



NATIONAL ROUND TABLE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY  
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*Planning for  
a Sustainable  
Future.*

# PROJET DE SOCIÉTÉ

**VOLUME 3 : REPORT OF  
THE DOCUMENT AND  
INFORMATION COMMITTEE**

**TOWARD A NATIONAL  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGY FOR CANADA**

**VOLUME 3 : RAPPORT DU  
COMITÉ DE LA DOCUMENTATION  
ET DE L'INFORMATION**

**VERS UNE STRATÉGIE NATIONALE  
DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE  
AU CANADA**

**THIRD NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS ASSEMBLY  
DECEMBER 16-17, 1993, OTTAWA, CANADA**

**TROISIÈME ASSEMBLÉE DES INTERVENANTS NATIONAUX  
LES 16 ET 17 DÉCEMBRE, 1993 À OTTAWA, CANADA**



**Volume 1 :**

Overview of the Projet de Société  
Aperçu du Projet de Société

**Volume 2 :**

Report of the Vision and Process Committee  
Rapport du Comité de la vision et du processus

**Volume 3 :**

Report of the Document and Information  
Committee  
Rapport du Comité de la documentation et de  
l'information

**Volume 4 :**

Progress Report June - December, 1993  
Rapport progressif, Juin - décembre, 1993

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**REPORT OF THE DOCUMENT AND  
INFORMATION COMMITTEE**

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## INTRODUCTION

Canada has begun the transition to sustainability. All levels and sectors of society are making changes to the way they work and live in their communities. Recent polls indicate that 72 percent of Canadians agree that, "developing our economy in a way that avoids the depletion of renewable resources and minimizes damage to the environment" is a major priority for the next decade. Fully 82 percent of Canadians surveyed said that "developing an environmentally sustainable economy over the next decade is likely or definitely possible."

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in June 1992 at Rio de Janeiro, addressed many of the key issues relating to sustainability which preoccupy Canadians and, indeed, citizens and governments around the world. Canadians from all walks of life devoted significant time and effort to prepare for UNCED.

The Projet de Société is a Canadian partnership established to respond to challenges emerging from Rio and to support and link on-going work on sustainability. This report of the Document and Information Committee (DISC) of the Projet de Société summarizes the work completed in Phase II (June-December, 1993), by the members of the committee who are listed in Appendix A of this report. The DISC sought to analyze Canada's commitments at Rio; identify gaps and omissions both in the UNCED products and in Canada's follow-up; and concurrently, develop a means to share information and strengthen cooperation in proceeding towards sustainability. The results represent a range of perspectives from many sectors of Canadian society. On one point there is unanimity: however we do it, we must move toward sustainability.

The work of the DISC has already contributed to other on-going efforts, including, for example, the preparation of Canada's reports to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in November, 1993. It is hoped that the information system put in place through the work of the DISC will continue to contribute to these and other sustainability initiatives.

Three significant, complementary pieces of work (as outlined below) were undertaken by the DISC, with input from a large number of individuals. A list of these individuals and organizations is attached to this report as Appendix B.

### **1. The Assessment of UNCED products to provide a benchmark for monitoring progress toward sustainability**

UNCED, in which 179 governments participated, was the largest intergovernmental conference ever held on environment and development issues. All participating governments formally agreed to the principles and programs outlined in Agenda 21. In addition, a majority of the governments agreed to the principles and programs outlined in any or all of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Statement of Principles on Forestry.

The DISC has prepared an assessment of Agenda 21 which examines what Canada and Canadians agreed to at Rio and where gaps and omissions exist that will limit our ability to

achieve sustainability. Individuals with relevant expertise were invited to prepare chapter assessments which were then reviewed by three other individuals. All chapter assessments drew upon the official Canadian government positions and agreements at UNCED, as well as from other positions from non-governmental groups at UNCED and from relevant positions adopted at the Global Forum and the Kari-Oca Conference.

## **2. Development of an Information System of sustainable development initiatives in Canada**

As a contribution to the Projet de Société, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) has designed a comprehensive, long-term data base to serve as a means through which Canadian individuals and organizations can share current and planned activities on sustainability with each other.

A partnership has been developed between the IISD and Environment Canada's UNCED Task Group to produce an accessible, interactive system that serves federal departments and agencies as well as all sectors and constituencies in Canada.

## **3. A workshop, "Visualizing Agenda 21," was held to provide policy- and decision-makers with alternative ways of thinking about the relationships among sustainability issues**

An overview of the topics and themes addressed in Agenda 21 was seen as necessary to provide a helpful representation of the complexity and inter-relatedness of issues and to illustrate their integration. Different types of visual aids were prepared and discussed - each serving a different purpose and audience.

This report of the DISC has been prepared for the Third National Stakeholders' Assembly. It provides a brief background to the Rio conferences; outlines some of the strengths and weaknesses of the UNCED process; summarizes the three main activities by the DISC; outlines some of the results emerging through the Assessment and the Information System, and their implications for future directions of the Projet de Société; and, in its conclusion, provides a list of recommendations to the Projet de Société for Phase III (1994).

# **RIO DE JANEIRO 1992 - EXPERIENCE AND PRODUCTS**

## **UNCED**

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was held in Rio on the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. The latter conference, held in Stockholm, put the environment issue on the international agenda. Subsequently, the UN General Assembly in 1983 established the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) to examine the state of the environment and development in the perspective of the year 2000 and beyond. The recommendations

of WCED made it clear that the planet and therefore the human future was at risk if unsustainable modes of economic growth and development continued. Based on the commission's recommendations, the General Assembly in December, 1989 decided to hold a conference on environment and development in Brazil in 1992.

The Rio Conference was the first global gathering of world leaders, non-governmental organizations, business, Indigenous Peoples, educators, students and grassroots workers on environment and development. It was a unique attempt on the part of nations to find a common basis for action - a global action plan to provide for everyone a more secure, sustainable and equitable future, and to protect the future of the planet. With this action plan as a guide, every nation faces the challenge of identifying and implementing policies that will meet its needs, reconciling the requirements of healthy environments, economies and global development.

The global plan of action agreed upon at the Earth Summit is called Agenda 21. For the two years preceding the Earth Summit, experts from around the world had developed and refined the contents of Agenda 21 in a series of four Preparatory Meetings (PrepComs). A traditional issue-by-issue approach was taken during these meetings, which continued during the Earth Summit. In retrospect, faced with the complexity of current environment and development concerns, perhaps a broader, more holistic perspective, or eco-system approach, might have better facilitated the world's understanding of cross-sectoral issues and the implementation of appropriate activities.

Agenda 21 is one of five key documents produced at the Earth Summit, the others being the Climate Change Convention; the Biological Diversity Convention; the Rio Declaration; and the Forest Principles. The Climate Change Convention and the Biological Diversity Convention are two major international legally binding instruments that were negotiated separately from, but in parallel with, preparations for the Earth Summit and were signed by most governments meeting at Rio. The Rio Declaration, adopted by many governments at UNCED, is a set of 27 principles which build on ideas from the WCED's Stockholm Declaration to guide future development globally. These principles define the rights of people to economic and social development and their responsibilities to safeguard the global environment. The Forest Principles attempt to reconcile the need to protect forests for environmental and cultural reasons with the need to use trees and other forest products for economic development.



**Box 1**

**Agenda 21**

*A blue print and a process on how to make development socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable.*

**United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

*A legally binding convention which aims to stabilize and reduce greenhouse gases so as to prevent dangerous human interference with the global climate system.*

**Convention on Biological Diversity**

*A legally binding convention which requires that countries adopt the precautionary principle and appropriate ways and means of conserving the Earth's many varieties of living species, and ensuring that the benefits from using biological diversity are equitably shared.*

**The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development**

*A statement of 27 principles defining the rights and responsibilities of nations as they pursue human development and well-being.*

**Statement of Principles on Forestry**

*A non-legally binding document advocating a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and their complex ecological processes essential to economic development and the maintenance of all forms of life.*

## **The '92 Global Forum**

The 1992 International Non-Governmental Organization Forum (the Global Forum), which brought together over 3100 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), was held in Rio at the same time as UNCED. At the Global Forum, NGOs discussed many of the environment and development issues covered by Agenda 21 as well as several issues not discussed at UNCED. The Global Forum's negotiation process produced an NGO Earth Charter and 39 Alternative NGO Treaties on environment, development and disarmament issues.

Two assumptions shaped the NGO treaty process:

1. International cooperation and consensus-building is required to replace current institutions, policies and processes and to envision new ones that are more equitable, just and sustainable; and,
2. NGOs are key catalysts in the transition to sustainability; they are moving from being critics of governments to being inventors and builders of a sustainable society.

NGOs have found that working together over great distances with few resources is very difficult. The treaty process is an attempt to develop some new "rules of the game" - a global, consensus-building process that is rooted in existing organizations and networks.

The Global Forum process, as reported by Canadian NGOs, accomplished the following:

- it expanded north/south friendships;
- it strengthened understanding;
- it increased consensus on the roles NGOs must play;
- it strengthened resolve and commitment to act;
- it created global networks; and,
- it coordinated input from NGOs into UNCED follow-up.

## **Kari-Oca**

Shortly before the Earth Summit, the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territory, Environment and Development was held May 25-30 at Kari-Oca Village in Brazil. Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe and the Pacific attended. The Conference culminated in the Kari-Oca Declaration and the Indigenous Peoples' Earth Charter. In the Declaration, Indigenous Peoples affirmed their inherent right to self-determination as well as inalienable rights to lands and territories. The Indigenous Peoples' Earth Charter contains 109 statements, covering a broad range of issues from human rights and international law to culture, science and intellectual property. Great value is placed on the safeguarding of traditional knowledge and its uses.

## **THE UNCED PROCESS: WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS**

In evaluating the UNCED process and the UNCED products, the DISC recognizes that there are systemic constraints to sustainability. Broad examples include: varying values, beliefs and attitudes towards sustainability; a conventional economic system which is often unsustainable or leads to unsustainable practices; traditional institutional structures which present roadblocks or constraints to progress toward sustainability; current scientific and technological knowledge of what is sustainable and what is not; and, the constraints surrounding how information is managed and shared. Such fundamental and over-arching constraints have profound implications on how the products of UNCED will be received and utilized as well as how sustainability will be achieved.

It is useful to briefly identify some of the weaknesses as well as some of the strengths, of the UNCED process, that have become apparent through the work of the DISC.

### **Weaknesses in the UNCED Process and its Products**

Two types of weaknesses were identified by the DISC. First are those in the UNCED process as a whole and second are those in its products. Weaknesses in specific chapters of Agenda 21 are highlighted in the Assessment.

The lists below are not necessarily exhaustive. There are a wide range of views as to what were the strengths and weaknesses of UNCED. Many of these weaknesses reflect the inherent difficulties of trying to reach agreement on an issue of such a large scale. The purpose of highlighting such deficiencies is to lay the foundation for further work for the Projet de Société and to move towards positive action.

An examination of the UNCED process reveals a number of broader deficiencies and constraints.

