

1992

# STRATEGIC OVERVIEW



**CCME**

Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment / Le Conseil canadien des ministres de l'environnement



The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) is the major intergovernmental forum in Canada for discussion and joint action on environmental issues of national, international and global concern. The 13 member governments work as partners in developing nationally consistent environmental standards, practices and legislation.

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# 1992 STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

## 1 GENERAL DIRECTION

In March 1990, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment adopted a Statement of Interjurisdictional Cooperation on Environmental Matters. The Statement provides a framework for effective intergovernmental cooperation on environmental matters. The member governments of CCME have committed themselves to achieving the objectives contained in the Statement.

During the time frame of this Strategic Overview, the need for intergovernmental cooperation to address environmental issues in Canada will continue to grow. The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment intends to play a strategic role in coordinating national discussion and action on these issues.

Given the number and complexity of environmental challenges facing Canada, it is impossible for CCME to address all of them. Fortunately, responsibility for responding to these issues is shared, not only among the members of CCME but also with other government organizations, the private sector and the public. CCME applies a comprehensive planning process to identify priority issues that it will address, either individually or in cooperation with other parties (Diagram 1).

In selecting its priorities, CCME seeks to strike a balance between addressing existing environmental issues and anticipating and preparing for emerging issues. The organization is also careful to differentiate between work that should be undertaken by CCME and work that can more effectively be conducted individually by its members or by others. Increasingly, the work of CCME will involve coordination or partnership arrangements with a wide range of stakeholders including other government departments, industry and interest groups.

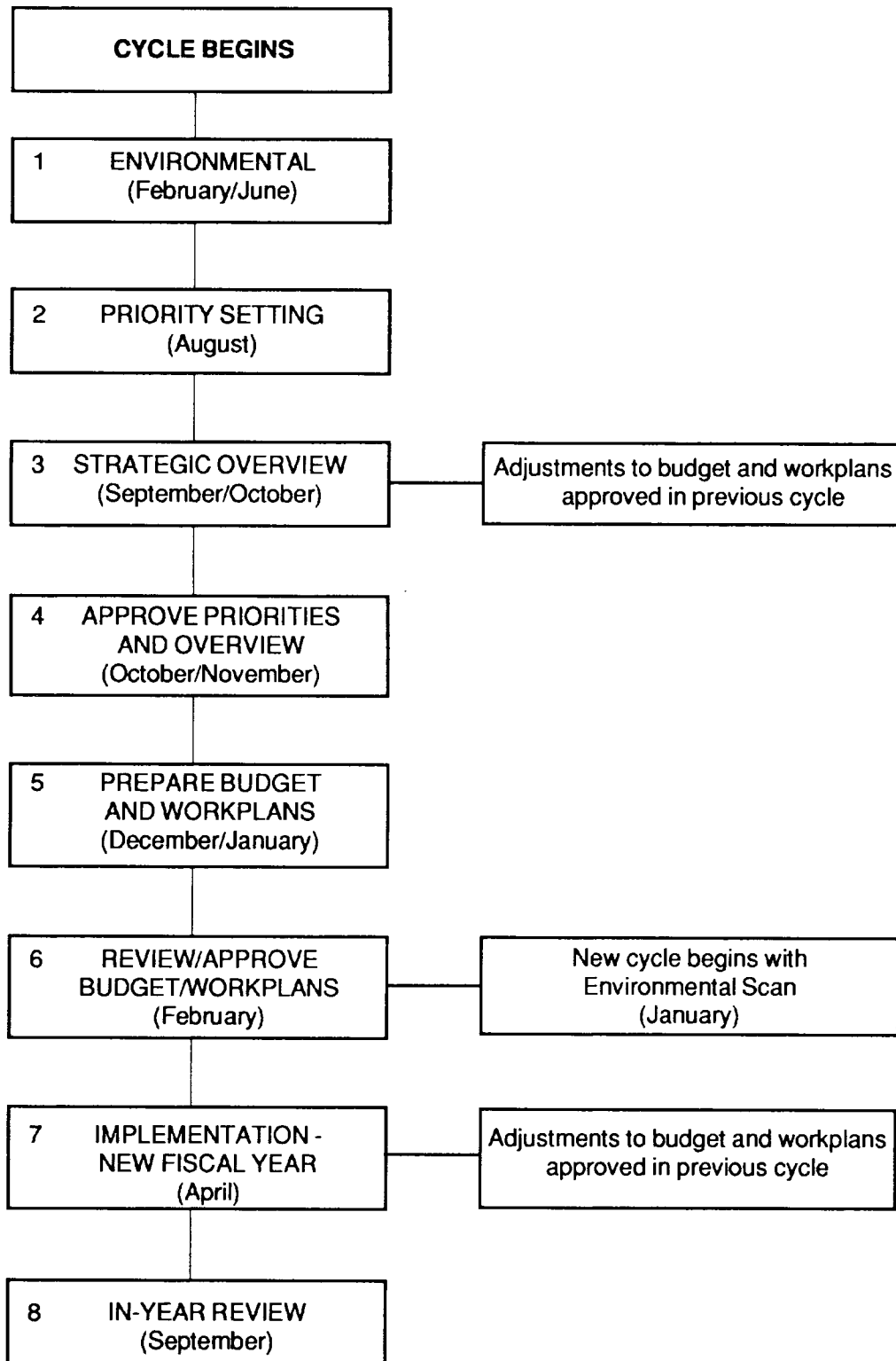
The Strategic Overview does not present all of the issues that are within the sphere of interest of CCME; rather, it presents those issues that require allocation of resources. Other issues of interest to CCME will continue to be monitored and brought forward for consideration, where necessary.

