

Environment
CanadaEnvironnement
Canada

Canada

Français	Contact Us	Help	Search	Canada Site
What's New	Topics	Publications	Weather	Home
About Us				

Speeches - Archive

[Acts and Regulations](#)[Media Room](#)[Programs & Services](#)[The Minister](#)[Conferences & Events](#)[Related Resources](#)**Quick Links**

Speech delivered by the [Honourable Sergio Marchi, P.C., M.P.](#)
Minister of the Environment

ARCHIVE**Seminar on Sustainable Development****(Delivered in Montevideo, Uruguay on November 27, 1996.)**

Ladies and gentlemen it is a pleasure to be here.

I know that this conference has been an informative and productive three days. I would like to commend the IDRC, UNESCO and the Strategy for International Fisheries Research for their efforts to promote a greener and healthier world.

International meetings like this are very important. They let us share information, expertise and enthusiasm. They also help draw countries -- and partners -- closer together. As we all know, closer cooperation benefit both Canada and Uruguay greatly.

I'm honoured to be the first federal Environment Minister to lead a trade mission to this region. This mission is an opportunity for Canadian environmental companies to sit down with your government -- and private sector -- to explore opportunities. It gives us a chance to match your needs with our technologies. It's a win-win situation.

We have a thriving environmental industry in my country. It is our fifth biggest sector-- and growing. I like to think of it as an "enabling industry". It enables people to tackle their problems. It offers innovative products and expertise -- and it offers solutions. Our environmental industries can work with you to change the world for the better.

As you can tell, Canadian companies are travelling around the world to share

our new technologies and to discuss trade initiatives. This is good for the environment. It is also good for the economy. We are creating new jobs -- green jobs for Canadians and green jobs for the companies using Canadian know-how.

The old way of thinking -- and we all thought like this -- was that you could either have jobs and development or a healthy environment. You couldn't have both. The new way of thinking is that you can have both. Jobs and the environment do go together!

Of course it means more work, more dedication --- and more conferences with meaning such as yours.

Trade missions like this aren't just about economics. When you're dealing with something as precious as our oceans, you can't just look to the fiscal bottom line. We are sharing our knowledge and innovations because a clean environment serves us all. We're all partners in creating a cleaner and healthier world for our children.

I'm happy to say that Canada already has a solid presence in the region. I know that one Canadian consortium, CENSOL, is hard at work here in Montevideo. It has joined forces with Obras Sanitarias Del Estado to provide clean water to 80 communities. As well, the IDRC opened its regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean in Montevideo in 1989.

Groups like CIDA, the Export Development Corporation and the CESO have, with the support of the Government of Canada, worked hard to bring our countries together.

They've succeeded. Despite our geographic distance, a warm friendship exists between our countries. I've certainly felt it during my brief stay here.

And friends help each other out. When the signatories of the Basel Convention chose Montevideo as the site of a new regional training centre for the transport of hazardous waste, Canada was quick to offer a helping hand. Indeed, Canada is providing C\$70,000 to help the Centre establish an electronic information clearinghouse; develop a five-year business plan; and develop project proposals for presentation to potential funding partners.

I look forward to more of this kind of team-work in the years to come.

Because we need to face the facts: there are pressing environmental problems in both our countries. Problems we can't address alone.

Canadians care passionately about the environment. In fact the Canadian environment is part of our national identity both at home and abroad. In Canada our heritage is intertwined with strong feelings about the mountains, our seas, our prairies and our wildlife.

The world has a similar view of Canada. They recognize us by our maple leaf emblem, our polar bear, our great inland waterways, our snowcapped mountains.

I know Uruguayans are just as passionate about their environment as we Canadians.

You have developed good and effective environmental laws and regulations. Especially in the industrial sector. I've been told that recently a large cement company was shut down because it was polluting. These type of decisions are hard -- but necessary.

But even the best legislation is sometimes simply not enough.

We are placing strains on the environment which we need to address -- and we need to do it today.

If we don't do it now -- who knows what kind of health and economic repercussions we face.

You have some absolutely magnificent beaches here. The sand and surf attract people from around the world. But what happens if pollution begins to poison the water and garbage clutters the beaches? What happens if the fish and plant life wither and die?

This would have a serious effect on your tourism industry, on your economy, and on the health of your residents.

We have seen similar things happen in Canada. Beluga whales in the St. Lawrence estuary had high levels of pollutants such as PCBs, DDT and other pesticides. Canadian initiatives have controlled the release of toxic substances into the environment: DDT is no longer permitted to be used, while PCBs are being taken out of service and destroyed.

This year we hope to strengthen our environmental protection even more by broadening the scope of legislation that covers our land, sea and air.

We are optimistic that the reductions apparent in other species will eventually be reflected in beluga whales. Studies on the health of the St. Lawrence have yielded encouraging results, and, despite some concerns, the River's future looks promising.

This type of progress must continue.

We need to work together to clean up our oceans and rivers.

In 1995, our two countries joined with over a hundred others to sign the UNEP's Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land Based-Activities.

By doing this, we agreed to work towards common goals. We agreed to promote the sustainable development of our ocean resources. We also agreed to protect marine habitats and to stop polluting our coastal areas.

Let's work together to meet these goals. Let's share expertise and information.

Canada intends to have a National Programme of Action in place by the International Year of the Oceans in 1998. We are currently working at all levels of government, and with the private sector and non-governmental organizations to develop our program.

I would welcome the opportunity to share our experiences with you and visa-versa.

Ladies and gentlemen, both of our countries have a responsibility to protect the environment.

I firmly believe that Canada's green businesses will be a key to meeting this commitment.

In Canada, we are looking to our environmental industry to provide the technology, leadership and ingenuity to meet our environmental goals.

I hope that you will too.

Thank you.

| [What's New](#) | [About Us](#) | [Topics](#) | [Publications](#) | [Weather](#) | [Home](#) |
| [Français](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Help](#) | [Search](#) | [Canada Site](#) |

The Green Lane™, Environment Canada's World Wide Web site

Last updated: 2002-12-30

[Important Notices](#)

URL of this page: http://www.ec.gc.ca/minister/speeches/ecop_s_e.htm