial species off the coast of Atlantic Canada has had a devastating effect on more than 400 communities in that region. *Canada in the World* emphasizes that Canada is concentrating its

efforts on the establishment of internationally agreed rules for the sustainable management of high-seas fishing that will recognize the special interests of all coastal states, including Canada.

Implementing such agreements requires better operational and institutional mechanisms in institutions such as the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization; Canada will continue to promote such concrete steps toward sustainable development.

Canada is also ready to work with developing countries on their fisheries needs. The Government has indicated that technical co-operation in managing ocean resources will be an element of its environmental focus in Canada's development assistance program. 

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Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre **PRIORITÉS MONDIALES**.



## Rio Moves Ahead:

### Progress on the Biodiversity Front

The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological

Diversity met in Nassau, the Bahamas, from November 28 to December 9, 1994. The

Convention, opened for signature at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, currently has 114 parties.

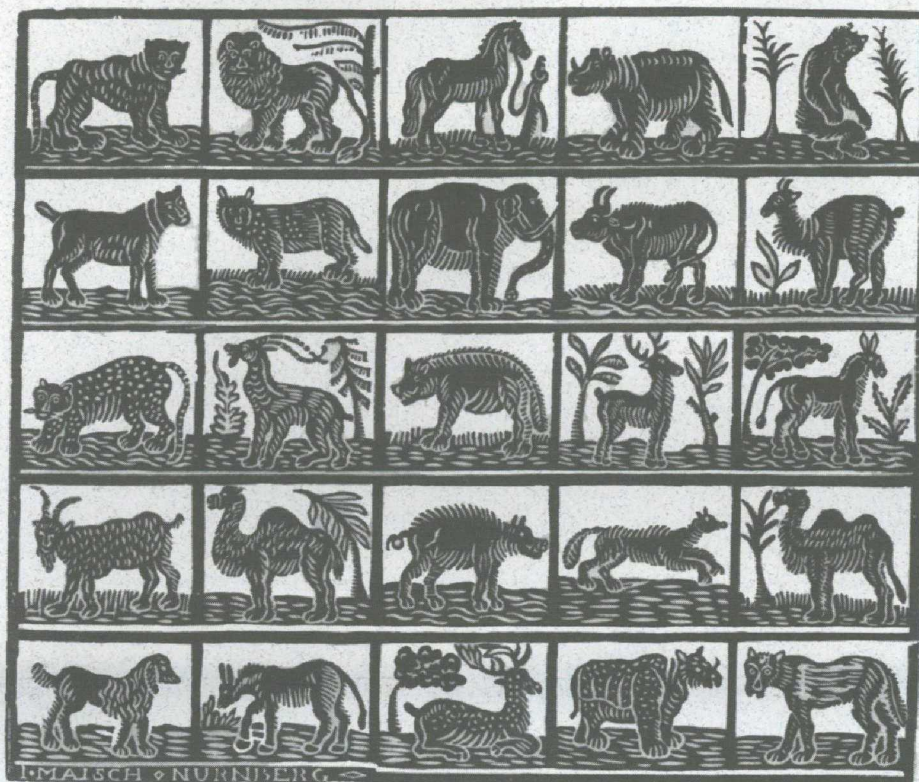
The meeting established a three-year work plan for advancing the biodiversity conservation. The parties recommended that the UN declare December 29 the annual International Day for Biodiversity. The parties will meet again in 1995 to continue their work.

A highlight of the Conference was the Biodiversity Technology Fair organized by Canada. The Fair show-cased products and services for biodiversity management. Organizers and exhibitors declared the Fair a success and are considering making it a regular part of future Conferences.

Work is also proceeding on another Rio initiative, the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. The first meeting of its 154 signatories was held at the end of March in Berlin. ❁

*"Canada has a particular role in defending and developing the Arctic environment, an area where international cooperation is vital and is just beginning. Through enhanced international cooperation and national commitment, demonstrated through our recent appointment of the Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs, we will seek to slow the process of global climate change and to protect and improve the Arctic environment and the health and livelihoods of the region's inhabitants."*

Canada in the World,  
Government Statement, p. 19



### Arctic Environment Meeting in Iqaluit

Special attention has been paid to the Arctic in the new foreign policy framework. To emphasize its commitment to action, Canada has created the position of Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs.