CCME will serve as a forum for:

- cooperative action including, where appropriate, an ongoing role in the implementation of projects;
- consultation among governments; and
- information exchange.

The focus of the Council of Ministers will be on setting policy direction and on resolving policy matters related to the many environmental issues facing the country. Deputy Ministers Committee will advise the Council of Ministers on these issues and, supported by CCME's Secretariat, Environmental Protection Committee, Strategic Planning Committee and task groups, will ensure that the necessary action plans are put in place and supportive technical work undertaken to implement the Council's decisions.

# DIAGRAM 1: CCME PLANNING PROCESS



## 2 MOVING TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The 1992 Environmental Scan proposed that CCME develop a new framework for strategic work planning. The new framework would replace the current organizational categories of Issues Management and Improved Decision-Making with four new themes that would reflect the commitment of CCME to entrenching the philosophy of sustainable development in its work.

The framework is designed to place CCME in a leadership role for advancing sustainable development in Canada. Sustainable development, with its emphasis on integrating environmental and economic decision-making so that the survival of the Earth's ecosystems and of the people who depend on those ecosystems is ensured, is perhaps the major challenge facing the world's decision-makers.

The framework must be more than just a convenient way of organizing existing work. The themes are designed to drive the CCME agenda. CCME would use the themes to identify issues to be addressed.

The four themes are:

- 1 building partnerships;
- 2 building a sustainable development vision and integrating environment with development;
- 3 overcoming jurisdictional fragmentation; and
- 4 adjusting to the international reality.

The first theme of building partnerships addresses the increasing tendency for environmental issues to extend beyond the authority of environment ministries. The resolution of complex environmental challenges, especially those involving the integration of environmental considerations into economic decision-making, will depend on consultation and cooperation among affected parties. By building partnerships with other government departments, the private sector, environmental groups and other stakeholders, CCME can develop comprehensive, effective and lasting solutions to environmental issues.

The second theme addresses the need to be forward-looking in integrating environmental and economic decision-making. Rather than relying on reactive cures, governments can reduce costs and improve environmental protection by integrating environmental considerations into decision-making. CCME can assist in this transition by moving towards a sustainable development agenda.

The third theme of overcoming jurisdictional fragmentation recognizes that jurisdiction for environmental matters is shared between the federal and provincial governments. To date, most of CCME's work has been directed towards this theme. This theme will continue to be an important part of the CCME agenda, since CCME is the principal interjurisdictional forum for environmental issues in Canada.

The fourth theme of adjusting to the international reality ties environmental considerations to the main international economic forces of the present - more open trading regimes and increased competitiveness. A concerted effort from CCME will be required to ensure the positive impacts of these forces outweigh the negative impacts.

**DIAGRAM 2 - 1992-93 TASK GROUPS - NEW FRAMEWORK**

ISSUES	THEMES			
	Building Partnerships	Building a Sustainable Development Vision	Overcoming Jurisdictional Fragmentation	Adjusting to the International Reality
Global Warming	AITG		AITG	AITG
Air Quality	AITG	AITG EITG	AITG	AITG
Water Management		SPC WQGTG	WQGTG LSTTG HORTA	
Packaging	NPTG	NPTG	NPTG	
Solid Waste Management			WMTG	
Hazardous Waste Management			CSTG WMTG	
Chemicals	(SPC)		SPC	
Economic Instruments	EITG	EITG		
Cooperation on International Issues			CIITG	CIITG
Improved Decision-Making	IDMTG	IDMTG	IDMTG	
Partnerships	Secretariat			
Environmental Assessment		(HEATG)	HEATG	
Harmonization of Regulatory and Technical Approaches		(HORTA)	HORTA	
State of Environment Reporting		SOERTG	SOERTG	

- AITG Atmospheric Issues Task Group
- EITG Economic Instruments Task Group
- SPC on SPC workplan, responsibility not assigned
- WQGTG Water Quality Guidelines Task Group
- LSTTG Leaking Storage Tanks Task Group
- HORTA Harmonization of Regulatory and Technical Approaches Task Group
- NPTG National Packaging Task Group
- WMTG Waste Management Task Group
- CSTG Contaminated Sites Task Group
- CIITG Cooperation on International Issues Task Group
- IDMTG Improved Decision-Making Task Group
- HEATG Harmonization of Environmental Assessment Task Group
- SOERTG State of the Environment Reporting Task Group

Implementation of the framework will require a shift in the way CCME approaches its work. Diagram 2 illustrates how the currently identified work of CCME task groups may fit into the framework. Because of the dramatic implications of this framework, CCME will not immediately implement the themes. However, the themes will be used to identify new issues and to refine the workplans for existing issues. Over the medium-term, as existing issues decrease in importance and new issues take their place, the work of CCME will become oriented to the sustainable development framework.

