

review

News from the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy

Finance Minister Endorses NRTEE's Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators Initiative

Over 600 people attended a National Round Table breakfast presentation by the Honourable Paul Martin, Minister of Finance, entitled *Environmental Indicators – Measuring Progress Towards a More Sustainable Economy* in Toronto on May 25, 2001.

Minister Martin expressed support for the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE)'s Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators Initiative, a co-ordinated effort to advance the science of measuring progress towards a more environmentally sustainable economy.

"Environmental indicators will provide us with the hard, quantitative data to ensure a sound basis for both environmental and economic policy in the future," said Minister Martin. "In effect, these indicators can serve as a



NRTEE Chair Stuart L. Smith (left) and David J. McGuinty (far right), President and CEO, NRTEE, welcome Minister Martin (middle) to the National Round Table's breakfast meeting in Toronto.

continuous call to arms – and ongoing protection against environmental complacency."

Minister Martin praised the Round Table, Environment Canada and Statistics Canada for their work on the indicators initiative and urged business leaders and academics to be supportive as well.

"It is incumbent upon us to show all Canadians not only that we are meeting our bottom-line financial targets, but that we are clearly focused on preserving and enhancing our natural heritage."

The breakfast was held in conjunc-

tion with the NRTEE's May plenary and was co-hosted by PanCanadian Petroleum and the Toronto-Dominion Bank. The people who attended the presentation represented a wide spectrum of sectors including industry, business, academia, environmental organizations and government.

The NRTEE hosted the event as part of its continuing efforts to identify issues that balance economic prosperity with environmental preservation. For a copy of Minister Martin's speech, please visit our Web site at www.nrtee-trnee.ca. ■

NRTEE Welcomes Two New Members

Harinder P.S. Ahluwalia and Cristina Marques were recently appointed by the Prime Minister to the National Round Table.

Dr. Harinder P.S. Ahluwalia, from Montreal, Quebec, is the Founder, President and CEO of Info-Electronics Systems Inc. (IES). IES is a hi-tech company

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Promoting Sustainable Aboriginal Communities

NRTEE Releases Latest State of the Debate Report in Yellowknife

The NRTEE released *Aboriginal Communities and Non-renewable Resource Development – A State of the Debate Report* at the Legislative Assembly in Yellowknife, NWT. Over 120 people attended the publication launch, which was the first event in a three-day NRTEE capacity-building workshop.

“The Round Table’s goal is to focus attention on the opportunities for promoting long-term sustainability through the prudent use of the North’s non-renewable resources,” said David J. McGuinty, President and CEO of the Round Table.

“Getting Aboriginal people a slice of this multi-billion-dollar pie is one of the most valuable outcomes we can obtain from a pipeline deal, diamond mining, natural gas production, and the other resource developments. But we must put the essential tools in Aboriginal people’s hands so they’ll be ready to seize the opportunity,” he said.

In 1998, the NRTEE launched a program to explore the relationship between Aboriginal communities and non-renewable resource development from the perspective of

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with its head office in Montreal. IES provides services in computer-based solutions in the fields of Meteorology, Hydrology and Process Control.

Dr. Ahluwalia is a member of the Order of Engineers of Quebec, Canada India Business Council, Canadian Advanced Technology Association and India Canada Commercial Council.

Cristina Marques, from Toronto, Ontario, is the Co-Owner and Developer of Dreamcoast Homes, a restoration and re-development company. Previously, Ms. Marques was an executive with a waste management company. She is a graduate of York University where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Women’s Studies.

Ms. Marques is an active member of the community, serving as a delegate with the Luso-Canadian National Congress, a member of the Advisory Board of the Federation of Portuguese-Canadian Business and Professionals, and a member of the Abrigo Centre. ■



Cindy Kenny-Gilday, Co-Chair of the Aboriginal Communities and Non-renewable Resource Development Task Force, addressed the audience at the launch of the State of the Debate report in Yellowknife, NWT, on June 4, 2001.

sustainability. What has emerged is one of the most comprehensive studies conducted over the past 10 years in Canada’s North of Aboriginal communities and non-renewable resource development. Over three hundred Aboriginal, industry, non-governmental organization, academic, federal and territorial government representatives participated in this study.