- There was a tendency to achieve consensus based on the lowest common denominator of participating national interests.
- UNCED goals were poorly communicated to the public.
- Many countries did not have nor use Canada's capacity to ensure non-governmental participation and input.
- There is a perceived lack of political will to follow through on UNCED obligations, which detracts from the credibility of the UNCED process.
- Following from the above, there is a general perception of UNCED as a failure and this has become an obstacle to progress.

An examination of the products of UNCED reveals a number of broader deficiencies and constraints. These include:

- Agenda 21 suggests goals and objectives but does not provide a methodology for achieving them.
- A number of issues were not adequately addressed in Agenda 21 despite their importance to sustainable development.
- There are few legally binding commitments to which governments will be held accountable;
- The role of the private sector in promoting development and prosperity in developing countries is underplayed.
- There is a widespread perception that the Rio Declaration is weak.
- There is a widespread perception that the UNCED documents are too abstract or vague to attract general interest.
- Financial issues were generally not adequately addressed. It was estimated that it would cost (US)\$625 billion per year to implement Agenda 21. Financial commitments made at Rio amounted to only (US)\$ 2.5 billion. This disappointed many UNCED supporters, as without financial contributions the objectives of Agenda 21 were unlikely to be achieved. The role of the private sector in finding funding for promoting development and prosperity in developing countries was underplayed. Though this issue was specifically addressed in Chapter 30, it could have been better integrated throughout the document. Moreover, the (US)\$1 trillion that is spent annually on militarization and armaments as a source of funding was ignored.

## **Strengths of the UNCED Process and its Products**

It is also important to stress the positive accomplishments of the UNCED process and results.

- UNCED officially put 40 issues relating to the environment and development on the international agenda.
- UNCED workers and participants spoke highly of the experience as one of building trust, providing hope and working together.
- The involvement of NGOs at UNCED was seen as a major accomplishment. More than 30 countries participating at UNCED included NGOs as members of their delegations. As many as 15,000 people were involved in NGO activities at Rio. The involvement for the first time ever of NGOs in such international deliberations was widely recognized as one of UNCED's principal achievements. In this way UNCED may have created a precedent, and the "Rio way" may influence other deliberations by helping NGOs to gain access to other important negotiations surrounding the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Global Environment Fund (GEF).
- In addition to NGOs' participation, the preparation of the NGO treaties at the Global Forum was a significant legacy of Rio. Citizens became involved in UN affairs in an unprecedented way; NGO cooperation and interaction in reaching their own agreements was unprecedented and substantive collaboration continued after Rio. However, many countries either did not have the capacity, or chose not to use it, to encourage and include non-governmental participation and input into their delegations, deliberations in the same way as Canada did.
- UNCED and Agenda 21 helped show the intimate relationship between environment and development. While UNCED may not have resolved the questions regarding the integration of these two issues, it certainly focused attention on the linkages between them. It made a first step at the international level, toward recognizing the inter-connectedness of environment and development problems, and the way these will have to be approached if we are to move toward sustainability.

## **THE WORK OF THE DISC**

### **The Assessment**

One of the principle tasks assigned to the DISC, was to examine Agenda 21 and the Rio Conventions in order to: capture their essence and *raison d'être*; identify Canada's policies and positions with respect to UNCED objectives; and identify what sectors of Canadian society are doing, or are planning to do, that is consistent with the objectives.

To fulfill this task, the DISC has prepared an Assessment of Agenda 21. In the Assessment, each of the 40 chapters of Agenda 21 has been individually examined. The structure of the chapter assessments is as follows:

- i) The nature of the problem is briefly outlined. For the most part, this reflects the nature of the problem as identified in Agenda 21.
- ii) The objectives of the relevant chapters are presented as described in Agenda 21.
- iii) The various Canadian positions at UNCED are identified where they exist. The four different views represented reflect major players at the Rio Conference: government, the NGO community, the business community and Indigenous Peoples.
- iv) The chapter assessments identify any commitments or promises made by Canada or Canadians, officially or informally, including commitments by NGOs through their alternative treaties and by Indigenous Peoples through the Kari-Oca Declaration.
- v) Any deficiencies in the chapter were interpreted by the author.
- vi) A comparison between current government policy and the commitments made is indicated where possible.
- vii) Examples are provided of relevant Canadian activities, within and outside government, which support the transition to sustainability. Some information was provided from the Information System. Further information was provided by the author in consultation with his or her network, and/or by the reviewers.
- viii) Finally, a list of other relevant international fora is provided, and a list of information sources including organizations and readings is included for reference.

Each chapter was written by one individual or organization with interest and expertise in the specific issue covered in that chapter. These individuals were provided with the framework outlined above, in order to ensure consistency in the presentation. Key information from various stakeholders was provided to the chapter authors including UNCED documentation and other relevant materials.

In order to ensure that the chapter assessments reflected the positions of the major groups accurately, in each chapter the NGO position was checked and/or completed by a member of the NGO community, the business and industry position was completed and/or checked by a member of the business community, and the Indigenous position was completed and/or checked by a member of the Indigenous community.

In order to prevent any inadvertent misrepresentation and to obtain as much information as possible from the various stakeholders, each completed chapter was reviewed by three individuals or organizations. For each chapter, where possible, a reviewer was found from each of the following: the federal government, the NGO community and the business community.

Given the length of the Assessment, it does not appear in this report. Instead it is available on two diskettes at the back of this report or through the Projet de Société. A limited number of copies of the Assessment have been printed for distribution at the Third National Stakeholders Assembly in December, 1993.

The Assessment is not a consensus document. The names and affiliations of the authors are set out at the beginning of each chapter as are appropriate disclaimers. Nothing in the

chapter assessments necessarily represents the views of either the Government of Canada or the Projet de Société.

## **Projet de Société Information System: Sustainable Development Initiatives in Canada**

A key issue discussed at the first meeting of the Projet de Société was the immediate need, across Canada, for information on UNCED follow-up. In response, as part of its contribution to the Projet de Société, the IISD has developed a database to identify and communicate information about projects in Canada that support UNCED. This activity is an element of IISD's broader information base on sustainable development. The Information System will:

- become a mechanism to be used by organizations wishing to share current and planned activities with others;
- provide better understanding of the diverse initiatives being undertaken across the country; and,
- make evident the gaps in actions needed to implement Rio's goals.

Access by stakeholders and constituencies to sustainable development-related information will generate opportunities for partnership and co-operation in program planning. The goal of the Projet de Société in placing these activities in an UNCED context, is to encourage Canadians to treat the agreements, conventions, and promises of UNCED as an international workplan for achieving sustainable development.

As a first step in compiling the database, the IISD carried out a survey designed to give a clear picture of current sustainable development activities in Canada. It approached stakeholders and their constituencies, as well as organizations involved in events leading to UNCED. The survey focused on the operational changes organizations have made as a reflection of their commitment to the goals of UNCED. Organizations were asked to describe:

- programs related to Agenda 21 and goals of sustainable development;
- details of obstacles and opportunities they encountered in implementing such programs; and,
- national gaps that might exist in the follow-up to UNCED.

As of November, 1993, more than 1,700 organizations had been contacted. A summary of these responses is attached to this report as Appendix C. Although a limited understanding of details relating to UNCED was often encountered in many of these organizations, it was evident that considerable work is being carried out locally, regionally, and nationally to help make sustainable development a reality for Canada.

Two significant products have been generated by the Information System for use by the Projet de Société. The first is comprised of information as supplied by the respondent organizations, including: general comments; basic contact data; information needs with respect to UNCED and sustainable development; opportunities and obstacles to the

sustainability efforts being made by the organizations; gaps in implementing Agenda 21 which have not yet been addressed nationally or internationally; and specific program and management initiatives that reflect institutional support for sustainable development activities and for the goals of UNCED.

The second product, derived from the survey responses, relates organizational activities directly to Agenda 21 and the UNCED documents. Taken together, the two products represent a snapshot of Canadian work in progress.

In addition, IISD has developed a new product which will combine the outputs from the Information System with DISC's Assessment of Canada's commitments at UNCED and its progress toward a sustainable society. Using the latest hypertext technology, it will be possible to review the analysis of a given chapter, then consult the database for current initiatives related to that chapter, and finally access the addresses and other contact information for the organizations undertaking the work. This product will provide the framework and context for sustainable action in Canada. Two diskettes and a user's guide have been inserted at the back of this report so that stakeholders may have access to this information.

The master database containing the survey results is held at the IISD in Winnipeg. Because of the way the Information System has been constructed, additional information can be added to and/or generated on request. Organizations have been categorized according to the sectors or constituencies they represent. This enables a user to generate an overview of activities by sector: government, business, industry, NGOs, education and research, as well as others committed to sustainable development. A similar picture of provincial and regional activity, and the status of their work plans, can be generated.

A partnership has been developed between the IISD and Environment Canada's UNCED Task Group, which is responsible for conducting a similar survey of federal government departments and agencies. The IISD and the UNCED Task Group will work together to merge the data. The result will be an accessible, interactive system that serves not just the federal departments and agencies, but all sectors of Canadian society.

## **"Visualizing Agenda 21": A Workshop of the Projet de Société**

Early in its deliberations, the DISC concluded that a quick, visual overview of the topics and themes surrounding sustainability which are addressed in Agenda 21 would be necessary a) to provide a helpful presentation of the complexity and interrelatedness of issues, and, b) to illustrate the necessity of integrating these topics and themes. A workshop was held in the fall of 1993 to provide policy and decision makers with alternative ways of thinking about and visualizing relationships between and among sustainability issues.

Any visual representation must be able to communicate effectively to the general public the complexity of Agenda 21 and achieving global sustainability. In particular, any representation must communicate the reoccurrences and inter-linkages between both the Agenda 21 issues and various cross-sectoral themes. Because of each issue's integrative nature, a holistic approach to the presentations was taken; therefore, they are not limited only to

Agenda 21 and the other related UNCED products, but encompass all aspects of sustainability.

During the workshop, it was recognized that different types of visual representations would be necessary, with each representation serving a different purpose and audience. As such, several presentations, each with their own perspective, were developed. These representations, are included in Appendix D in the hope that they will assist individuals in conceptualizing what Agenda 21 and sustainability are about. The representations may be used as aids in identifying opportunities, for further work as a result of gaps and constraints. In this way, they will assist in the development of a research agenda. They may also be applied to facilitate the further development of a national sustainable development plan through identifying the required scope and nature of the issues from different perspectives.

## **ASSESSMENT RESULTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF THE PROJET DE SOCIÉTÉ**

The data collected in the Assessment and the Information System reveals that to achieve sustainability, national and global efforts will need to be increased and to become more focused. The Assessment points to the need for additional work at both the micro and macro levels. Both products also indicate that Canadians at all levels are actively working towards making the required transition.

The compiled information suggests that future efforts should be directed towards:

- identifying and taking advantage of existing linkages;
- identifying appropriate, alternative approaches; and,
- providing greater specificity, in particular, with respect to problem definition, targeted solutions, and stakeholder engagement.