### **3 PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIC OVERVIEW**

The Strategic Overview outlines the goals and priorities of CCME over the next five years. The goals identified for each issue are the basis upon which the annual workplans and budget of CCME are developed. The Overview is updated annually on the basis of new information and a review of the priorities of the organization.

Together, the Overview and draft workplans and budget for 1993-94 will be presented to the Council of Ministers for approval at the Annual Meeting in November 1992.

The Overview also offers continuing direction for CCME's 1992-93 workplans and points to priority issues where work needs to be initiated immediately.

### **4 CCME PRIORITIES**

The CCME planning process begins with the preparation of a scan that identifies environmental issues of national importance. Input to the scan comes from member governments, CCME committees and the Secretariat, and a variety of other sources. The 1992 Scan was prepared by the Institute for Research on Public Policy, in cooperation with Resource Futures International and Synergistics Consulting Ltd.

The issues identified in the 1992 Environmental Scan were discussed by the Deputy Ministers Committee at a meeting in February 1992, and the priorities identified in the 1991 Strategic Overview were updated to reflect the new Scan.

Deputy Ministers Committee confirmed 1991 priorities with the following changes:

- work on packaging will shift from a development role to a monitoring role, and will move from a high priority to a medium priority;
- formal CCME involvement in contaminated sites work ended March 31, 1992;
- State of the Environment Reporting work will end with the current workplan;
- CCME involvement in leaking storage tanks work will end when the current workplan tasks are completed; and
- research and development will be phased out as a separate issue.

The Deputy Ministers also identified these new priorities for 1993-94 and beyond:

- *Aboriginal issues* - The key aboriginal issues in relation to CCME are changing environmental management responsibilities, and the integration of traditional knowledge into resource management.
- *Partnerships and sustainable development* - Many of the most important emerging environmental issues reach beyond the traditional mandate of environment ministries. Integration of environmental and economic decision-making can be achieved by forging partnerships with key stakeholders.
- *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development follow-up* - CCME will work to initiate a Canadian follow-up to the results of UNCED.
- *Environmental liability* - It was agreed that this growing issue requires urgent CCME attention, and Strategic Planning Committee was directed to address it.
- *Issues papers* - The Council of Ministers agreed that CCME should commission major studies of emerging issues, such as urbanization and the relationship between trade, competitiveness and the environment.

## 5 ISSUE MANAGEMENT

The Strategic Overview identifies four main areas in which CCME will pursue activities aimed at the protection, conservation and enhancement of the environment: atmospheric issues, water management, waste management and chemicals.

### 5.1 Atmospheric Issues

#### 5.1.1 Air Quality

Air Quality will be a **high priority** issue for CCME over the next five years.

#### *Background*

Air pollutants are a problem of intergovernmental scope because the pollutants can be transported long distances in the atmosphere. With respect to urban air quality, the concentrations of several air pollutants have declined significantly since 1974, although ground level ozone and smog continue to be major urban air pollutants of concern. Many other complex pollutants are being emitted into the air including pesticides, cadmium, PCBs, dioxins, other organic toxics and mercury.

Internationally, NO<sub>x</sub> and SO<sub>2</sub> emission management commitments are in place, and a VOC protocol has been negotiated with the Economic Commission for Europe. The Montreal Protocol calls for the phase out of ozone depleting substances, including CFCs, by the year 2000. Canada's new commitment is to phase out these substances by the end of 1995. Nationally, individual jurisdictions are developing clean air strategies to guide local air quality management.

## *CCME Perspective*

There is a need to work cooperatively in the management of air quality issues, because air pollutants cross provincial and territorial boundaries, and there are benefits to dealing with groups of air pollutants, instead of one at a time. CCME is working toward an air quality management strategy for Canada that would establish the principles for intergovernmental cooperation in dealing with atmospheric issues. A key element of this work has been to determine what kind of management structure is necessary to enable steering and coordination of the work that needs to be done. Continuing to develop this structure, in cooperation with other agencies directly influenced by decisions on air quality, such as energy departments, will be a priority activity for CCME.

CCME is implementing Phase I of a plan to manage NO<sub>x</sub> and VOCs. Altogether, three phases of work are contemplated to improve air quality in regions that have ground level ozone problems and to protect the current standard of air quality in the rest of the country. The Atmospheric Issues Task Group, supported by a NO<sub>x</sub>/VOC management office in Environment Canada, is coordinating the implementation program.

