

PARTNERSHIPS

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) has come about through the recognition that concerted effort by all segments of global society is essential to achieving the goals of sustainable development. As a result, partnerships are expected to be a major outcome of the WSSD. In the words of Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations: "What is needed is a positive vision, a clear road map for getting from here to there, and a clear responsibility assigned to each of the many actors in the system."

Just as sustainable development requires the integration of economic, social and environmental concerns, actions for achieving sustainability depend on partnerships and mutual commitment among all sectors of society. While governments have a leadership role to play, they alone cannot ensure that sustainable development goals are met.

This is where drawing upon the energy and enthusiasm of the private sector, non-governmental organizations, the



research community and developing countries comes into play. More effective partnerships will mean more concrete outcomes and tangible benefits for sustainable development. These partnerships should complement the commitments made by governments and serve to inspire further action at the local, national and international levels on such issues as urban infrastructure, clean water, waste management, clean energy, housing, telecommunications and governance.

Within the private sector, innovation means more than coming up with new methods or technologies to deliver products and services. The most progressive companies today recognize the business case for sustainability and accept corporate responsibility for achieving its goals. Sharing the expertise of these companies in integrating social responsibility with economic development is of great importance. Canadian companies operating abroad tend to use cleaner technologies and demonstrate good corporate governance in areas such as labour standards and management practices. Moreover, private investment is a growing source of financial support for development.

As well, government-sponsored assistance continues to have an important role in advancing partnerships in support of sustainable development. In this regard, a new partnership has been emerging in which developing countries seek to establish conditions conducive to development, with developed countries actively supporting these initiatives. Good governance is a key element of this partnership. It is now recognized that official development assistance cannot alone create the sustained economic growth that is integral to achieving meaningful development. More and more, developing countries are encouraged to establish and follow policies that create a framework for sustainable economic growth and productive private sector investment, including a commitment to the rule of law, sound fiscal and monetary policies, improved transparency, and investment in basic economic and social infrastructure.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) making up civil society are also crucial to engaging broad segments of society and in forging international alliances. NGOs have invaluable, practical experience in how communities can deal with social, economic and environmental problems. Partnerships that bring together the powerful trio of government, the private sector and civil society are proving to be extremely effective in developing innovative approaches, particularly when these alliances cross international boundaries.

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Over the years, Canadian researchers and university scholars have actively demonstrated their commitment to harnessing the latest science and technology in support of responsible economic growth and development, particularly in partnership with developing countries. Knowledge gained through cutting-edge research has become a means of empowering people to make more informed decisions. Combining resources with research expertise in alliance with proven partnerships has created new opportunities and more effective results.

Canada will focus on partnerships as an important element of success in arriving at effective outcomes for the WSSD. By working together, partners can help bring about practical, cost-effective solutions to matters such as urban sustainability, capacity building and sharing knowledge on issues from forest management to sustainable mining. Canada's expertise and technology in these and other areas may be of particular interest to developing countries.



For more information on partnerships and other issues that Canada will pursue at the WSSD, consult Canada's World Summit Web site at www.wssd-smdd.gc.ca.

