

Montréal Process on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests

Remarks by Canada on behalf of the Montréal Process Working Group at the Fourth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

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Geneva, Switzerland

Madame Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to share with this meeting the progress being made by member countries of the Montréal Process on "Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests".

Launched in 1994, the "Montréal Process" includes 12 countries spanning the globe: Australia, Argentina, Canada, Chile, China, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Uruguay and the United States of America. These countries account for 90% of the world's temperate and boreal forests, 60% of all forests and 45% of world trade in forest products.

We in the Montréal Process are implementing criteria and indicators to facilitate forest monitoring, assessment and reporting and adopt policies and practices that foster sustainable forest management. At the XII World Forestry Congress in September 2003 in Québec City, the 12 countries each released its first *Country Forest Report* using the 7 criteria and 67 indicators adopted by Montréal Process countries in the Santiago Declaration of 1995. These country reports are designed for policy makers and the public and reflect the state of and trends in forests at the national level based on contemporary scientific understanding of forest ecosystems and their values to society.

To illustrate the content of these country reports, the Montréal Process Working Group published a *First Forest Overview Report 2003* that presents data from all 12 countries for one indicator under each of the 7 criteria. In this way, the Overview Report highlights the progress and challenges reflected in the individual country reports. (Copies of Overview Report are available in English, French and Spanish.)

Madame Chairman, I wish to say a few words about what we have learned in preparing our first Country Forest Reports and where we go from here.

First, the country reports reveal that all countries have made progress in reporting forest information since 1997 when we prepared our *First Approximation Reports*. Our capacity to collect and report on indicators varies greatly among countries and no country is able today to report on all 67 indicators.

Second, despite differences in forest ecosystems, land ownership patterns, economic development and government structure, many countries show some similar trends over the past few decades. These include decreasing conversion of forests to agriculture or urban land, increased protection of soil and water, and small decreases in forest employment as a percent of overall employment.

Third, countries expect to greatly improve their capacity to report on forests and progress on sustainable forest management using criteria and indicators. They will increasingly use C&I as a framework for strategic planning, forest inventory, stakeholder involvement and

communicating progress to policy makers, and as a model for monitoring and assessing other natural resource sectors, such as rangelands, mining and freshwater.

Finally, all countries agree that the Montréal Process Working Group has provided many benefits as an international forum for collaboration, including catalyzing national efforts, promoting a shared view of sustainable forest management and how to measure it, and fostering bilateral and regional cooperation among members to build capacity. It has also been extremely useful for each of us domestically, not least to transfer knowledge from international discussions to our stakeholders at home.

Madame Chairman, with the completion of the *Country Forest Reports*, we have demonstrated that we can assess our forests using the Montréal Process criteria and indicators, and we have formed a better understanding of the challenges that remain for us to strengthen our capacity to report using criteria and indicators.

To meet these challenges and launch the next phase of our work, Canada was pleased to host the first Special "High Level" Session of the Montréal Process Working Group during the XII World Forestry Congress. This Special Session adopted the Québec City Declaration reaffirming our commitment to using the Montréal Process criteria and indicators to monitor, assess and report on forests and to collaborating through the Montréal Process Working Group. The Special Session also endorsed a robust set of 14 actions, setting forth our vision and course for the next five years. Four actions are especially relevant to the discussions here today. These are to:

1. Develop strategies to mobilize resources needed to collect data
2. Increase communication and collaboration with other C&I processes
3. Use the C&I as the basis for national reporting on sustainable forest management to international fora, including UNFF, and
4. Seek international endorsement of a global set of criteria to provide a framework for existing criteria and indicators processes.

We look forward to working closely with other criteria and indicators processes, the CPF and the UNFF to achieve these objectives and increase global recognition of the contribution of criteria and indicators to sustainable forest management. (Copies of Québec Declaration available in English, French and Spanish.)

Thank you, Madame Chairman.