With respect to ozone depletion, a Canadian Environmental Protection Act working group has developed an action plan following from approval of a CFCs Elimination Strategy by CCME in the fall of 1990.

## *Key Issues*

- A structure for steering and coordinating all activities requiring national cooperative action, such as intergovernmental agreements on specific pollutants, national efforts on global warming, developing ambient air quality criteria, and implementing the acid rain accord with the U.S., has not been developed.
- The policy implications of domestic and international commitments (including NO<sub>x</sub>, VOCs, SO<sub>2</sub>) have not been identified.
- Integration of strategies that address individual air quality issues is required.
- A better understanding of the impacts and management of air toxics is required.

## *Goals*

- Develop a comprehensive national air quality management agreement containing a strategic approach that integrates and incorporates the clean air strategies of individual jurisdictions, intergovernmental agreements on NO<sub>x</sub>/VOC, SO<sub>2</sub> caps, greenhouse gases, etc., cooperation with other departments such as energy, CCME activities on specific problems, and approaches to the control of air emissions of toxic chemicals.
- Coordinate implementation of Phase I of the NO<sub>x</sub>/VOC Management Plan and SO<sub>2</sub> emissions commitments. This includes:
  - developing federal-provincial agreements to effect national commitments;
  - involving stakeholders in the development of national initiatives; and

- identifying appropriate regulatory and non-regulatory instruments to achieve objectives (e.g., emissions trading).
- Ensure implementation of Phase II and III of NO<sub>x</sub>/VOC Management Plan.

### *Identified Activities*

Workplan activities identified to date include:

- finalization of the text of the Comprehensive Agreement;
- development of an emissions trading scheme for SO<sub>2</sub>; and
- implementation of Phase I of the NO<sub>x</sub>/VOC Management Plan, including the activities in the NO<sub>x</sub>/VOC Office.

### *Responsibility*

- Environmental Protection Committee

## 5.1.2 Global Warming

Global warming will be a **high priority** issue for CCME over the next five years.

### *Background*

Global warming is one of the dominant environmental issues on the international agenda. Global warming results from an increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere. Canada has the fourth highest per capita production of such gases. Because of its northern location, Canada could experience more significant impacts than many other countries. Canada has made the commitment to stabilize CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gas emissions at the 1990 level by 2000. A Climate Change Convention is expected to be signed at UNCED in June, 1992.

### *CCME Perspective*

National responses to this issue can be developed in a coordinated manner under the forthcoming Comprehensive National Air Quality Management Agreement. A key concern is developing the strategy for jurisdictions to share the responsibility for reaching the stabilization target. To facilitate preparation of Canada's negotiating position on the Climate Change Convention, Canada has established a federal-provincial advisory committee of environment and energy ministries as well as a multi-stakeholder group.

### *Key Issues*

- Timely national action to reduce Canada's contribution to global warming is needed.
- Domestic policy implications of international negotiations and negotiated commitments, such as stabilization of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2000, must be identified.

- There is a need for a process to ensure that international and national commitments are met.
- Research needs have to be identified to improve understanding of the implications of global warming.
- Linkages to energy and other sectors/ministries must be built.

### *Goals*

- Elaborate a national action strategy in cooperation with other sectors, in particular energy, forestry, transportation, urban planning and agriculture.
- Ensure coordinated action to implement and assess the effectiveness of existing measures in Canada to address global warming.
- Establish a greenhouse gas reference level, reporting system, and improve greenhouse gas emissions inventory and forecasting methodologies.
- Influence Canada's international negotiating position on the Climate Change Convention.
- Ensure that intergovernmental agreements on greenhouse gas emissions reduction are developed in accordance with the comprehensive air quality management agreement.

### *Identified Activities*

Workplan activities identified to date include:

- development of a list of current emission reduction activities in Canada; and
- development of common approaches to emission inventory, forecasting and reporting.

### *Responsibility*

- Environmental Protection Committee

## **5.2 Water Management**

Identification of strategic options for CCME involvement in Water Management will be a **medium priority** issue for CCME. Depending upon the outcome of a review during 1992/93, CCME may undertake further work in this area.

### *Background*

Water is Canada's most abundant natural resource. It is also the most taken for granted, the most abused and probably the most undervalued. There is no systematic accounting for the use and abuse of this resource, despite its role as "the lifeblood of the environment". Aquatic ecosystems are under stress because of manmade inputs from both land and air.

### *CCME Perspective*

Since the management of water has transboundary impacts, and elements of both federal and provincial jurisdiction affect water, cooperative efforts may be required.

CCME is currently undertaking some work in water management, including:

- developing national water quality guidelines;
- updating storage tank codes of practice to avoid problems such as ground water contamination; and
- examining water pricing as an economic instrument.

