

Position Paper for the Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20)

The Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication

Canada has long been on the forefront of combating climate change and identifies the global shift toward a green economy as a sustainable economic practice that improves the standard of living by protecting human health, conserving the environment, using resources efficiently and advancing long-term economic competitiveness. As reported by the Millennium Ecosystem assessment, over 60% of the world's major ecosystem goods and services were used unsustainably. The livelihoods of billions, specifically the rural poor, are threatened by a wide range of climate-induced risks that affect food security, water availability, natural disasters, ecosystem stability, and human health because their livelihoods depend upon directly on natural resources. Because of these intricate ties between the global market and the biosphere, Environment Canada has recognized that "climate change is a global challenge requiring a global solution," and therefore supports an "approach to climate change that achieves real environmental and economic benefits for all" such as the UN Secretary General's Report for the first Preparatory Meeting of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development which impelled an outline of a green economy (A/RES/64/236). In addition, Canada has been very progressive in terms of ecological and climate related resolutions and treaties put forth by the United Nations, such as the Basel Convention (1992), the Convention on Climate Change (1992), the Kyoto Protocol (2002) and many more. Canada has also been the host nation for the Montreal Protocol in 1997, exposing the nation to much international attention and global leadership. In fact, Kofi Annan praised the Montreal Protocol as "perhaps the single most successful international agreement to date." In terms of sustainable development and poverty eradication, Canadian development assistance has significantly increased, doubling its international assistance from 2001 to 2010, with assistance to Africa doubling from 2003-2004 to 2008-2009. Canada has been a first-mover on announcing and disbursing against its 2009 G8 L'Aquila Summit commitments to support sustainable agricultural development. As of April 2011, Canada has fully disbursed its \$1.18 billion L'Aquila commitment and is the first G8 country to do so. Canada has also launched significant new initiatives to support maternal, newborn and child health (the 2010 G8 Muskoka Initiative), education and food security in developing countries, with a clear focus on sustainability of effort and impacts.

The five thematic priorities of Canada's international development assistance are sustainable economic growth, security and stability, democracy, children and youth and food security. However, as a global leader in oil and natural gas production, Canada is taking action through multi-level efforts in the economy, both in the private sector and on the international stage that focuses on addressing national energy needs and reducing GHG emissions through clean energy initiatives (such as Carbon Capture and Storage technologies). To secure sustainable and renewable energy, Canada is investing \$3 billion in research and development of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) technologies. In addition, Canada is taking a leadership role in corporate social responsibility (CSR) by launching its CSR Strategy for the Canadian extractive sector operating abroad which includes support for host country resource governance capacity-building initiatives such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative; endorsement and promotion of widely-recognized international CSR performance guidelines such as the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights; and the creation of the Office of the Extractive Sector CSR Counselor. Because agriculture is another issue central to developing countries' economies and is becoming increasingly threatened through unfavorable climatic conditions, Canada has set up a cooperate program (Agricultural Greenhouse Gases Program) and is providing more than \$19 million in seed money for 18 projects to advance research, transfer technology and adopt beneficial management practices to mitigate agricultural greenhouse gases. Canada is currently contributing \$400 million in new and additional climate change financing to support developing countries to reduce GHG emissions and stop and reverse harmful impacts of climate change. Outside the UN, Canada is an active participant in various IGOs including: the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate (MEF); the Global Methane Initiative (GMI); the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries and Approaches to Stimulate Action Partnership (REDD+); and the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases. Canada plays a significant role in is the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate (APP) and currently invests \$11.75 million in 28 APP projects leveraging more than \$77 million in investments that promote sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. Internationally, Canadian-funded projects reduce fugitive methane emissions, decrease GHG externalities, improve energy efficiency, and

conserve valuable non-renewable resources from oil and gas facilities and transmission systems- all issues central to providing long-term as well as ecologically sustainable economic growth.

Transitioning towards a green economy is a long-term process that will require the active engagement and leadership of many actors including industry and civil society as well as all levels of government. The engagement of the private sector, especially small and medium enterprises, is critical. Moreover, Canada acknowledges the importance of finding ways to protect global ecosystems, reduce the risks of global climate change and improve energy security while simultaneously improving the livelihoods those in poverty. Canada will work with the CSD to examine the means by which industry, civil society and government can work together to leverage their potential to create jobs, support workers through training and skills development, access financing, advance innovative technologies, and influence the supply chain towards greener methods of production. Using both regulatory and non-regulatory instruments according to national circumstances can enable the wide range of sectors and actors whose participation is necessary to successfully achieve a green economy. Well-designed regulations provide predictability for business, thus supporting innovation and economic growth while meeting environmental objectives. Canada also believes that a balanced suite of indicators, adaptable to national circumstances, can assist governments to measure progress as they transition to a green economy but their interpretation should consider differences in national circumstances to avoid inappropriate comparisons; Canada sees the CSD as an opportunity to identify policy tools and best practices to facilitate the transition as well as a balanced suite of voluntary indicators for measuring progress towards a green economy. For a successful green economy to develop, Canada believes that countries need to focus and strengthen efforts on the management of their natural resources in a sustainable and socially responsible manner. These efforts should include policies that improve natural resource management, environmental sustainability and corporate social responsibility. These actions are aligned with UN agreements, such as the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as well as the United Nations-led Marrakech Process. Canada will continue to push for a green economy, ensuring that it will be able to meet the “needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Moreover, the government of Canada states that “advancing sustainable development is about safeguarding our future and improving the quality of life in Canada and for the global community.”