### **Linkages**

Most sustainability issues are inter-related as part of the larger environment and development problematique. As such, there is a need for an ecosystem or holistic approach to identify problems and potential solutions. Particular attention needs to be paid to the full range of issues that comprise a particular problem or that should be considered when identifying and implementing a particular solution (e.g., economic, ethical and social issues). Identifying and dealing with these critical linkages is the most effective way of achieving sustainability.

For example, the Assessment points to the need to:

- clearly identify the relationships between the atmospheric issues - climate change, transboundary air pollution, and stratospheric ozone - and their impacts, as well as taking



advantage of the opportunities afforded by these relationships by designing targeted but linked solutions; and,

- to recognize the relationships between poverty, population pressures and the natural environment and the key roles they play in problem and solution definition for a number of development and environment issues (e.g., desertification and technology cooperation) in both developed and developing countries.

## **Alternative Approaches**

There is a need to develop and consider alternative approaches (both innovative and based on traditional knowledge) to solving environmental and developmental issues beyond those normally proposed. The achievement of sustainability will require a major shift in our thinking and our actions, and as such, standard approaches may not be effective and, when implemented, may even contribute further to the problem.

This search for alternative approaches is to some degree linked to the need for more holistic or ecosystem-based considerations of problems and solutions (including economy-environment integration). But it is even broader and includes considering the ever-increasing global nature of our environments and economies.

For example, the Assessment suggests that:

- solutions to the human health issues should reflect a health promotion rather than a conventional health protection approach, and the health sector as an important economic sector, should ensure that its own practices are environmentally sustainable; and,
- with respect to financing, innovative approaches such as directing existing resources more strategically and the leverage provided by capital markets need to be explored along with the call for new and additional resources.

## **Specificity**

The Assessment indicates that implementation of Agenda 21 will require greater specificity in terms of defining the problem and appropriate solutions. For example:

- fundamental terms and concepts such as toxic and solid wastes and environmentally sound technologies need to be clearly defined or guidelines provided to assist in formulating a useful definition; and
- there is a need for a logical framework and/or specific solutions directed at achieving the desired change (e.g., integrated water resource management).

The specific nature and underlying or root causes of the problems being addressed need to be more clearly identified. This is necessary in order for effective and lasting solutions to be found, including addressing more fully the scope of the problem. In addition, clearly identifying the problem and its root causes will show the interconnectiveness of environment and development issues and thereby allow for the development of more effective solutions.

Greater specificity is also required in terms of the appropriate stakeholders that should be engaged in identifying and implementing the required solutions, their respective roles, and

the manner in which they can be most effectively engaged. Achieving specificity, however, will require attention to the different political, economic and social conditions that stakeholders are currently working under and, as such will require country specific strategies.

As examples of this need for greater specificity, the Assessment indicates that:

- there is a need to clearly identify who the stakeholders are in issues such as toxic and hazardous wastes (large and small businesses, households, etc.) and with respect to implementing the recommendations under major groups (e.g., women); and,
- further work is needed on roles of workers in chemical factories or farmers using pesticides in the decisions which affect the management of these chemicals, and the roles of communities or sectors such as women and youth in sustainable development decision-making processes.

The Assessment also points to a fundamental need to develop national or regional specific action plans or strategies. This is essential for achieving national and global sustainability. These strategies or plans should allow for the consideration of environmental, economic, social and ethical differences between and among nations and facilitate the targeting of the resulting actions as a contribution to a global agenda.

Examples of where a more specific approach would be effective include:

- identifying specific national and regional actions to combat overpopulation based on the framework for action included in the chapter on demographic dynamics;
- realizing objectives related to sewage and waste management will require a specific approach in each country which reflects its own level of development and resource capacity;
- defining the nature and roles of stakeholders (e.g., labour, youth, NGOs and women); and,
- considering the jurisdictional differences related to national and regional governments, divisions of power, and the management of resources.

## Further Considerations

The assessment process identified a number of factors which are part of the sustainable development agenda which were, for a variety of reasons, not considered or fully considered during the development of Agenda 21. These remain challenges to be addressed in international fora and in the development of domestic plans and strategies. These issues include:

- child labour;
- conflicts between anti-harvesting interests and Indigenous Peoples;
- over-consumption in industrialized countries and emerging over-consumption among high-income and elites in developing countries;

- the lack of balance between reforestation and conservation of existing forests;
- nuclear waste from military activities and low-level radioactive waste, particularly in developing countries;
- the labour force in the developing world;
- militarism/demilitarization;
- Third World/international debt;
- trans-national corporations;
- globalization of trade;
- population growth;
- nuclear issues;
- energy issues; and,
- the role of other societal groups such as religious groups, peasants, and the media.

In addition, the Assessment highlights a number of opportunities for specific research and action. A sample of these is offered in Box 2.

## **CONCLUSIONS OF DISC AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS**

Canadians and their activities are already moving Canada toward sustainability. Whether or not Canadians actually know about Agenda 21 or UNCED, they see a strong need for change; for preserving and protecting the Earth upon which all people are dependent; for taking the environment into account in economic recovery; for undertaking new and dynamic activities that will provide employment without destroying the planet; and for sharing their learning and experiences through their strong commitment to formal and non-formal education. There is no doubt that Canadians are learning by doing and sharing.

The Assessment is offered as a benchmark for Canadians on the path to sustainability. It considers Canadian contributions going into UNCED, commitments emerging from this landmark conference and the wide range of Canadian activity since UNCED in June, 1992. In so doing, the contributors to the effort demonstrated that for problems there are solutions or, at least, creative ways to approach problems. For the constraints, there are ample opportunities and innovations being initiated and implemented.

There exists in Canada a wealth of commitment and experience around the concept of sustainability. The DISC urges that any effort to design a National Sustainability Plan build upon and integrate the wide-ranging activities underway by peoples, government, business,

**Box 2**

Note: The Assessment indicated a number of opportunities for research and action in Canada under the themes of Agenda 21. The following provides an illustration of the kinds of issues raised in the chapter assessments. It is not a comprehensive list and is not intended to reflect any priorities. For further detail please refer to the Assessment.

**1. Major Development Issues**

- *consider how consumption patterns in the North could be changed through attitudinal and behavioural change*
- *research the health-related impacts of global change*
- *understand more clearly links between poverty, wealth, population and environment*
- *integrate health impact assessment into environmental impact assessment*
- *examine the impact of armed hostilities on development and environmental degradation*

**2. Environmental Issues**

- *develop better approaches to integrated water resources development and management*
- *create a national inventory of Canada's biological diversity*
- *enhance agricultural research into best management practices compatible with ecological limits*
- *find better means of managing issues of hazardous waste from small and medium sized businesses*
- *promote cost-recovery approaches to the provision of waste management services*

**3. Major Groups**

- *identify the key issues for women in the industrialized world vis-à-vis sustainable development*
- *find ways to include more major groups in the implementation of activities necessary to achieve sustainability*
- *consider how to reconcile Indigenous perspectives on living resources based on Indigenous knowledge with Western approaches to land ownership and resource management*
- *review of decision-making processes in existing organizations to determine the role and impact of major groups*

**4. Methods for Implementing Agenda 21**

- *identify strategic roadblocks to sustainability*
- *beyond political organizations, understand the role of social, scientific and regulatory organizations and institutions in achieving sustainability*
- *consider how environmental and trade priorities can be better reconciled in international law*
- *conduct an inventory of the needs of developing countries for environmentally sound technologies*

NGOs and other institutions in all walks of life in Canada. It will be critical for any future effort to harvest and share initiatives such as those in the Information System.

Two unique and related attributes of the Assessment exercise should be highlighted here. With the strong direction of the National Stakeholders, this exercise emphasized "self-assessment" rather than reporting or monitoring. In addition, governments are key contributors, indeed partners, in the overall Projet de Société effort rather than the originators of the effort. The DISC commends to the Projet de Société both the self-assessment approach that facilitates learning and sharing, as well as the broadly based partnership in which governments and other sectors can pool their unique contributions.

## Recommendations to the National Stakeholders

1. The Projet de Société should encourage Canadians to address, in their own transitions toward sustainability, not only those issues covered by Agenda 21, but those issues revealed as having been left out of, or not adequately treated in, Agenda 21.
2. Work remains to be done on building consensus around a) the key obstacles to sustainability in Canada, and b) which issues Canadians need to better address to move forward towards sustainability. The Projet de Société could play an on-going role in this area.
3. The Assessment revealed that there are at least three areas toward which future efforts should be addressed. These included: the need to better understand and address the linkages in environment and development problems; the need to develop and adopt more innovative, alternative approaches to management; and the need to provide *greater specificity in problem definition, targeted solutions and stakeholder engagement* in Canada. The Projet de Société should address these in its future work.
4. The DISC recommends that, the Projet de Société consider undertaking the following initiatives in Phase III of its work under four main building blocks. A number of these initiatives will require resourcing for their implementation and continuation.
  - i) *On Sharing Information and Experience*
    - The Information System should be maintained and up-dated. A Task Force should be struck to guide the further development of the system. Compatibility and data-sharing with other related databases is essential. The system should be promoted as a key source of input to Canadian contributions to international agencies such as the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) and the Earth Council. This input should be provided on a regular, systematic basis.
    - The public should have access to the Information System.
    - Both the Assessment and this DISC Report should be widely disseminated beyond the National Stakeholders as part of a Projet de Société communications package or sustainability tool kit. Among others, this distribution should include those involved in the preparation of Canada's Report to the CSD and the development of sectoral or jurisdictional strategies or plans. (Note: these

documents might require some adaptation in order to render them useful to the broader public.)

ii) *On Accelerating Learning and Change*

- On-going efforts must build on existing work of Canadian people, governments, business and industry and their networks, as indicated in the database, and by contributors to the Assessment.
- Match-making between needs and available assistance, and mentoring are two roles that the Projet de Société should consider playing in any future work.

iii) *On Sharing Power and Building Capacity*

- Self-assessment techniques should be explored by the Projet de Société task groups so as to build a body of expertise to support this approach. These might be delivered through "tool kits" that capture and communicate the body of knowledge/experience in the works and/or through modules, courses and retreats that facilitate exchanges and provide experiential learning for not only community groups and learning/research institutions but also for decision and policy makers.

iv) *On Setting Priorities*

- The Projet de Société should expand its stakeholders in order to call more fully upon the scientific, research, financial and entrepreneurial communities as it develops a research and action agenda and establishes strategic priorities, building on the preliminary work of the DISC.
- The Projet de Société should continue to work through demonstration projects that mobilize leaders in any chosen area so as to contribute to the effort of moving Canada and Canadians toward sustainability. (See Box 3 for examples)

5. With this report the work of the DISC is complete. It is recommended that this committee be dissolved and its work integrated into the next phase of the Projet de Société.