### *Key Issues*

- There may be a need for a national approach to transboundary water issues, including both water quantity and water quality.
- Efforts of individual jurisdictions may be strengthened by a national water conservation strategy, including pricing and infrastructure.
- Efforts of individual jurisdictions may be strengthened by national water management initiatives that include wetland management, ground water management and management of entire watersheds, as opposed to individual bodies of water.

### *Goals*

- Identify strategic options for CCME involvement in water management issues.

### *Identified Activities*

Workplan activities identified to date include:

- participation in the 1993 Water Conservation Conference in Winnipeg;
- examination of water pricing as a competitiveness and economic tools issue;
- examine harmonization of policies; and
- build partnerships with other intergovernmental agencies with a concern for water management.

### *Responsibility*

- Strategic Planning Committee (with support from Environmental Protection Committee)

## 5.3 Waste Management

### 5.3.1 Solid and Hazardous Waste Management

Solid and hazardous waste management will be a **medium priority** issue for CCME over the next two to three years.

#### *Background*

Waste disposal has become a critical issue faced by governments in larger, growing municipalities as space in which to bury garbage is becoming limited. The problem is exacerbated by fiscal restraint and the rising costs of disposal. The solid waste problem results from the rapid growth of some urban centers coupled with changing lifestyles and consumer tastes, most notably the trend towards high consumption, quick use and disposal of consumer products. One third of all municipal solid waste is packaging.

Hazardous wastes make up about 20% of Canada's waste stream. Apart from taking up space, the disposal of these wastes in landfill sites and accidental spills have caused serious land, water and ground water contamination problems across the country. In some cases, hazardous wastes are being stockpiled, awaiting the development of safe destruction technologies or construction of suitable waste management facilities. There is a need for strong regulatory programs at both the federal and provincial levels to control hazardous substances before they become wastes, accompanied by effective control through all other phases of their life cycle.

#### *CCME Perspective*

Despite the urgency of these issues, responsibility for them is generally confined to municipal and provincial governments. CCME's role is limited to areas where interjurisdictional cooperation and agreement are useful. In this respect, in 1989 CCME announced a national goal of reducing the solid waste sent to landfill by 50% from 1988 levels by the year 2000. The major CCME work currently underway includes implementation of the National Packaging Protocol (see section 5.3.2). Also, a five year program has been launched to clean up orphaned contaminated sites and to demonstrate new clean-up technology. Additional steps have been taken in the area of waste management for CCME to attain the overall waste reduction objective.

#### *Key Issues*

- A strategy for meeting the 50% reduction objective is required.
- Consistent waste measurement and reporting systems for solid and hazardous wastes need to be developed.
- Greater intergovernmental cooperation must be achieved.
- A forum for waste information exchange should be provided.
- The hierarchy of waste management principles (reduce, reuse and recycle) must be integrated into decision-making.

- The responsibility for waste management falls generally upon governments, rather than the generators of the waste.
- “Wastes” may actually be “resources”, but are not currently perceived as such.
- A commitment from industry to CCME goals must be obtained.

### *Goals*

- Review progress toward reducing solid waste by 50% by the year 2000.
- Determine what aspects of solid and hazardous waste management require attention by CCME, e.g., siting, disposal technology, recycling markets.
- Assess current activities and identify major weaknesses in hazardous waste management practices in Canada and the United States.

### *Identified Activities*

Workplan activities identified to date include:

- preparation of a discussion paper on a national waste management strategy, including input from municipalities;
- development of national waste measuring and reporting systems and inventories;
- development of a waste information index and database; and
- endorsement of a pilot waste oil project.

### *Responsibility*

- Environmental Protection Committee

## 5.3.2 Packaging

Packaging will shift from a **high priority** issue to a **medium priority** issue for CCME over the next two to three years.

### *Background*

See section 5.3.1

### *CCME Perspective*

In 1989, CCME announced a national goal of reducing the solid waste sent to landfills by 50% from 1988 levels by the year 2000. In support of this goal, in March 1990, CCME adopted the National Packaging Protocol designed to reduce packaging waste by 50% by the year 2000. A task group is overseeing implementation of the National Packaging Protocol in cooperation with a multi-stakeholder task force. Under the protocol, CCME has funded the

development of a data base and communications activities, and is implementing other workplan elements, including the development of model legislation and regulations, a review of government policies and practices, life cycle analysis and a technology review. The Canadian Code of Preferred Packaging Practices was published and released in November, 1991.

### *Key Issues*

- Canadians produce too much packaging waste, which takes up too much space in landfills.
- The National Packaging Protocol is voluntary, but if the first target of 20% is not achieved a decision on regulation must take place by mid-1993.
- There is a need for industry to develop a product stewardship perspective.

### *Goals*

- Ensure that 20% reduction target in packaging waste is achieved by the end of 1992 through the actions planned by the National Packaging Task Force.
- Ensure that 35% reduction in packaging waste is achieved by December 31, 1996.
- Ensure the necessary steps are taken to achieve the reduction goal of 50% by 2000.

