

review

NRTEE Hosts Forum on Sustainable Aboriginal Communities in Yellowknife

The NRTEE hosted a forum entitled *Sustainable Aboriginal Communities: Balancing Economic Vitality, Ecological Integrity, Social and Cultural Well-Being* in addition to its November plenary in Yellowknife, NWT. The official welcome was made by

Chief Peter Liske, Yellowknives of Dene (Ndilo). The Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Premier of the Northwest Territories and the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Secretary of State, Children & Youth, were the keynote speakers. Stuart Smith, Chair of the

NRTEE, made opening and closing remarks.

The forum examined three topics in a panel discussion format. These included:

- **Building a Strong Economy** – Addressing the need to strengthen non-renewable resource investment in the NWT, while promoting economic diversification and the sustainability of Aboriginal communities over the long term.
- **Meeting Social and Environmental Challenges** – Examining the social and environmental challenges facing Aboriginal communities and current

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Left to right: The Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Premier of the Northwest Territories; Cindy Kenny-Gilday, NRTEE member; David McGuinty, NRTEE Executive Director & CEO; Dr. Stuart Smith, NRTEE Chair; and, the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Secretary of State, Children & Youth. Premier Kakfwi was a keynote speaker at the NRTEE's Forum on Sustainable Aboriginal Communities: Balancing Economic Vitality, Ecological Integrity, Social and Cultural Well-Being.

The NRTEE Welcomes a New Member

The National Round Table is pleased to welcome a new member, Terry Duguid, who was recently appointed to the NRTEE by the Prime Minister.

Terry Duguid is currently the Chairman of the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission, an independent agency responsible for conducting public hearings for environmental assessments, mediating environmental disputes and conducting investigations

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National Round Table
on the Environment
and the Economy

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initiatives to address those challenges.

- **Promoting Aboriginal Participation**
– Focussing on an integrated partnership approach to skills development (capacity building) and a coordinated approach to consultation in the NWT.

For those who have been following the progress of the NRTEE's Aboriginal Communities and Non-renewable Resource Development program, the final State of the Debate report, including recommendations reflecting the multi-stakeholder process, will be released in the winter.

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related to environmental matters. As well, he manages Sustainable Development International, a firm specializing in environmental management, sustainable development and international affairs consulting.

He has a broad range of experience in both the public and private sectors in the areas of environment, tourism and trade. Mr. Duguid is the past President and CEO of Gateway North Marketing Agency, and the past Executive Director of the Mid-Continent International Trade Corridor Task Force. This task force was created to advise the Foreign Affairs Minister on improving trade and tourism between Canada, the United States and Mexico in the mid-continent region of North America. In the early 90s, Mr. Duguid was involved in municipal politics in Winnipeg.

On the Web

Find out more about the
NRTEE's programs, publications
and upcoming events by visiting
our Web site at:

<http://www.nrtee-trnee.ca>

Guiding Canada's Progress toward Sustainable Development

The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy's Sustainable Development Indicators (SDI) Initiative is a three-year multi-stakeholder program which will develop and promote feasible and nationally accepted sustainable development indicators. These indicators will help Canada track its progress toward making its economy, environment and society sustainable for future generations.

"There has been a long-standing need for relevant, timely and well accepted environmental and sustainable development indicators to aid in decision making in Canada," said Stuart Smith, Chair of the NRTEE and Co-Chair of the SDI Initiative, "especially indicators that examine the links between social, economic and environmental factors."

With this in mind, the federal government committed \$4.5 million over three years in the 2000 federal budget for the NRTEE to develop, in collaboration with Statistics Canada and Environment Canada, one or more sustainable development indicators that are feasible, nationally agreed upon and ready for implementation after the release of the SDI Initiative's final report.

Research leading to understanding

Many agree that macroeconomic indicators such as the GDP do not reflect the long-term sustainability of an economy. To develop alternative statistical tools, many organizations in Canada are currently conducting research on a range of economic, social, and environmental sustainability indicators. "Despite the existing research," said Stuart Smith, "a national set of sustainable development indicators does not exist." To create a set of national indicators, the NRTEE will use the results of work achieved to date, support further work, and engage existing experts and stakeholders across Canada. The proposed indicators will be

tested to ensure they can be used in Canadians' decision-making processes.

