

BANFF MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON
THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We, the Environment Ministers of the eight major industrialized countries, and the European Commissioner responsible for the Environment, met in Banff, Canada, from April 12 to 14, 2002, to advance preparations for the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from August 26 to September 4, 2002. Discussions focused on environment and development, environment and health, and environmental governance.

Since the 1992 Rio Summit, we have witnessed a growing awareness of the need to manage the environment in a sustainable manner to promote human dignity and well-being. We commend progress in managing environmental resources in a sustainable manner at the local, national, regional and international levels, and the commitment to sustainable development shared by all levels of society and the international community. We also recognize that more action is required. The state of the environment world-wide continues to degrade. In order to reverse environmental degradation, we must attain more sustainable patterns of consumption and production, alleviate poverty, further improve domestic and international institutions, resolve conflict and curtail pollution. To secure global prosperity, stability and security, all these issues require urgent attention.

Toward A Successful World Summit on Sustainable Development

The World Summit must arrive at action-oriented outcomes, effectively responding to the new challenges that have arisen since the Rio Summit. It should strongly reinforce Agenda 21 and help deliver the positive outcomes achieved at the Millennium Summit in New York, World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Doha and the Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey. The goals of the World Summit will also be advanced by a positive outcome from the next World Food Summit. The World Summit must be about implementation. It must build upon the active engagement of all stakeholders and must seek ways to develop active and effective partnerships among them.

We are committed to continue to demonstrate leadership in implementing sustainable development, at home and globally, working with the international community to further implement Agenda 21. We are making every effort to ensure the early entry into force and implementation of multilateral environmental conventions and protocols

We reaffirm the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet the pressing global environmental challenge of climate change with global participation. We are determined to take the lead by taking strong actions, in fulfillment of our commitments under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and in furthering its ultimate objective. For most countries, this means timely entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, with many ratifications by the World Summit; for other countries, it means taking strong, realistic domestic actions. We agree to reinforce our exchange of information and best practices, in particular in the field of research and development.

The World Summit must show renewed political commitment resulting in a Plan of Action, and deliver partnerships, to achieve sustainable development, producing tangible results and mobilizing action at all levels. A successful World Summit requires leadership and engagement at the highest possible levels. We will work together with governments and other partners to develop concrete proposals in specific key sectors including, among others, i) strategic partnerships to promote sustainable water resource management, including access to safe

water and sanitation; and ii) building on work already done by G8 countries, actions in the field of energy such as substantially reducing the number of people without access to energy supplies, increasing energy efficiency, improving conservation of energy resources, developing new technologies and promoting the use and share of renewable energy sources in all countries. Among others, attention should also be given to continuing to enhance the protection and sustainable management of forests, including action to combat illegal logging and related trade. We look forward to the 6th Conference of the parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity making constructive progress in this area.¹

Environment and Development

Better integration of the environmental dimension into economic and social development policies remains a challenge and is crucial for the achievement of Agenda 21 and of the internationally agreed development goals and targets, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. We are committed to work with our respective domestic and international partners to ensure that globalization promotes sustainable development for the benefit of all. We acknowledge the important contributions of multilateral environmental agreements to advance global sustainable development. These agreements have proven to be effective tools to shape national sustainable development policies and programs, and frame concrete action at all levels. We resolve to work with our partners at all levels to enhance their effectiveness. In this regard, we stress the need for adequate resources to the third replenishment of the Global Environmental Facility, taking into account the broadening of its mandate. We underscore the contribution to poverty alleviation that is made through community-based conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

We recognize the pressing need to continue to improve coherence among different policies such as international development, social, trade, finance (including export credits), investment and bilateral and multilateral environmental assistance, and the mechanisms and tools that support development objectives. We welcome the innovative approach to sustainable development put forward in the New Partnership for Africa's Development by our African partners, and intend to work with them to advance its goals.

Environment and Health

The connection between health and the quality of our environment has become a key driver of environmental protection in both developed and developing countries. We underscore the importance of working in partnership with our health colleagues to strengthen efforts toward sustainable development. There is also a growing appreciation of the linkages between environment, health and poverty. We are especially concerned about children and other particularly vulnerable populations, in our own countries and globally, in the face of growing environmental pressures, notably from polluted air, water and soil, and the effects of climate change, growth of the transportation sector, chemical use and urban development. Our policies should continue to be based on the precautionary approach, as set forth in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration. Contaminated water and inadequate sanitation cause a large proportion of ill health and disease in the developing world, leading to millions of deaths each year, particularly among children.

¹ With a view to the 6th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Germany and France recommend the establishment of a Convention on Biological Diversity ad hoc working group to deal with these problems.