### *Identified Activities*

Workplan activities identified to date include:

- development of 1988 reference data and 1990 survey of packaging waste;
- summary of legislation relevant to packaging in each jurisdiction;
- development of regional workshops for public input on product stewardship initiatives, and on the proposed methodology for measuring progress toward the reduction targets;
- preparation of draft guidelines on packaging audits and packaging waste reduction workplans;
- preparation of draft regulations for enforcing the first reduction target if that target cannot be reached voluntarily; and
- review of international initiatives, particularly European, concerning packaging and product stewardship.

### *Responsibility*

- Environmental Protection Committee

## 5.4 Persistent Toxic Chemicals

Identification of strategic options for CCME involvement in Persistent Toxic Chemicals will be a **medium priority** issue for CCME. Depending upon the outcome of a review during 1992/93, CCME may undertake work in this area.

### *Background*

Chemical use has the potential to significantly impact the environment. The growing number of chemicals available and their increasing use requires that these products be managed throughout their life cycle in a manner that will minimize their impact on the environment.

### *CCME Perspective*

The issue of chemicals is very broad, with many sub-issues grouped under the generic term “chemicals”. Chemicals can have transboundary impacts, chemical management practices have competitive implications, and international agreements affect provincial jurisdiction. CCME has identified a need to examine the issue of persistent toxic chemicals to determine if there is a CCME role in this issue.

### *Key Issues*

- Chemicals can be persistent and can travel great distances from their sources, leading to transboundary impacts.
- Consumer pressure in major foreign markets may lead to trade barriers based on Canadian chemical management practices.
- Agriculture, one of the main sectors using chemicals, is a shared jurisdiction between federal and provincial governments, requiring coordinated action.
- Industry and environmental groups (e.g., the New Directions Group) may be poised to cooperate on initiatives concerning persistent toxic chemicals.

### *Goals*

- Define the chemicals issues of concern to CCME.
- Identify strategic options for CCME involvement in chemicals issues.

### *Identified Activities*

Workplan activities identified to date include:

- preparation of a paper summarizing initiatives already in place to manage chemicals.

### *Responsibility*

- Environmental Protection Committee (with support from Strategic Planning Committee)

## 6 IMPROVED DECISION MAKING

Elements of improved decision-making include an ecosystem approach to management, integration of environmental and economic decisions, the application of new policy instruments and improved environmental information.

The Strategic Overview identifies six main areas in which CCME will pursue work of a strategic nature aimed at improving processes and methods of decision making: integration of environmental and economic decision-making, cooperation on international issues, environmental assessment, harmonization of regulatory and technical approaches, State of the Environment reporting and environmental liability.

### 6.1 Integration of Environment and Economy

Integration of environment and economy will be a **high priority** issue for CCME over the next five years. Work undertaken in the next year will determine what actions CCME undertakes in the long term.

#### *Background*

The integration of environmental considerations into economic decision-making is one of the first steps to developing a sustainable economy. Environmentally-sound decision-making must ensure that the health of ecosystems is maintained and, where necessary, restored, for the use of present and future generations.

#### *CCME Perspective*

Future solutions to environmental issues will cross departmental and jurisdictional boundaries. As the major intergovernmental forum on environment issues, CCME has a key role to play in encouraging new ways of decision-making. CCME has demonstrated this leadership role in suggesting improvements to existing decision-making processes through the work of the National Task Force on Environment and Economy and the Advisory Committee on Environment and Economy. Partnerships have been formed with the Council of Energy Ministers on the National Action Strategy on Global Warming and in-depth consultation with the private sector has been conducted on activities such as the NO<sub>x</sub>/VOC Management Plan and the National Packaging Protocol.

#### *Key Issues*

- Integrated approaches to environmental decision-making that recognize the linkages among environmental issues and between environmental and economic objectives are not fully developed and utilized in Canada.
- Linkages between CCME and other sectors and stakeholders need to be explored to promote information exchange, consultation and the development of joint approaches to environment issues.
- While the theory of economic instruments and other market based techniques is well-developed, there is an information gap on the implementation techniques of market-based instruments.

- Since market-based instruments affect the competitive position of each jurisdiction, a cooperative national approach is required to ensure a level playing field.
- Evolving constitutional and administrative arrangements between Canadian jurisdictions and aboriginal groups may alter the way governments make decisions on resource management and environmental protection. Aboriginal groups have a stake in both environmental protection and economic development.
- There is controversy over the impact of the global trend towards more open trading systems on both competitiveness and the environment. Linkages between the environment and the economy are especially pronounced in trade.
- The impact of the expansion of the urban economy on both urban and rural environments is largely undefined.

### *Goals*

- Re-focus CCME away from a primary emphasis on environmental protection and towards an emphasis on sustainable development.
- Prepare strategic options for further CCME involvement in the integration of environmental issues and environmental and economic decisions.
- Create opportunities for joint meetings with energy, education and other national councils to develop partnerships and promote joint issue identification.
- Review work underway to develop and implement economic instruments and develop goals for CCME action in this area.
- Develop strategic options for CCME involvement in aboriginal issues impacting the environment.
- Examine the relationship between trade, competitiveness and the environment.
- Examine the impact of urbanization on the environment.
- Review Round Table experience to determine how Round Table activities will influence the environmental agendas of environment ministries, both individually and collectively through CCME.

