

Statement by the Delegation of Canada to the Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development

Friday May 9, 2008, 9:00 am – Parallel session on Interlinkages and cross-cutting issues, including means of implementation

Mr/Madame Chairperson,

Canada recognizes the importance of interlinkages amongst the six themes of the current CSD cycle and the issues outlined in Agenda 21, including poverty eradication, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development. In some instances, the themes are so interlinked that their delineation, although useful conceptually, proves difficult when sharing lessons learned from existing policies, programs, and projects. Their interconnectedness underscores the need for purposeful consideration of synergies amongst international efforts.

We note that many cross-cutting issues need to be considered during policy development and development cooperation activities in relation to the themes. Integrated policy development and decision making that considers social, economic, and environmental dimensions is essential if we are to achieve sustainable development. Canada notes the importance of integrated consideration of agriculture, rural development, land, drought and desertification within National Sustainable Development Strategies and Poverty Reduction Strategies. We also recognize strategic environmental assessment as a tool that can contribute to integrated decision making.

Mr/Madame Chairperson, Canada believes that good governance at the national level provides a strong foundation for progress towards sustainable development. Support for democratic governance in the context of poverty reduction and sustainable development seeks respect for human rights and gender equality, respect and enforcement of the rule of law, accountable and inclusive public institutions, and a commitment to freedom and democracy. Sustainable development depends on peace and security.

Gender has been a prominent cross-cutting issue this cycle. Men and women often play unequal roles in the fields of agriculture, land, drought, desertification, rural development, as well as in Africa's development. Canada recognizes equality between women and men and women's empowerment as a development goal in its own right, and as essential for the achievement of all Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Inequitable access to decision-making processes, opportunities for land ownership, and financial resources detracts from the sustainability of economic outcomes, and can have negative impacts on women and girls in particular. Negative environmental impacts often exacerbate this result. Canada focuses on delivering results for equality by striving to advance equal participation in decision making, supporting women and girls in their full realization of human rights, and reducing gender inequalities in access to and control over the resources and benefits of development.

Mr/Madame Chairperson, with regards to means of implementation, Canada has taken significant steps to reduce global poverty, in terms of increasing both the volume and effectiveness of its aid. We are committed to meeting our Gleneagles target of doubling our aid to Africa by 2009. As part of its commitment to help developing countries participate more fully in the global economy, Canada also encourages economic growth and development in the least-developed countries through its far-reaching market access program and provides for duty-free and quota-free market access for almost 99% of products originating from the least-developed countries. Canada strongly supports the provision of Aid for Trade to help developing countries to build the supply-side capacity and trade-related infrastructure that they need to assist them in implementing and benefiting from WTO Agreements and more broadly to expand their trade.