Progress has been made through initiatives such as the 1997 G8 Miami Declaration on Children's Environmental Health, the programs developed by the European Environment and Health Committee, and the recent meeting of Health and Environment Ministers of the Americas. We welcome the convening of Health and Environment Ministers of African countries and strongly encourage other regions in the world to follow in this direction. Among the most important instruments for the sound management of chemicals are the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and we support their early entry into force and implementation by member parties. We also note the effective steps taken by organizations such as the Arctic Council in addressing health and environment challenges for northern people. Collectively, we will consider further areas of collaboration such as review of, and action towards, providing safe drinking water and sanitation, and improved air quality in urban areas through advanced technology and clean fuels.

Children's environmental health is of particular concern to G8 Environment Ministers. In 2002, we have taken stock of our collective and individual actions to implement the 1997 Miami Declaration on Children's Environmental Health and reaffirm our commitment to its implementation. Recognizing that the task of protecting children's health from environmental threats is ongoing, we agree to collectively advance work on the development of children's environmental health indicators as a means for monitoring progress, in consultation with relevant multilateral organizations.

We see the World Summit as a key opportunity to mobilize concrete actions to address environmental issues that threaten human health. We see a clear need to further the science base in order to underpin action on environment and health issues and to build capacity to address them in an integrated way at all levels. We resolve to work with partners throughout the international community, and with key international organizations, particularly the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Health Organization to develop and implement constructive approaches to meet environment, health and poverty challenges. We agree to early discussions by experts to determine how we can further advance G8 thinking on the World Summit initiatives related to human health and environment in the context of sustainable development. In this regard, we call for the launch, in Johannesburg, of an international initiative to synthesize and exchange existing information on environment and human health linkages, including the evaluation of best practices and the identification of barriers to action and focus actions and funding on the identified priorities with a view to strengthening policy responses.

National and International Environmental Governance

Solid policy, legal, regulatory measures and measures promoting voluntary initiatives are required to enhance sustainability and improve environmental performance. Each of our countries has taken important steps in this direction, and has made gains in terms of institution building, resource efficiency, citizen involvement, and cooperation with communities of interest, including local authorities and the private sector. We note in particular the critical role that those private sector players committed to sustainable development can play through investment, technology and corporate social responsibility. We need to explore ways to create opportunities for these leading companies and to facilitate their ability to play an active role in recruiting a greater number of private sector entities to adhere to the principles of sustainable development. Voluntary codes of conduct and initiatives like the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the Global Compact, the Global Reporting Initiative and the proposed London Principles can play an important role in promoting sustainable corporate practices. The G8 Environmental Futures Forum on the Role of Government in Advancing Corporate

Sustainability, held in March 2002, was an excellent step forward for coordinated efforts by G8 countries. We will promote proposals and ideas that encourage foreign investment to make a greater contribution to environmental protection and sustainable development.

We are committed to continue to improve our respective domestic environmental governance and to further engage civil society on the merits of sustainable development. We underline the need to integrate environmental, social and economic policy making, including, for example, through the elaboration and implementation of national sustainable development strategies. We will continue to share with the international community our successes and lessons-learned on environmental governance. We stress the importance of effective national governance to achieve sustainable development in all countries.

In the context of the overall discussion of sustainable development governance, we welcome the recommendations emerging from the Intergovernmental Group on International Environmental Governance, under the leadership of the United Nations Environment Programme. These recommendations are essential to a strengthened international environmental regime, and as such represent an important contribution to the World Summit. We are committed to take concrete steps at the World Summit to ensure their full implementation and the enhancement of linkages between the strengthening of international environmental governance and the other aspects of sustainable development governance. We underline the urgent need to improve the financial situation of UNEP, which remains hampered by insufficient and unpredictable resources, by such ways as providing UNEP with more predictable funding, a broadened base of contributions, more efficient and effective use of available resources, and greater mobilization of resources from the private sector and other major groups. We also note the importance of strengthening UNEP, including as regards its coordinating role, and will consider the important but complex issue of universal membership of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum/Governing Council in the context of preparations for the World Summit. We will continue to collaborate with the international community and UN bodies to enhance the effectiveness of international governance, including multilateral environmental governance, governance at the regional and subregional level (e.g. UN regional commissions) conducive to sustainable development so as to enhance the coordination of our respective environmental, economic and social objectives.

Conclusion

Our commitment to sustainable development remains strong, and we will pursue that commitment through further action. Local, national, regional, and global environmental challenges are growing in severity and complexity, and their resolution requires leadership, innovation and investment. We look forward to the World Summit in Johannesburg as a timely occasion to galvanize the international community and make further progress towards sustainable development. It is a unique chance to reverse the current trend in the depletion and degradation of environmental resources, contribute to poverty alleviation, promote equity, and make globalization work for sustainable development. We will do our part, and welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with the global community to shape a prosperous, secure and sustainable future for generations to come.