### *Identified Activities*

Workplan activities identified to date include:

- development of a discussion paper on decision-making tools and a workshop on decision-making;
- development of a workshop on economic instruments and a report on implementation of economic instruments;
- development of identified partnerships;

- preparation of a scoping paper outlining CCME's role in aboriginal issues;
- commissioning of a study paper on trade, competitiveness and the environment; and
- preparation of a scoping paper outlining CCME's role in urbanization issues.

### *Responsibility*

- Strategic Planning Committee

## **6.2 Cooperation on International Issues**

Cooperation on international issues will be a **high priority** issue for CCME over the next two to three years.

### *Background*

The federal government has constitutional responsibility for international affairs, including the right to negotiate protocols, conventions and other agreements. However, many international agreements impact on provincial jurisdiction. The focus on international issues has been increasing in recent years, and will increase dramatically after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992.

### *CCME Perspective*

CCME can serve as a body to coordinate provincial and territorial input into federal negotiating positions, and to disseminate information from the federal government to other member governments. CCME provided a representative to the Canadian delegation at the final UNCED preparatory committee meeting in New York.

### *Key Issues*

- Implementing UNCED's global action plan for sustainable development will require coordination and cooperation among all segments of Canadian society.
- Formal federal-provincial consultation mechanisms are lacking.

### *Goals*

- Promote the adoption of UNCED recommendations for Canadian policy.
- Become the vehicle through which progress on the domestic follow-up to UNCED is reported to the Canadian public.
- Examine the need for formal consultation mechanisms on international issues.

### *Identified Activities*

Workplan activities identified to date include:

- development of a process for initiating a national follow-up to UNCED.

### *Responsibility*

- Strategic Planning Committee

## **6.3 Environmental Assessment**

Environmental assessment will be a **high priority** issue for CCME over the next two years.

### *Background*

Environmental assessment is used by governments to analyze, assess and review the potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of proposed developments and, increasingly, policies and programs. There is an array of environmental assessment procedures, legislated or otherwise, in place or being contemplated across the country. Environmental assessment is of great interest to environmental groups, since it directly affects the level of environmental protection imposed on developments. Environmental assessment is also of great interest to industry since the cost and outcome of environmental assessments are a major factor in decisions related to start-up, siting, production methods, and cost structure. Finally, environmental assessment is of great interest to aboriginal people because the projects being assessed most often affect the lives of aboriginal people the most.

### *CCME Perspective*

The Task Group on Harmonization of Environmental Assessment has prepared a draft set of cooperative principles for environmental assessment. CCME has also been the primary forum for information exchange about existing, new and revised environmental assessment and review legislation and processes, most notably the federal Environmental Assessment Act (Bill C-13).

### *Key Issues*

- Because of shared constitutional responsibility for the environment and the transboundary nature of the impacts of many projects, there is potential for jurisdictional conflict and duplication of effort in environmental assessment legislation and processes.
- Because of the potential for duplication, there is a need for multi-jurisdictional (joint) processes.
- The public is demanding greater involvement in environmental assessments, including intervenor funding.
- The scope of environmental assessment is not clearly defined.

## *Goals*

- Fully implement the cooperative principles of environmental assessment.
- Ensure existing and new environmental assessment legislation and processes complement legislation and processes in other jurisdictions.
- Develop multi-jurisdictional (joint) environmental assessment processes.
- Develop mechanisms to assist in ongoing intergovernmental cooperation on environmental assessment between the federal and provincial/territorial governments, among provincial and territorial governments, and between Canada and other countries.

## *Identified Activities*

Workplan activities identified to date include:

- development of recommendations on cooperative mechanisms;
- preparation of a report on joint process experience;
- development of comprehensive bilateral agreements on environmental assessment between federal and provincial governments; and
- assistance in the development of Bill C-13 regulations.

## *Responsibility*

- Strategic Planning Committee

## **6.4 Harmonization of Regulatory and Technical Approaches**

Harmonization of regulatory and technical approaches will be a **medium priority** issue for CCME over the next five years.

### *Background*

National harmonization of environmental standards, through legislative means, objectives, codes of practice or otherwise is required to ensure a minimal level of environmental protection to all Canadians, to minimize conflict and duplication between the federal and provincial governments in an area of shared jurisdiction and to increase predictability and ensure consistency across the country.

### *CCME Perspective*

The National Task Force on Environment and Economy called on CCME in 1987 to play a lead role in this area.

Over the past several years, CCME has developed, among other things, Canadian Water Quality Guidelines, Codes of Practice for Leaking Storage Tanks and a national approach to the regulation of PCB storage and transportation. CCME has also worked with the Canadian

Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) Federal-Provincial Advisory Committee on standards for CFCs management and pulp and paper mill effluent regulations.

