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## **CIELAP Releases Sustainable Development in Canada – 2005 Update**

### **A Guide for the Federal Government**

Toronto, March 30, 2005 – The Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy (CIELAP) today issued its latest research project *Sustainable Development in Canada*. It is a follow-up to CIELAP's landmark policy paper issued four years ago.

As part of the lead-up to the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, CIELAP published its assessment of sustainability initiatives in Canada complete with proposals for action by the federal government. Setting priorities, implementing mechanisms and resources, measuring sustainability initiatives, and assessing progress were among the recommendations in that document.

Four years later and with a greater sense of urgency in light of the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol, CIELAP has revisited the 2001 report, upgraded its recommendations, and added a short list of priorities. Lead researchers Mary MacDonald and Susan Holtz, have noted current conditions and discussed six areas that need to be strengthened in existing federal policy on sustainability.

Among the new recommendations are: a call for political leadership from the Prime Minister and Cabinet; more effective coordination and partnerships between federal departments; a stronger sustainability education program for all federal employees; more support for science, environmental and sustainability monitoring; and five priorities that will demonstrate a commitment by the government to sustainable practices.

The 2005 Update suggests that the federal government should focus on addressing: The Kyoto Protocol (climate change), Childhood poverty and deprivation (including early education), Cities (especially public transit and infrastructure), Canadian competitiveness and innovation in 'green' programs, and long-term solutions to Housing and Homelessness.

As Stephane Dion, the federal Minister of the Environment recently acknowledged, "countries that fail to integrate both environmental and economic factors will not position themselves well to improve, or even to maintain, the quality of life of their people."

Anne Mitchell, Executive Director of CIELAP stated, "There is a basic need for scientific knowledge and research along with ongoing monitoring. Part of sustainability

is in knowing what is happening in the environment and what the federal government is and can be doing to keep Canadians informed. Our research has shown that there is real progress on sustainability in Canada and that it can be found in many different forms – from inspired policy statements, to innovative partnerships and funding programs, to hands-on community projects. CIELAP proposes to build on and learn from the examples of sustainable development initiatives documented here and address the weak nodes of sustainability practice, such as leadership and priority-setting.”

*The Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy has been commenting on and monitoring policy and regulatory changes related to the environment for nearly 35 years. As a non-profit environmental research organization, CIELAP is focused on building the foundations of a more sustainable society. CIELAP’s mission is to provide leadership in the research and development of environmental law and policy that promotes the public interest and sustainability. CIELAP’s vision is a world in which basic human rights include the provision of a safe and healthy environment, achieved through the respect for, and preservation of nature’s integrity and diversity. We do this by examining the environmental, social and economic impacts of current policies, laws and practices and by researching, formulating and communicating more sustainable alternatives. We also reach out to the community through programs such as our Citizens’ Guides, poster maps of Canada and our website, which help people to understand environmental issues and to take actions to create healthier, more sustainable communities.*

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