**Box 3**

**Examples of demonstration and pilot projects**

- identifying options for more effective and efficient implementation of policies and programmes, including means of delivery (e.g., regulations and institutions), designed to achieve sustainability;
- identifying environmental, social and economic benefits associated with making the transition to sustainability (e.g., resulting market opportunities);
- bringing together and disseminating resource and support material for use by groups, communities and organizations to design, implement, and validate their specific course to sustainability;
- identifying appropriate strategies and plans, and/or demonstrating and testing the validity of specific approaches to achieving sustainability using targeted case studies. Some examples of specific environmental, resource or economic sectors of interest to Canada include oceans, agriculture, urban communities, transportation , and water management; and,
- engaging elements of Canadian society (e.g., Indigenous Peoples and youth) in building the basis for long-term changes in attitudes, behaviour and choices.

## **APPENDIX A**

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## APPENDIX B

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## APPENDIX C

### CANADIAN RESPONSES TO AGENDA 21

In IISD's development of the Information System, surveys were sent to over 1700 organizations within Canada who had contributed to the process leading to and following UNCED. Of these, a number were no longer in existence, leaving a total of 1653 active bodies contacted. Information was requested on their contributions to sustainable development. This is not a representative sampling of Canadian action but rather a selected sampling. Responses have been received from 398, giving a response rate of 24%.

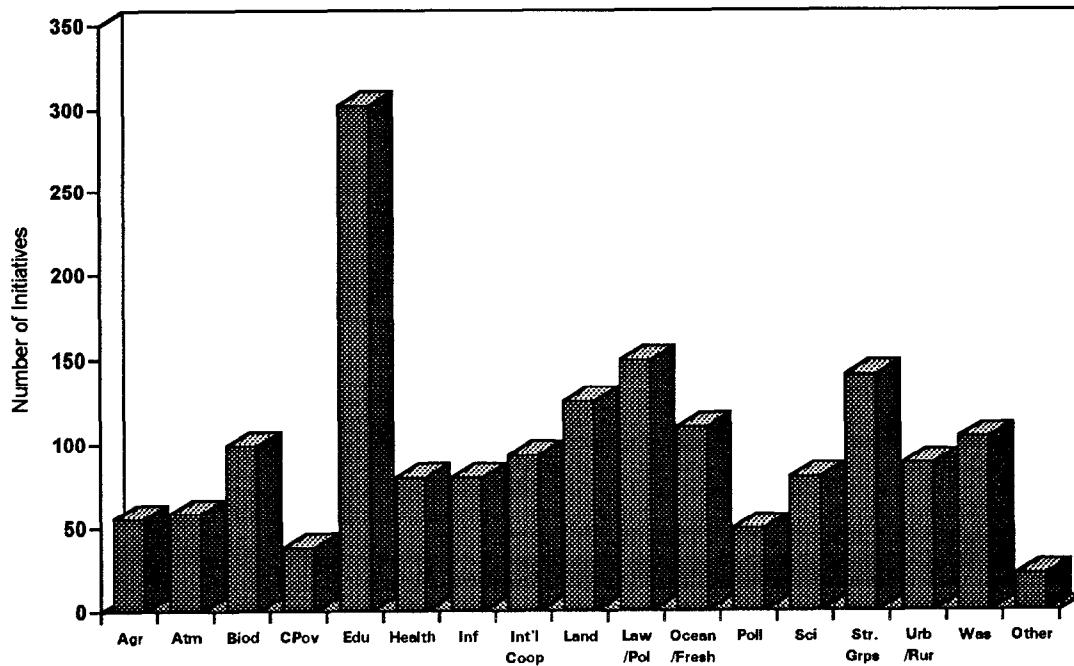
<b>Sector</b>	<b>Sent</b>	<b>Received</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
Government	193	78	40.4%
NGOs	923	184	20%
Large Corporations	122	31	25.4%
Small-Medium Corporations	131	19	14.5%
Industry Associations	59	21	35.5%
Labour	29	8	27.5%
Education/ Academic	239	83	34.7%
Other*	23	23	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>816 (1653)</b>	<b>476 (398)</b>	<b>28.7% (24%)</b>

\* In all surveys which had used "other" to classify their sector, this designation had been made by the organization respondent hence the 100% response rate for this category.

In this sectoral breakdown, there is a higher number of reported surveys sent out and received due to the fact that many organizations classified themselves as belonging to more than one sector (e.g., some organizations classified themselves as being both an NGO and an educational/academic organization).

As part of the development of the Projet de Société Information System, IISD grouped many of the themes and objectives of Agenda 21 into 17 subject categories. Initiatives and projects reported on by respondents were linked to these categories. The following graph depicts the wide range of sustainable development action being undertaken in Canada. In particular, it illustrates the attention Canadians are giving to education and public awareness.

## Sustainable Development Initiatives in Canada by Subject Category

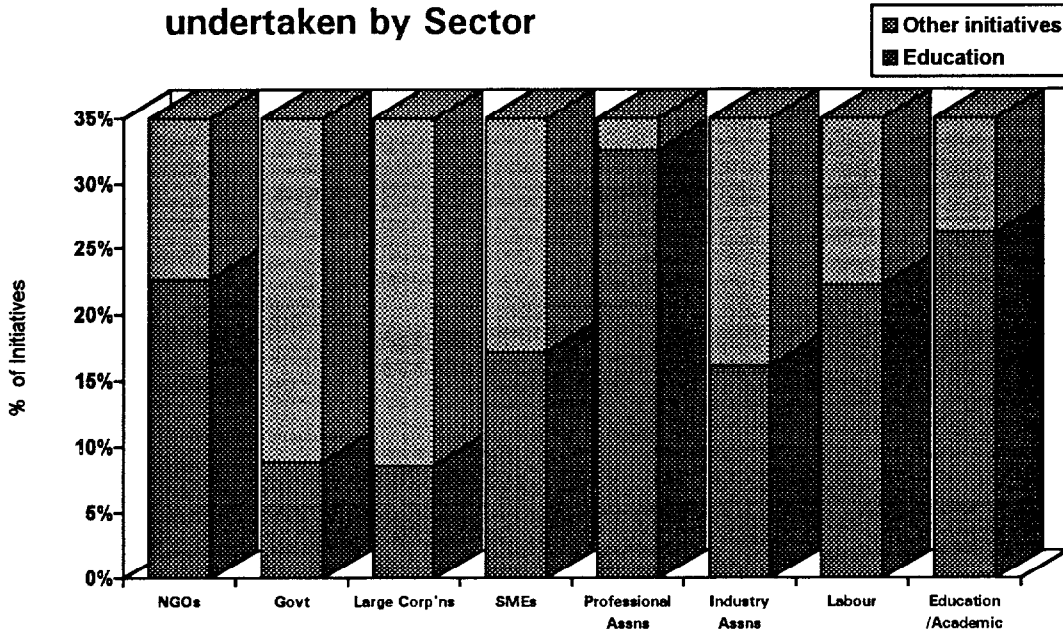


### Legend

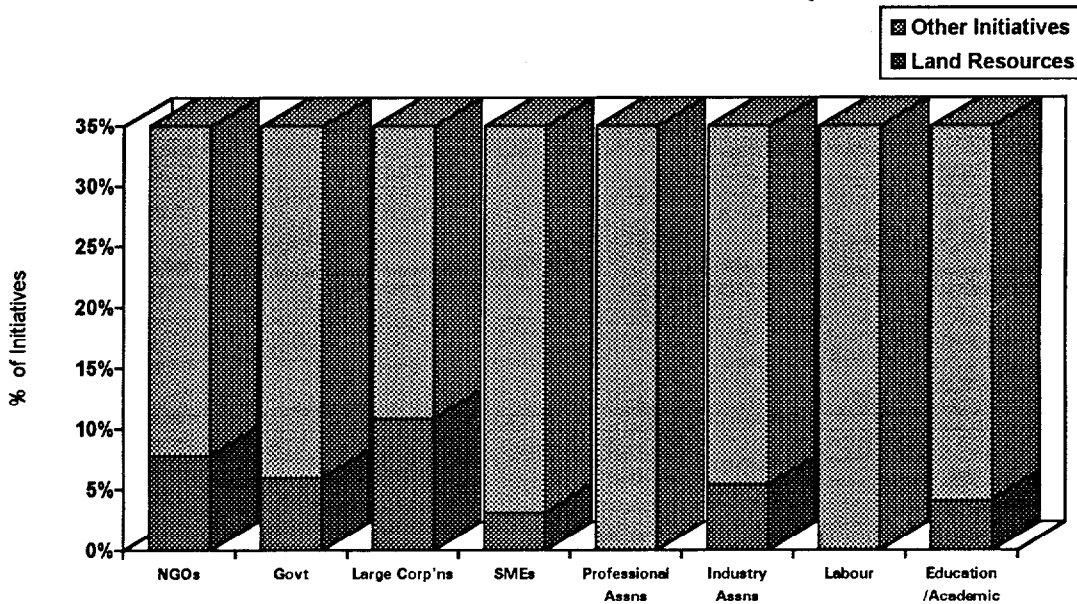
Agr	Agriculture
Atm	Atmosphere
Biod	Biodiversity
CPov	Combatting Poverty
Edu	Education and Public Awareness
Health	Health
Inf	Information
Int'l Coop	International Cooperation
Land	Land Resources
Law/Pol	Law and Policy
Ocean/Fresh	Ocean and Freshwater Resources
Poll	Pollution
Sci	Science and Technology
Str. Grps	Strengthening Interest Groups
Urb/Rur	Urban/Rural Development
Was	Waste Management
Other	Other

Each sector of Canadian society has undertaken a multiplicity of actions to support sustainable development. For most sectors, a significant percentage of their overall work is devoted to education and public awareness. Many organizations also indicated an active involvement with land resources issues. The following graphs illustrate the percentage of work each sector has undertaken which relates to education and to land resources, in comparison to their other commitments.