Mary Simon, an Inuk from Northern Quebec, has led the way in raising the profile of Arctic and Aboriginal issues. From 1986 to 1992, she was President of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference. In her new role, she led the Canadian delegation to the Arctic Environment Protection Strategy (AEPS) meeting in Iqaluit, Northwest Territories, from March 15 to 17.

The AEPS focusses primarily on research into Arctic environmental issues. However, as Ambassador Simon notes, "We hope to build on the AEPS through the creation of an Arctic Council. It will be made up of the eight Arctic states and will provide for the direct participation of a number of Arctic Aboriginal organizations. We believe the Council could consider a wide range of issues such as health, social matters, economic development, cultural exchange, tourism, transport and communications systems, and circumpolar trade." ❁

## G-7 Environment Ministers Come to Canada

The G-7 group of industrialized countries plays an important role in world affairs. Canada's G-7 membership allows it to contribute to activities in a variety of fields of common concern, including the environment and sustainable development.

Canada will host a meeting of G-7 environment ministers and representatives of the European Commission and the United Nations Environment Program in Hamilton, Ontario, from April 29 to May 1, 1995. Its purpose is threefold:

- to review the efforts of G-7 governments to integrate environmental and economic considerations into their decision making;
- to examine the role and efficacy of international institutions as they pertain to the environment and sustainable development; and
- to examine global issues of concern, notably climate change, biodiversity and the management of toxic substances.

Canada's Deputy Prime Minister and Environment Minister, Sheila Copps, will chair the meeting. It will be a chance to share Canada's experience in integrating the environment and the economy and to focus on the steps the Canadian government is taking to improve the environmental performance of its own operations. ❁

## In Search of Greater Commitment

by the Honourable John Fraser, PC, QC  
Canada's Ambassador for Environment and Sustainable Development

This year, 1995, marks the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. For all its imperfections, the UN has played an important role in building a more peaceful world during the past half-century, and has responded to emerging issues such as the environment and sustainable development.

The 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development was a milestone in addressing these issues globally. Three years later, the world is striving to attain the goals we set in Rio.

The next session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) will take place in New York from April 11 to 28. It provides an opportunity to measure our progress to date in achieving sustainable development and to look at the steps we take from here.

While the CSD has begun the important work of assessing achievements in implementing Rio's results, more can be done to make it a more effective body. For example, we need a greater political commitment to the work of the CSD, such as having ministers in addition to the Ministers of the Environment attend the High Level Session, and by continuing to press for the High Level Session to be a forum for a real exchange of views between ministers.

The annual national reports to the CSD have been useful. They are a storehouse of information and experiences to which the world should have better access. Better accessibility to the information

could be achieved by adopting internationally accepted indicators of sustainable development. The CSD can help push the world community in that direction, building on its ongoing activities.

Forests will be an important topic on this year's CSD agenda. The Ad Hoc Working Group of the CSD on Sectoral Issues, which met February 27 to March 3 in New York, recommended that the April regular session of the CSD create an Intergovernmental Panel on Forests. While its full program of work must be fleshed out, it would be open-ended and transparent, and draw together a wide range of international work on international forest issues to help determine what future international action is necessary. Canada wants to see the proposed panel deal with such key issues as criteria and indicators, voluntary timber certification schemes and national forest action plans.

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we set in Rio.*

In the long term, Canada would like to see an international convention for all types of forests and forest values. However, we are conscious that much work needs to be done before the international community is ready to launch the negotiation of such a Convention. We hope that the proposed CSD panel can help flesh out the options in this regard. Canada expects to be a very active participant in its work. ❁



## Fishing for Multilateral Solutions

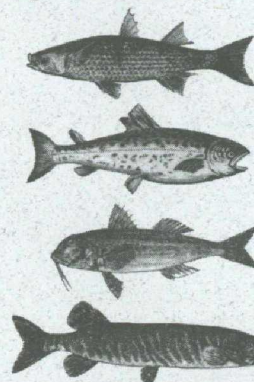
The problem of declining fish stocks off Canada's coasts, and around the world, is becoming increasingly critical. Scientists are struggling to identify all the issues, but have singled out overfishing as a primary cause. Overfishing means over-exploitation, including taking too much fish and netting fish that are too small.

### Canada's Leadership

To help resolve the problem, Canada has taken action and begun to move toward sustainable fishing. This country's unilateral decision to impose a moratorium on cod fishing on the Atlantic Coast put us in a leadership role. Canada hopes, through example, to lead the way for other nations and encourage sustainable management of all marine resources.

