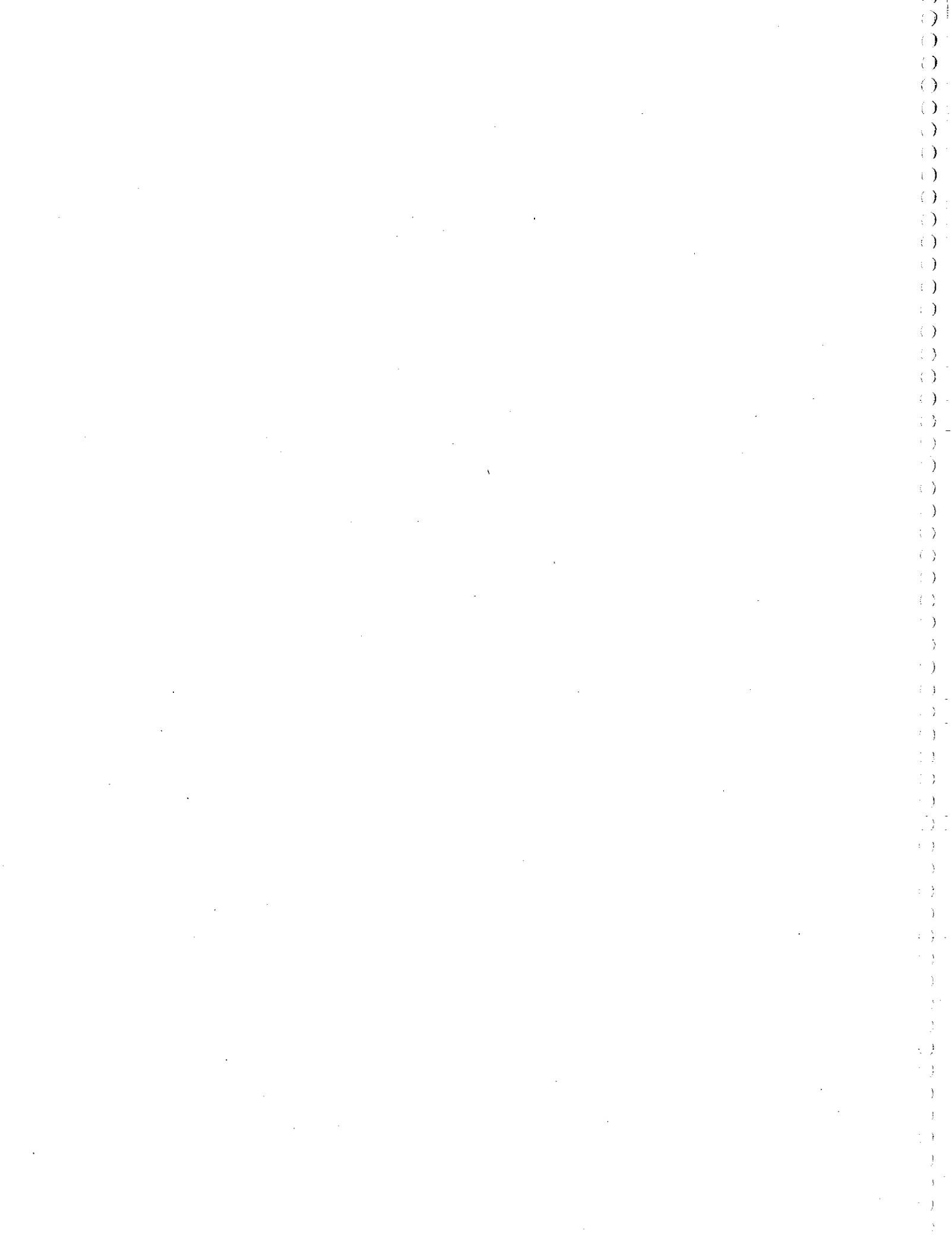


# Sustainability Forum

March 13-15, 1997

## Conference Report

*A joint effort of Health Canada and Environment Canada  
Facilitated by the Edmonton Social Planning Council*



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PART I:

How the Forum Began

## How *the Forum Began*

During the spring and summer of 1996, community groups and agencies began more and more to discuss how they could keep their activities going in these times of fiscal restraint and change. In particular, organizations started to focus on planning for carrying on business with the coming sunset of funding strategies in areas as diverse as HIV/AIDS, tobacco, and capacity-building in health and the environment.