### Education and Public Awareness Initiatives undertaken by Sector



### Land Resources Initiatives undertaken by Sector



## **APPENDIX D**

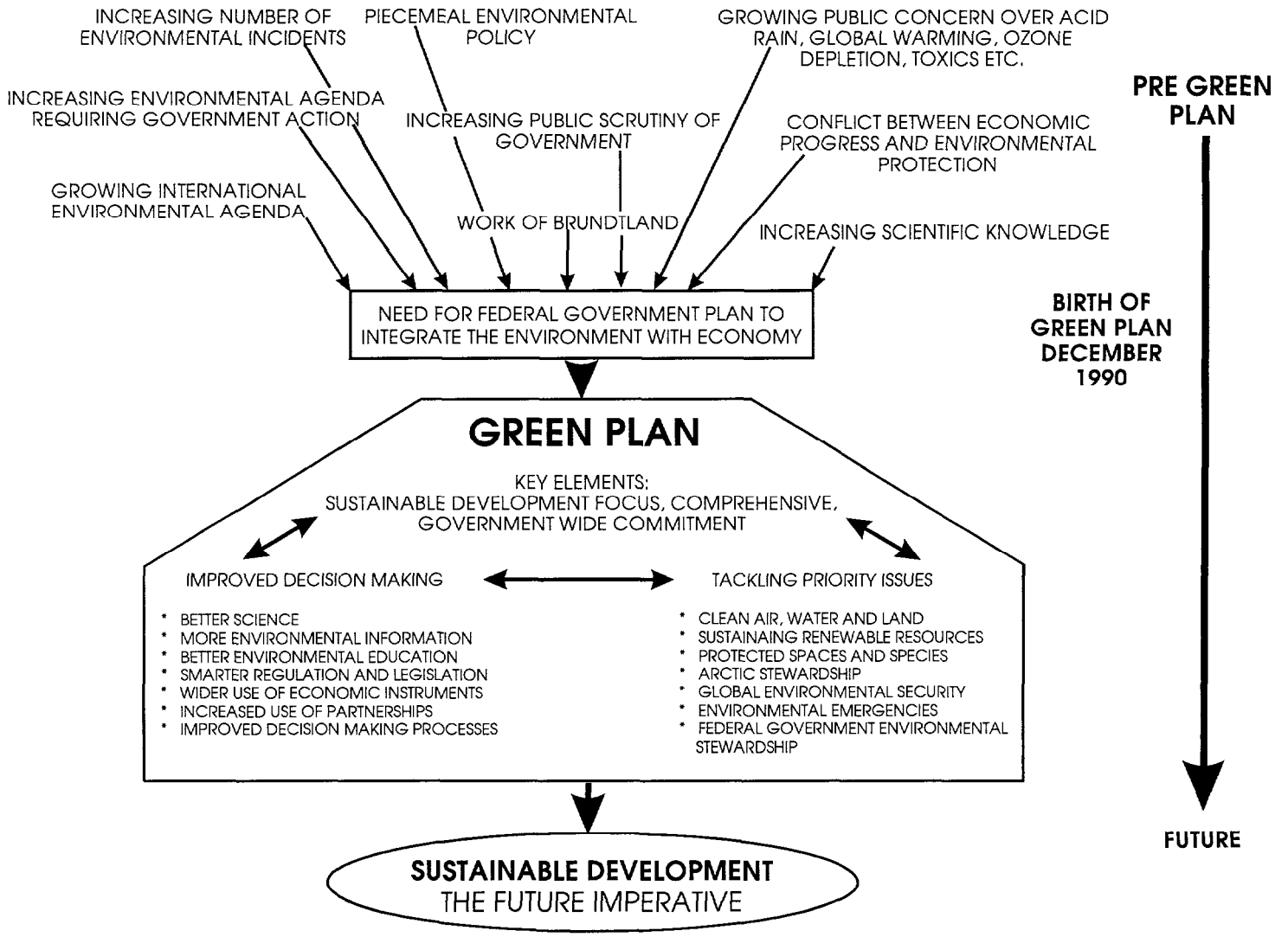
### **"VISUALIZING AGENDA 21"**

A workshop was held in the fall of 1993 to provide policy and decision makers with alternative ways of thinking about and visualizing Agenda 21 and relationships between and among sustainability issues. During the workshop, it was recognized that different types of visual representations would be necessary, with each representation serving a different purpose and audience. As such, several presentations, each with their own perspective, were developed. These representations are reproduced below in the hope that they will assist individuals and organizations to conceptualize issues of sustainability and the value of Agenda 21.

The visual representations below reflect views and thoughts of those of the individuals or organizations that created them and do not necessarily represent the views of the Government of Canada or the Projet de Société.

1. The Green Plan Framework
2. UNCED Follow-up, Agenda 21 and Conventions:  
The Multiyear Thematic Program of Work
3. The Rio Roadmap... Agenda 21
4. Agenda 21 and other UNCED Products
5. Sustainability Linkages
6. A Visual Depiction of Agenda 21
7. Three Important Dimensions of Agenda 21, The Transition Toward the 21st Century
8. The Sacred Path, An Indigenous Peoples' Perspective
9. Sustainable Ways and Activities
10. Methods of Implementing Agenda 21

**Figure 1. THE GREEN PLAN FRAMEWORK**



Steve Blight  
 Environment Canada  
 (This matrix was not developed at the DISC workshop but is a useful representation of the sustainability process)



## Figure 2: UNCED FOLLOW-UP AGENDA 21 AND CONVENTIONS: MULTIYEAR THEMATIC PROGRAM OF WORK

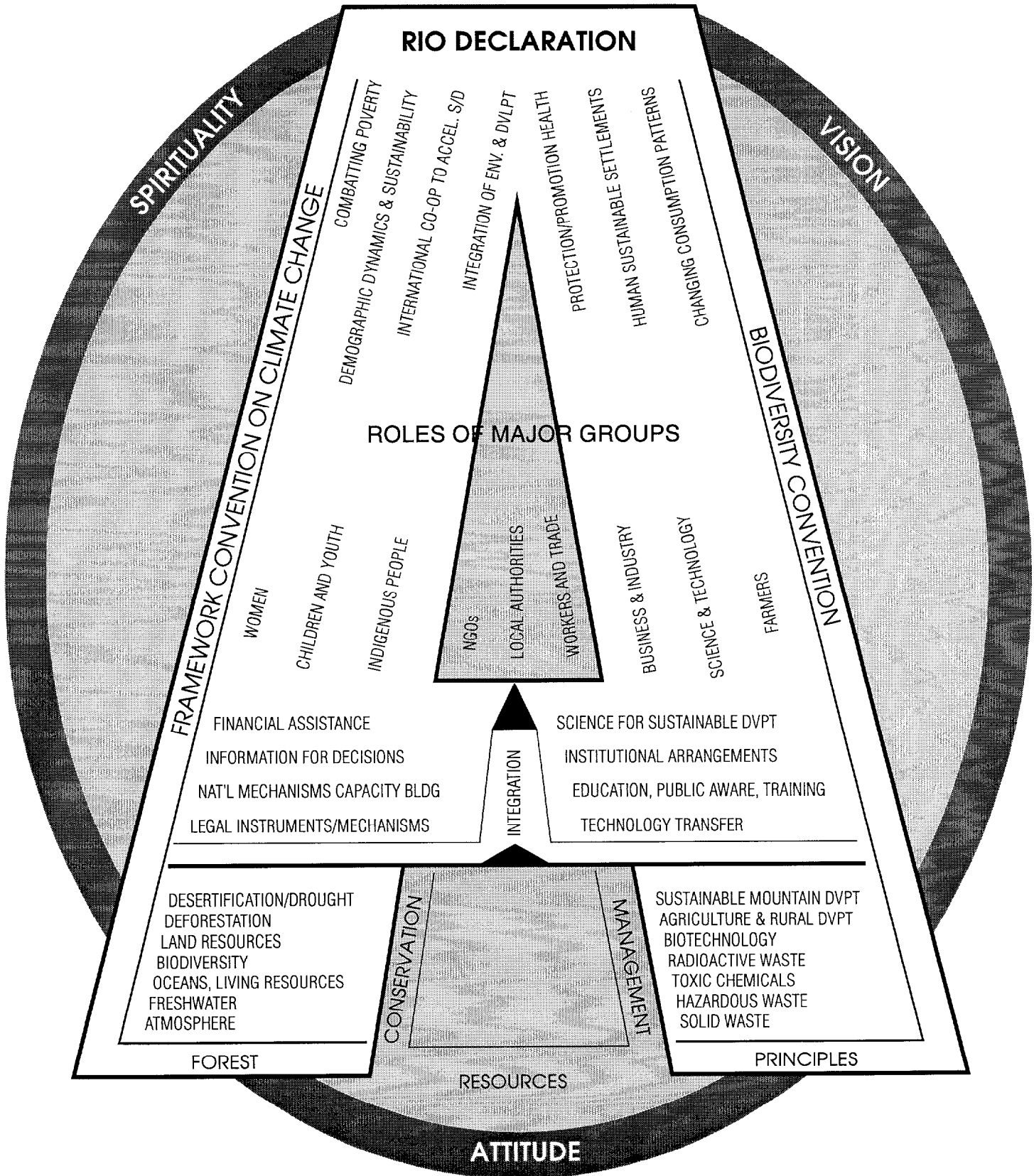
The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development has analyzed Agenda 21 from their perspective and for their purpose breaking it down into the following clusters and themes:

<b>A. Critical Elements of Sustainability (Chapter 2-5)</b>	Chapter 2	International Cooperation to Accelerate Sustainable Development
	Chapter 3	Combating Poverty
	Chapter 4	Changing Consumption Patterns
	Chapter 5	Demographic Dynamics and Sustainability
<b>B. Financial Resources and Mechanisms (Chapter 33)</b>	Chapter 33	Financial Resources and Mechanisms
<b>C. Education, Science, Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies, Cooperation and Capacity-Building (Chapters 16, 34-37)</b>	Chapter 16	Environmentally Sound Management of Biotechnology
	Chapter 34	Technology Transfer
	Chapter 35	Science for Sustainable Development
	Chapter 36	Education, Public Awareness and Training
	Chapter 37	National Mechanisms and International Cooperation for Capacity-Building
<b>D. Decision-Making Structures (Chapters 8, 38-40, Rio Declaration-see below)</b>	Chapter 8	Integration of Environment and Development In Decision-Making
	Chapter 38	International Institutional Arrangements
	Chapter 39	International Legal Instruments and Mechanics
	Chapter 40	Information for Decision-Making
<b>E. Roles of Major Groups (Chapters 23-32)</b>	Chapter 23	Strengthening the Role of Major Groups
	Chapter 24	Global Action for Women Towards Sustainable and Equitable Development
	Chapter 25	Children and Youth in Sustainable Development Recognizing and
	Chapter 26	Strengthening the Role of Indigenous People and Their Communities
	Chapter 27	Strengthening the Role of Non-Governmental Organizations: Partners for Sustainable Development
	Chapter 28	Local Authorities Initiatives in Support of Agenda 21
	Chapter 29	Strengthening the Role of Workers and their Trade Unions
	Chapter 30	Strengthening the Role of Business and Industry
	Chapter 31	The Scientific and Technological
	Chapter 32	Community Strengthening the Role of Farmers

<b>F. Health, Human Settlements, Solid Wastes and Fresh Water (Chapters 6, 7, 18, 21)</b>	Chapter 6	Protection and Promotion of Human
	Chapter 7	Health Promoting Human Sustainable Settlement Development
	Chapter 18	Protection for Freshwater Resources
	Chapter 21	Environmentally Sound Management of Solid Wastes and Sewage-Related Issues
<b>G. Land Desertification, Forests and Biodiversity (Chapters 10-15)</b>	Chapter 10	Integrated Approach to the Planning and Management of Land Resources
	Chapter 11	Combating Deforestation
	Chapter 12	Combating Desertification and Drought
	Chapter 13	Sustainable Mountain Development
	Chapter 14	Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development
	Chapter 15	Conservation of Biological Diversity
<b>H. Atmosphere, Oceans and All Kinds of Seas Including Enclosed and Semi-Enclosed Seas (Chapters 9, 17)</b>	Chapter 9	Protection of the Atmosphere
	Chapter 17	Protection of Oceans and their Living Resources
<b>I. Toxic Chemicals and Hazardous Wastes (Chapters 19, 20, 22)</b>	Chapter 19	Environmentally Sound Management of Toxic Chemicals
	Chapter 20	Environmentally Sound Management of Hazardous Wastes
	Chapter 22	Safe and Environmentally Sound Management of Radioactive Wastes
<b>J. Other Unced Documents: Climate Change Convention; Biodiversity Conventional; Forestry Principles; Rio Declaration</b>		