The report documents the results of that work, presenting recommendations aimed at building sustainable Aboriginal communities in Canada’s North over the next 10 to 25 years.

Using extensive research and multistakeholder input, the NRTEE recommendations fall into five broad categories: cumulative effects management; the investment climate for non-renewable resource development; capacity building; consultation; and sustainable Aboriginal communities in the long term.

Recommendations include:

- \$25.8 million over six years to complete the development and implementation of an integrated policy framework for cumulative effects management in the NWT;

- \$2.2 million per year to enable the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to provide the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board with a secure, multi-year funding commitment to ensure its mandate is carried out;
- \$10 million per year for 10 years to create a modern, integrated and accessible geo-science database for the NWT;
- The federal government should appoint an independent champion for a two-year term to evaluate the current state of Aboriginal capacity building in the NWT;
- \$5 million toward the creation of a three-year awareness program to raise the profile of education and training in all Aboriginal communities in the territory;
- \$60 million for a state-of-the-art 10-year adult education program to enhance literacy, high-school upgrading, and computer training and basic skills;
- A \$15-million funding mechanism over three years to facilitate the participation of Aboriginal organizations and Aboriginal governments in a consultation process associated with large non-renewable resource development projects in the three northern territories; and
- The creation of a savings and economic diversification fund to promote long-term sustainability for Aboriginal communities and for the NWT as a whole.

Overall, the report recommends over \$237 million in spending by the Government of Canada to help ensure the necessary foundation for sustainable Aboriginal communities exists.

“We expect that the findings and recommendations will resonate in all three northern territories, and elsewhere in Canada where opportunities exist to promote the economic,

social, cultural and environmental sustainability of Aboriginal communities through the prudent use of non-renewable resources,” says Mr. McGuinty.

For more information on the NRTEE’s *State of the Debate* report, please visit our Web site at www.nrtee-trnee.ca. ■



Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators (ESDI) Initiative

Launched in September 2000, the NRTEE's Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators (ESDI) Initiative is a three-year endeavour aimed at developing a set of nationally well-accepted indicators which will promote the integration of environmental considerations into economic decisions. In collaboration with Statistics Canada and Environment Canada, the NRTEE will create a solid set of indicators that are analytically robust, and that can be updated on a regular basis.

The NRTEE is recommending a "capital approach" which will track stocks of key capital (produced, natural and human) that will be needed by future generations. One of the most important assets that will be tracked are "stocks" of crucial ecosystems services (such as the provision of clean water and soil) that our society and our economy depend upon.

The most difficult task will be developing practical indicators for these ecosystems services, and much of the ESDI Initiative's efforts will focus on these. In response to stakeholder input, the NRTEE will also increase its existing support of organizations working on other areas (such as indicators linked to social capital) in order to increase the capacity to eventually develop national indicators on social aspects.

"The NRTEE's ultimate goal is to provide clear indicators so that the impact of the economy on the environment can be better understood," said Dr. Peter Pearse, Co-Chair of the ESDI Initiative.

National Conference and Workshop

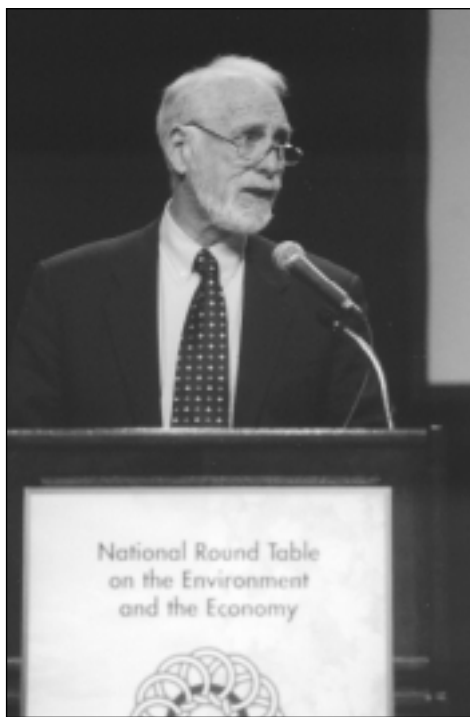
Over 600 people attended the National Round Table's one-day *National Conference on Sustainable Development Indicators* held in Ottawa in the spring. The goal of the conference was to share knowledge and experience gained in sustainable development indicators projects already under way or completed in Canada and throughout the world.