In the Statement of Interjurisdictional Cooperation on Environmental Matters, governments agreed to harmonize environmental legislation, policies and programs and their implementation.

### *Key Issues*

- A common approach to risk assessment does not exist.
- Approaches to developing environmental standards, objectives and codes of practice vary among jurisdictions.
- The application of standards and the enforcement of related regulations vary among jurisdictions.

### *Goals*

- Implement a national approach to risk assessment.
- Develop a list of issues where standards, objectives, and codes of practice need to be established and a means to implement a national approach to those issues.
- Determine areas of responsibility for the preparation of standards, objectives and codes of practice.
- Establish common approaches to the application and enforcement of standards.

### *Identified Activities*

Workplan activities identified to date include:

- preparation of a scoping paper outlining harmonization issues and defining CCME's role in harmonization;
- review of the CSA proposal on environmental auditing and management systems;
- development of a risk assessment action plan; and
- development of a framework for codes of practices.

### *Responsibility*

- Strategic Planning Committee (with support from Environmental Protection Committee)

## **6.5 State of the Environment Reporting**

State of the Environment Reporting will be a **low priority** issue for CCME after the completion of the current work plan.

## *Background*

Reliable environmental information is vital to informed decision-making by government and other sectors in society. In order to monitor both success and failure in protecting the environment, reliable, consistent and comparable data are needed. Some jurisdictions have begun to institutionalize State of the Environment Reporting and some initial work has been undertaken among jurisdictions to compare approaches.

## *CCME Perspective*

State of the Environment Reporting has been recognized as an area where the federal, provincial and territorial governments can work cooperatively both to improve the quality and comparability of environmental data available and to send a signal to the public about government's ability to make effective decisions and to be held accountable for those decisions.

CCME established the State of the Environment Reporting Task Group in late 1990 to provide advice in this area.

## *Key Issues*

- There is a need to promote national consistency and comparability of data.
- The linkage between environmental indicators and economic indicators is currently weak and the ability to use these to measure progress toward sustainable development is underdeveloped.

## *Goals*

- Harmonize the federal, provincial and territorial structures and frameworks for reporting environmental data.
- Develop environmental indicators that can be used in conjunction with economic indicators to measure progress toward sustainable development.
- Develop integrated data monitoring systems.

## *Identified Activities*

Workplan activities identified to date include:

- development of recommendations on harmonizing SOE Reporting structures;
- development of recommendations on integrated ecosystems monitoring mechanisms; and
- development of recommendations on integrated ecosystem monitoring requirements.

## *Responsibility*

- Strategic Planning Committee

## 6.6 Environmental Liability

Environmental liability will be a **high priority** issue for CCME over the next five years.

### *Background*

In recent years society has placed greater responsibility on polluters to pay the cost of remediating pollution. At the same time, increasing costs of remediation, reduced economic activity and a high rate of change in corporate ownership have made the polluter-pays principle a burden on some operations. Certain segments of the public argue that legal liability for pollution should be broadened, so that the costs of remediation do not fall on society at large. Other segments of the public oppose broadening legal liability.

### *CCME Perspective*

Member governments of CCME are attempting to find common ground between opposing viewpoints. At the same time, actions by any one government may adversely impact economic activity in that jurisdiction. There may be a CCME role in coordinating environmental liability legislation, regulation and policies.

### *Key Issues*

There is controversy in Canada over:

- the extent of liability of lenders, receivers and trustees in bankruptcy;
- whether liability should be retroactive and/or prospective;
- limits to liability and liability defenses;
- the extent of governmental liability; and
- the concepts of broad environmental liability and environmental bills of rights.

### *Goals*

- Develop coordinated and complementary legislation, regulations, policies and practices regarding environmental liability.

### *Identified Activities*

Workplan activities identified to date include:

- preparation of a paper defining the issue and identifying a process for addressing the issue.

### *Responsibility*

- Strategic Planning Committee

## 7 NEXT STEPS

Following review and approval by the Deputy Ministers Committee, the Secretariat and steering committees will use the Strategic Overview as the basis for preparing the workplans and budget for the fiscal year 1993-94. Further direction on the workplanning process will be provided by the Secretariat.

The Strategic Overview and the 1993-94 budget and workplans will be presented to the Council of Ministers in November 1992 for approval.

The Secretariat and steering committees will also review the workplans and budget approved for 1992-93 and determine whether there is a need to redirect activities based on information provided in the Strategic Overview. The issues identified in the Strategic Overview where work must begin in 1992-93 are:

- water management;
- chemicals;
- integration of environmental issues and economic development;
- aboriginal issues;
- environmental liability; and
- follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

Work on these issues will continue in 1993-94 and beyond.

Furthermore, work already planned for 1992-93 in such areas as atmospheric issues, improved decision-making and economic instruments should be provided some further direction by the goals outlined in the Strategic Overview.