United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development  
*(This matrix was not developed at the DISC workshop but is a useful representation of a framework for sustainability)*

Figure 3: THE RIO ROADMAP... AGENDA 21



**Figure 4: AGENDA 21 AND OTHER UNCED PRODUCTS**

**RIO DECLARATION**

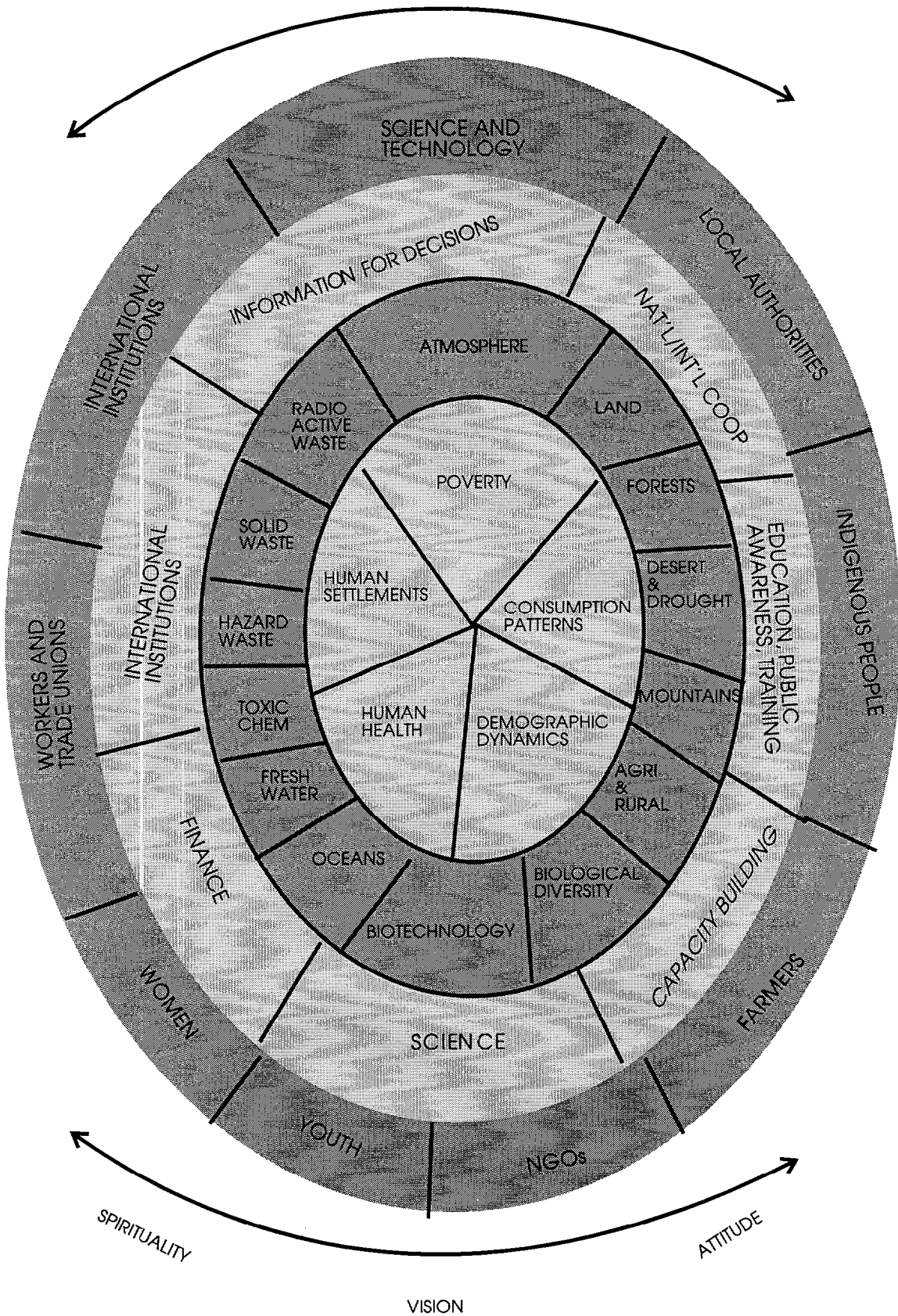
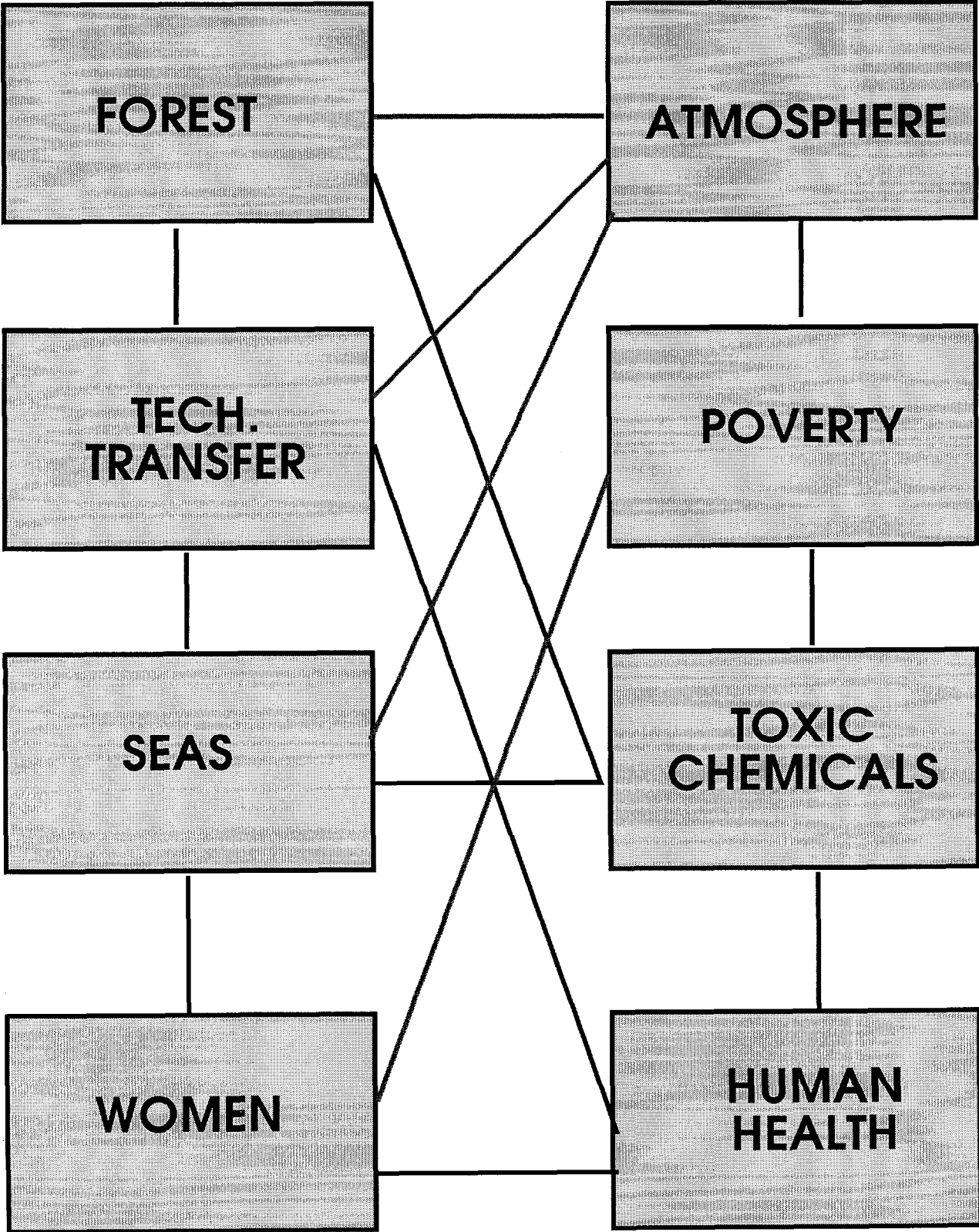
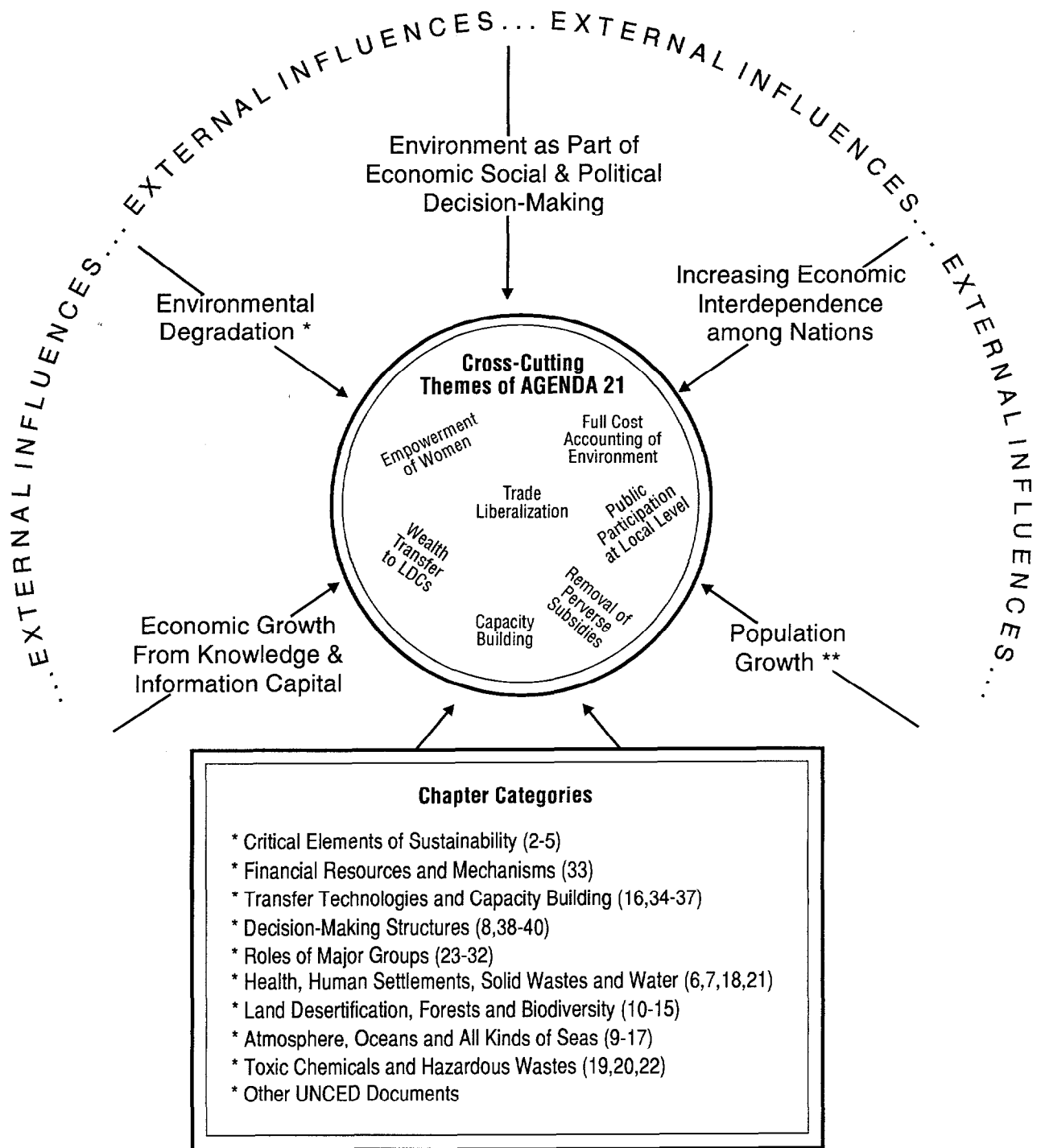