Following the conference, the NRTEE hosted a *National Stakeholder Workshop* to evaluate and discuss the NRTEE's initial approach and framework. Over 80 individuals from academe, business, NGOs, commu-

nity groups and all levels of government participated in the day-long workshop.

Next Steps

The ESDI Initiative will be focusing largely on defining specific indicators. Existing indicator and data collection work linked to natural and human capital will be examined



As the conference keynote speaker, the Honourable David Anderson, Minister of Environment (pictured above), noted, "We have to take a more integrated approach to public policy that addresses our environmental objectives in parallel with our economic and social objectives."

through the use of advisory cluster groups of experts, which will recommend national indicators, valuation methodologies and data sources for each domain (since data already exist for produced capital, no group will be assigned to this topic).

The topics that the cluster groups will examine include:

- productivity of agricultural soils;
- the ecosystem health of terrestrial ecosystems;

- stock estimates of commercially exploited marine and freshwater species;
- marine and freshwater ecosystem health (e.g., biodiversity, the availability of spawning habitat, water or habitat quality); and
- air and water quality.

The cluster groups will advise the ESDI Steering Committee which indicators should be included in the final report, as well as highlight those that require more research. The NRTEE will also continue to ask potential users to provide input concerning the relevance and usefulness of the proposed indicators. The ESDI final report will be released in early 2003.

For further information, or for a copy of the conference and workshop proceedings, please visit the NRTEE's Web site on indicators at www.nrtee-trnee.ca/indicators or contact Carolyn Cahill, Policy Advisor, at (613) 996-4501 or by E-mail at cahillc@nrtee-trnee.ca. ■

A New Program

Conservation of Natural Heritage

The NRTEE's Millennium Program outlined several key challenges and opportunities for Canada with respect to nature conservation. Members noted that Canada's natural riches are unparalleled in the world. However, the pressures on these resources are growing rapidly. Even our national park system is at risk – a federal panel stated last year that the ecological integrity of our parks is being compromised by activities on lands outside park boundaries. With this in mind, the NRTEE is pleased to announce a new program entitled *Conservation of Natural Heritage*.

The program will consider new approaches to conservation that focus on connecting protected areas to the broader landscape in ways that conserve nature in all of its complexity.

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The goal of the program is to encourage Canadians at all levels to undertake stewardship of the land and waters, addressing not just public but also private lands; and to shape and support new tools that will assist Canadians to better conserve, restore and maintain the long-term health of ecosystems.

Canadians understand that we cannot destroy nature to sustain our economies without losing the very basis for our economic and social health. At the same time, conservation plans and efforts must take into account the economic and social needs of communities or they will fail. For these reasons, partnerships with all levels of government, resource industries, Aboriginal people and local communities are critical to achieving a good balance.

For more information, contact:

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Sustainable Development Award

The NRTEE is pleased to sponsor the Policy Research Initiative's *Outstanding Research Contribution Theme Award - Sustainable Development*. This award recognizes the broad spectrum of research that contributes to sustainable development policy. In sponsoring this award, the NRTEE is continuing its effort to promote balancing concern for economic prosperity and environmental preservation in policy and decision making.

The winner of this category will be announced at the *Bringing Communities Together: 2001 National Policy Research Conference* held in Ottawa from December 5 to 7, 2001.

For more information, please visit <http://policyresearch.schoolnet.ca/>. ■

Virtual Library

The NRTEE has launched a Virtual Library section on the National Round Table's Web site (www.nrtee-trnee.ca) allowing access to over 150 NRTEE documents and publications that are organized into 15 easy to search categories including: natural resources, community awareness, atmospheric issues, greening government policy, and health.



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