Canada has learned from experience that conservation of fish stocks makes sense environmentally and economically. The future of commercial fisheries depends on international co-operation. The 1977 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) established an early framework for such co-operation. Following UNCLOS, Canada established 200-mile exclusive fishing zones off its shores and has administered stringent conservation regimes inside its zones since then.

The challenges Canada faces in taking a leadership role are evident in the current fishing dispute with the European Union. To protect all fish stocks living in the high seas, strict regulations, effective monitoring and, above all, international co-operation are urgently required.



Canada is making these points in its discussions with the EU and stated them again during a meeting of the United Nations Conference on Straddling and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks held March 27 to April 12 in New York.

Since 1979, the responsibility for managing stocks outside Canada's 200-mile limit has belonged to the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO). There are 15 contracting parties to NAFO: Canada, Bulgaria, Cuba, Denmark, Estonia, the European Union, Iceland, Japan, South Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania and Russia. NAFO offers its members a forum on international co-operation in scientific research and the conservation and management of some fisheries resources in the Northwest Atlantic. It makes decisions regarding total allowable

catch limits and allocates quotas to members based on consensus or majority vote.

### International Action

At the multilateral level, Canada has been among the leading advocates of a binding convention for conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks on the high seas. At the Rio Earth Summit, in 1992, participating countries agreed to discuss conservation and management of these particular fish stocks. A draft binding convention, under the United Nations' auspices, was tabled in the summer of 1994 with work expected to be completed in mid-1995.

Canada has also been involved with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in trying to produce an International Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing Operations. Canada was the first country to ratify a flagging agreement, concluded in November 1993. Signatories must ensure their high-seas fleets comply with international conservation rules.

One thing is certain: Only through international co-operation and with a clear commitment to conserving and managing fish stocks can the world hope to continue receiving from the sea what it has for centuries taken for granted. 🌿

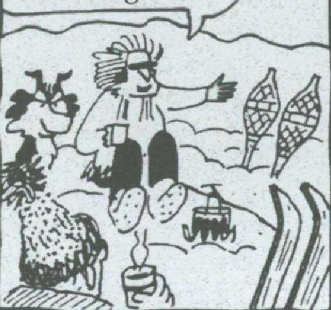
When my Great Grandpa came here, there was nothing but wilderness!



And being an energetic young man from a big industrial family back East...



He made a decision that affected this entire region!



He left it ALONE!



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## Facts and Stats

## GLOBAL AGENDA

- ❖ **Sulphur dioxide** is a colourless gas with a strong odour. Oil and gas processing, ore smelting and the burning of coal and heavy oil are the major generators of sulphur dioxide. From 1974 to 1992, in Canada, the annual mean sulphur dioxide concentration decreased 61 per cent. As a result, sulphur dioxide levels rarely exceed maximum acceptable levels.
- ❖ **Carbon monoxide** is a toxic, colourless and odourless gas generated from burning material containing carbon. Most carbon monoxide is created by motor vehicles, heating of dwellings and industrial pollution. The annual average concentration of carbon monoxide decreased by 70 per cent, in Canada, from 1974 to 1992. As a result, carbon monoxide levels very rarely exceed maximum acceptable levels.
- ❖ **Nitrogen dioxide** is generated through high-temperature combustion processes including transportation and industrial fuel combustion. There was a steady decrease in annual average nitrogen

dioxide levels Canada-wide from 1977 to 1992, a reduction of 38 per cent. As a result, maximum acceptable levels are rarely exceeded.

- ❖ There are three types of ultraviolet, or "UV" rays: UVA, UV-B and UV-C. The first, **UV-A**, is the weakest form. It causes skin aging, wrinkles and can also damage outdoor plastics and paint.
- ❖ **UV-B**, which is stronger than UVA, is the most harmful to us and other life forms. It causes skin cancer and cataracts - a permanent clouding of the eye which reduces vision. Both UV-B and UVA cause suntans and sunburns. UV-B also reduces the growth of plants, and may affect the health of wildlife and other animals.
- ❖ **UV-C**, which is stronger than UV-B, never reaches the earth's surface because it is filtered by the atmosphere.

Source: *Air Quality Trends in Canadian Cities (1979-1992)* and *UV and You - Living with Ultraviolet*, Environment Canada

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