Figure 5: SUSTAINABILITY LINKAGES



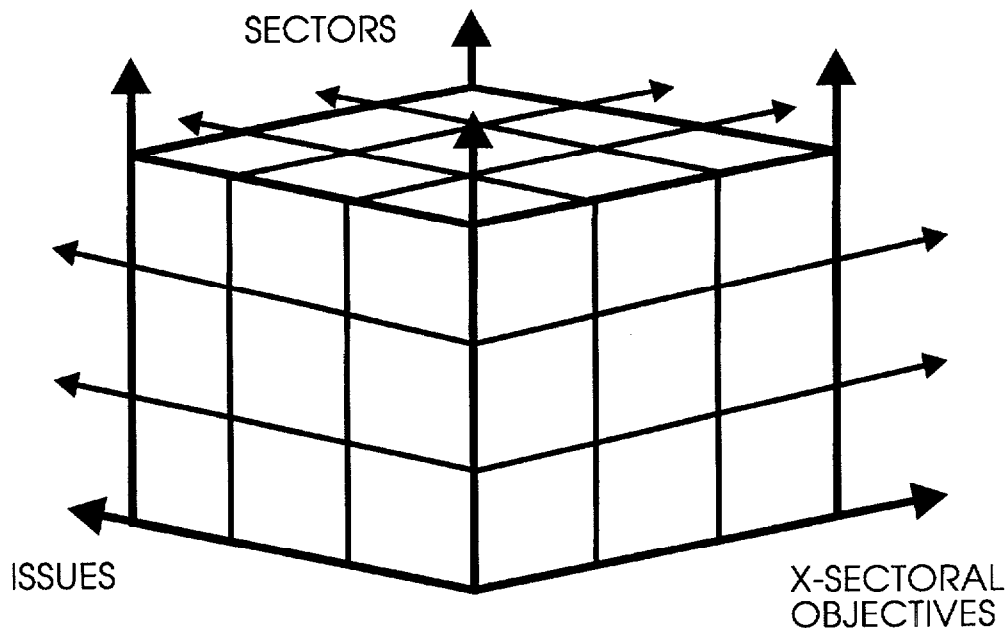
**Figure 6: A VISUAL DEPICTION OF AGENDA 21**



\* Climate Change  
 Ozone Layer Depletion  
 Transboundary Air Pollution  
 Land Degradation, Soil Loss  
 Desertification  
 Deforestation  
 Loss of Biodiversity  
 Biotechnology Risks  
 Freshwater Availability and Pollution  
 Marine Pollution  
 Depletion of Marine Living Resources  
 Toxic Chemicals  
 Hazardous Wastes

\*\* Unsustainable Consumption Patterns  
 Demographics Pressures  
 Poverty  
 Quality of Living Environment  
 Health Issues  
 Condition of Women and Children  
 Vulnerable Groups  
 Food Security

**Figure 7: THREE IMPORTANT DIMENSIONS OF AGENDA 21,  
THE TRANSITION TOWARD THE 21st CENTURY**



**ISSUES:**

1. Climate Change
2. Ozone Layer Depletion
3. Transboundary Air Pollution
4. Land Degradation, Soil Loss
5. Desertification
6. Deforestation
7. Loss of Biodiversity
8. Biotechnology Risks
9. Freshwater Availability and Pollution
10. Marine Pollution
11. Depletion of Marine Living Resources
12. Toxic Chemicals
13. Hazardous Wastes

**"TRANS-SECTORAL" ISSUES:**

14. Unsustainable Consumption Patterns
15. Demographic Pressures
16. Poverty
17. Quality of Living Environment
18. Health
19. Condition of Women and Children
20. Vulnerable Groups
21. International Economic Environment
22. Food Security

**CROSS-SECTORAL OBJECTIVES:**

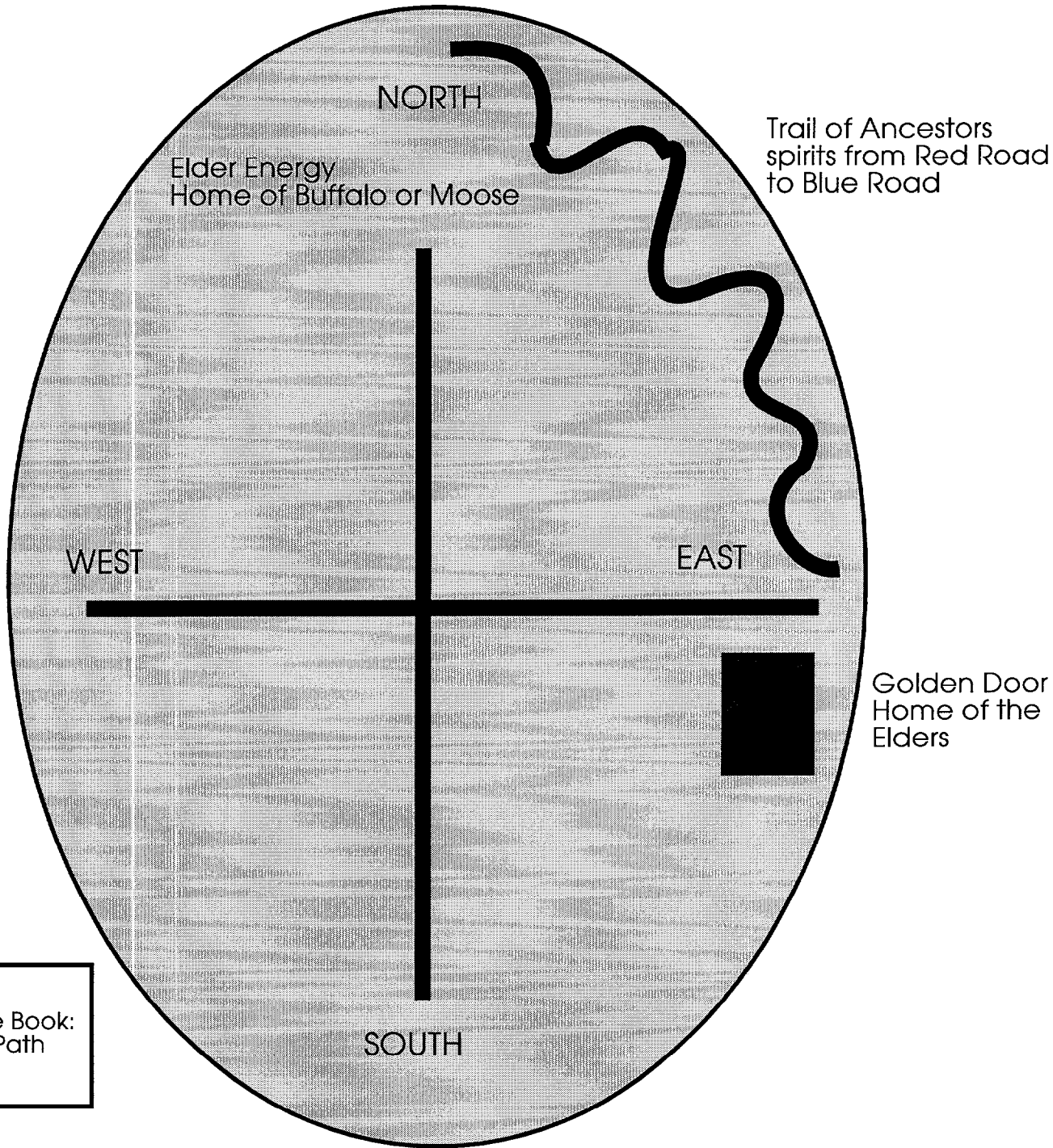
1. Capacity Development
2. Technology Development, Cooperation and Transfer
3. Normative Measures (standards, legislation, etc.)
4. Economic Policy & Instruments
5. Information, Monitoring, Data
6. Financial Resources

**DEVELOPMENT SECTORS:**

1. Agriculture
2. Fisheries
3. Forestry
4. Mining, Water Extraction
5. Industry
6. Energy Production
7. Transportation
8. Transportation
9. Housing
10. Water Supply, Sanitation and Waste
11. Recreation, Tourism
12. Information, Communication
13. Social Services (Health, Education, etc.)

Janos Pastzov  
Senior Officer, Atmosphere UNCED  
(This representation was not developed  
at the DISC workshop)

**Figure 8: THE SACRED PATH,  
AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' PERSPECTIVE**



From the Book:  
Sacred Path  
Cards

Dan Smith  
*United Native Nations*

Dawn McCorrister  
*Environment Canada*



## THE SACRED PATH

The **Four Directions** comprise how one is balancing their shields. These shields are:

**The East Shield** - The place of illumination, where the *Golden Door* leads to all other levels of understanding and awareness. There are three paths to this shield, the first one being *talent* and *creativity* which leads to illumination. The second path to illumination is *healing* and *transmuting poison*. The third path is in *knowing how to properly use and exchange energy* (health).

This is the place where **Conservation and Management of Resources for Development** (Chapters 9-22 of Agenda 21) are found.

**The South Shield** - This shield belongs to the child, *returning to that which is most precious*. Past and present generations pass on a higher level of understanding; realizing that they must return to the child what has been taken for own use.

This is the place where **Strengthening the Roles of Major Groups** (Chapters 23-32 of Agenda 21) are placed.

**The West Shield** - This shield holds *present goals* and to be able to *discern* (to see or understand the difference) the future. It is the place of all tomorrows. The west shield speaks of the ability to complete our goals and gives us the tools that may assist us.

This is the place where **Social and Economic Dimensions** (Chapters 1-8 of Agenda 21) have their place.

**The North Shield** - This is the *Home of the Elders - wisdom and knowledge*. Wisdom is the one way in which one can experience the natural order of the universe.