Leadership

The SDI Initiative is being guided by a steering committee, which includes representatives from current sustainability indicator initiatives, business, labour, not-for-profit organizations, and academic and research institutions. Environment Canada, Statistics Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Finance Canada and Health Canada are participating as ex-officio members. The Committee is co-chaired by Stuart Smith and Dr. Peter Pearce, Professor Emeritus in Forest and Resource Management at the University of British Columbia.

Stakeholders from across Canada will be consulted at strategic points in the program.

"In the years ahead, these environmental indicators could well have a greater impact on public policy than any other single measure we might introduce."

Finance Minister Paul Martin

Final Report

At the end of the three-year period, a final report will be released. It will include recommendations on specific, tested indicators. The report will also include options concerning next steps in the indicators' promotion, implementation and use. The federal government will be called upon to respond to the Initiative's final recommendations on the chosen set of sustainable development indicators.

For more information, please contact:
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Public Lecture – *Biomimicry: Sustainable Innovations Inspired by Nature*



Left to right: David McGuinty, Executive Director & CEO, NRTEE; Janine Benyus; Stuart Smith, Chair, NRTEE.

Speaking to a crowd of over 200 people in Ottawa on October 27, Janine Benyus presented *Biomimicry: Sustainable Innovations Inspired by Nature*, a public lecture on an emerging science that studies nature's best ideas and then imitates these designs and processes to solve human problems. The lecture was co-hosted by the NRTEE and the Canadian

Museum of Nature.

According to Ms. Benyus, nature is imaginative by necessity and has already solved many of the problems we are grappling with. After 3.8 billion years of research and development, failures are

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Improving Quality of Life in Canadian Communities

The overall theme of the NRTEE's 2001 Greening the Budget recommendations is improving the quality of life in Canada's communities, thereby enhancing the productivity, health and environment of all Canadians.

The NRTEE will be calling for federal action in five key areas:

- encouraging sustainable opportunities for Northern Aboriginal communities;
- increasing green energy procurement in Canada;
- promoting a better understanding of the links between environmental regulation and human health;

- preserving and enhancing Canada's rich natural legacy; and,
- encouraging sustainable forestry practices.



"The 2001 budget is an important opportunity for the federal government to contribute to the well-being of Canada's diverse communities," says David McGuinty, Executive Director and CEO of the NRTEE. "Strategic investments in these areas will enhance Canada's sustainable development initiatives."

Each year the NRTEE identifies environmental issues that can be addressed

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Program Updates

Economic Instruments – Ecological Fiscal Reform

The NRTEE has begun a new program entitled Ecological Fiscal Reform (EFR) as part of the Economic Instruments program. The EFR program will explore how a coordinated and deliberate strategy to redirect government taxation and expenditure programs might support sustainable development goals in Canada.

Designing discrete, practical economic instruments to achieve these goals will be the primary focus of the program. A multistakeholder expert group will analyze, design and test suites of issue-specific economic instruments. From this experience, the NRTEE will develop guiding principles to apply to a broader range of sustainable development issues. Issues that may be explored include: atmospheric quality, water quality, biodiversity loss, and waste management.

Examples of important issues are revenue neutrality, international competitiveness and jurisdictional competence in an integrated, market-based approach to sustainable development.

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Health, the Environment and the Economy

The Health, the Environment and the Economy program will release a State of the Debate report later this fall or early

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in the winter. The subject is how decisions are made to protect human health from harmful substances in the environment and how to improve the quality of decision making in this area in Canada.

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in the federal budget and provides recommendations to the Minister of Finance.

Recommendations for the 2001 Federal Budget will be announced and presented to the Minister of Finance and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance in January. For more information on the Greening the Budget program and/or the 2001 recommendations, please contact:

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fossils, and what surrounds us is the secret to survival. "We ask questions such as: Which paint is less toxic? A biomimic would ask: How does nature paint?" says Janine Benyus.

Ms. Benyus is a life sciences writer and author of six books, including *Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature*. A graduate of Rutgers University with degrees in Natural Resource Management and English Literature, she consults with sustainable business leaders and continues to speak about the genius that surrounds us.

For more information, please visit the NRTEE Web site (www.nrtee-trnee.ca). ☎

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