This is the place where **Means of Implementation** (Chapters 33-40 of Agenda 21) will start on the path to the *Golden door*.

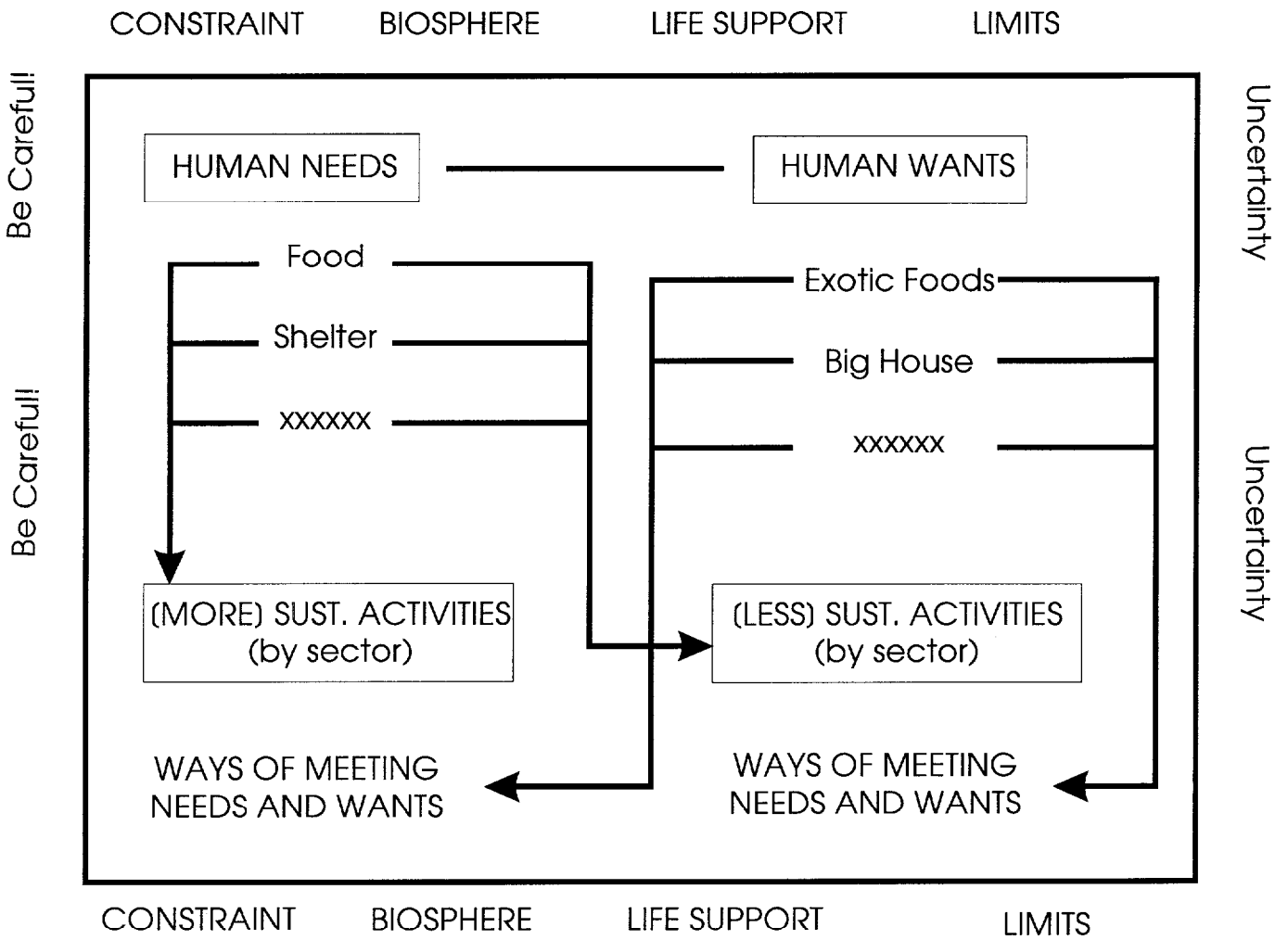
The **Circle** can not be broken. One must walk around and within this circle if they are to have full understanding of our Mother Earth. Each path will cross or meet at some point where sharing and cooperation must take place.

These **Shields** are expressing the unique healing properties that every living thing has been endowed with since before the beginning of the physical world. Everything in our universe has the potential to be healing rather than harmful. Each flower, bird, tree, person, plant and cloud has a message that can express something that will allow another creature in nature- if it is wounded or seeking wisdom- to grow and heal.

The **Red Road** is the colour of *faith*. This path has already been broken and is being cleared with the Rio Declaration, The Framework Convention On Climate Change, The Biodiversity Convention and The Forest Principles. The **Blue Road** is the *Spirit of change*. Spirituality, vision and attitude are integral components of the Blue Road. This is expressed in the beginning of this walk "The Rio Way" principles- Inclusiveness, Transparency and Accountability.

\* These views do not necessarily express the views of any or all Indigenous Peoples or Groups.

**Figure 9: SUSTAINABLE WAYS AND ACTIVITIES**



**Human Needs:**

Listed under the Human Needs dimensions, the basic physiological, psychological and other needs are portrayed, drawing on Agenda 21 and the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

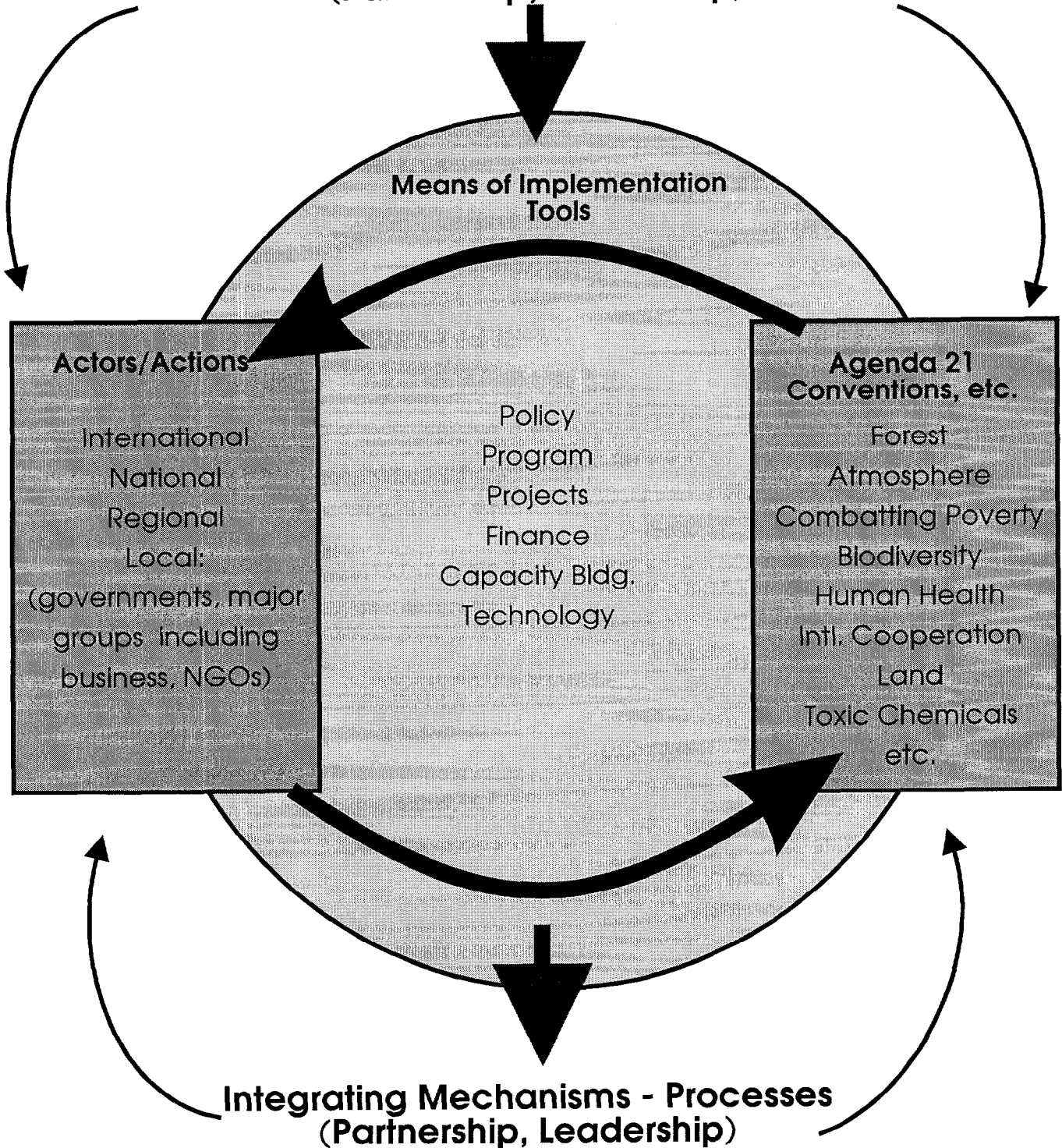
**Human Wants (Ambitions):**

Listed under the Human Wants and/or Ambitions dimension are desires beyond basic needs, including those that are arguably "unreasonable" because they may not be satisfiable for the entire global population within environmental constraints, nor in the face of human uncertainty about environmental limits: a wide variety of exotic foods in all seasons, large dwellings for small family groups, private auto transport for every individual, production of unlimited energy for all, use of the oceans as a pollution sink, etc.

There is, of course, always a debatable continuum between "needs" and "wants". For all categories within/along that continuum however, it is possible to examine sector by sector, more and less sustainable ways and activities to attempt to fulfil Canadians' needs and wants. This exercise will have to acknowledge the global context with respect to questions of equity.

Figure 10: METHODS OF IMPLEMENTING AGENDA 21

**Implementing Mechanisms - Processes  
(Partnership, Leadership)**



**Actors/Actions:**

These are the key players or stakeholders at all levels and include governments, the private sector, the community and representatives from all major groups. Actions are required at and between each of the levels identified and among all actors and stakeholders.

**Agenda 21:**

These are the targets or goals of the actions by the actors. They can be individual chapters of Agenda 21, the Conventions and other decisions of UNCED or any combination of these.

**Implementing Mechanisms (Means of Implementation):**

These are the concrete tools used by the actors in order to implement recommendations arising from Agenda 21 and to achieve specific related goals. They may include policy, program and project development, financing mechanisms, capacity-building and/or technological means.

**Integrating mechanisms:**

These are the processes used by the actors in order to achieve the most effective implementation possible. They may include: partnerships among actors either at a given level or among levels; and leadership at political, community or private sector levels.

Integrating mechanisms have an impact on the means of implementation used by the actors in implementation of Agenda 21. In this sense, they are a way of integrating the actors, Agenda 21 and the means of implementation.

\*\*\* Each of the above can be presented sequentially (perhaps by overlays) in order to "build" the final sphere. The sphere could visually represent a global approach to sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21 and other recommendations arising from UNCED.

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