Groups approached both Health Canada and Environment Canada. They spoke of their interest in gaining better understanding of what sustainability really meant, what key practices supported sustainability, and how they could share learnings on what worked and what didn't...and why.

Organizations expressed the need to view their own work in a broader context—to examine how their work contributed to the overall health of communities and their environments. There was also strong interest in identifying new opportunities for collaboration so that work in their own areas could get done more effectively, and similarly, so that there could be “crossovers” of positive results to other areas.

In response to these requests, Health Canada and Environment Canada contacted the many groups with whom they work and sent out surveys to establish how these individual and collective needs could best be met. These initial consultations suggested a forum as a useful starting point.

An advisory committee representing a cross-section of health, environment, government and non-government organizations was set up to work with Health Canada and Environment Canada on developing plans for the forum. These plans would include the proposed forum structure, its content, and the orientation process needed to make the gathering a useful experience for diverse groups of people. In addition, the two federal departments contracted the Edmonton Social Planning Council to help with the logistics of designing and delivering the forum.

Working together, the advisory committee members saw the need for the forum to move beyond the scope of a traditional conference format and to provide an opportunity for local community-based groups to come together to share experiences and ideas. While there was a recognized need to draw on past experiences, the key focus remained one of looking to the future.

The advisory committee identified representatives from the following groups as important participants in the forum: grassroots organizations that had received funding from Health and Environment Canada and Alberta Health, Alberta Environment and Protection, and the Alberta Regional Health Authorities.

As the forum took shape, it became clear that it represented the first steps of a journey towards the destination of healthier communities and environments.

This report represents the major findings from the Sustainability Forum. The report consists of five sections:

- Part I: Background information on the development of the forum and its structure;
- Part II: An overview of forum activities and its major findings;
- Part III: An initial analysis of what the forum accomplished based on comments from participants, discussion group facilitators, observers, and organizers;
- Part IV: Our approach to evaluation;
- Part V: Conclusions on what was learned and the identification of follow-up activities to support the journey towards sustainability.

There is also a series of appendices which support, and shed greater light, on the information shared in these sections. They include detailed notes reflecting the comments of discussion group participants as well as the full text of the keynote address.

This information is available upon request from the Edmonton Social Planning Council or can be downloaded from the Sustainability Forum Website at <http://www.web.net/~susforum/> We urge you to read these parts of the report. They contain the exact words that we used to describe our ideas.



*"Participants sharing ideas on healthier communities and environments."*

# What *the Forum Was About... and the Activities We Chose*

The Sustainability Forum took place from March 13 to 15, 1997 in Edmonton. The forum moved away from the traditional conference model where presentations and studies are presented formally by outside experts. The participants were the experts. They had collective wisdom to share. The structure was therefore based on active participation in working sessions by everyone who attended. These included working sessions, discussion groups and informal networking.

The purpose of the forum was to work towards sustaining the health and vitality of the communities and environments where we work and live.

## Desired outcomes were:

- Awareness and understanding of the common goals that participants are working to achieve;
- Greater knowledge and awareness of potential resources available to us;
- Common goals, effective practices, resources and opportunities for implementation, identified through sharing and learning together by health and environmental agencies.

## Here was our agenda:

### Day One: Thursday, March 13th

- Goals:**
- To provide participants with the opportunity to begin networking and connecting with other participants;
  - To meet with group facilitators to provide a common framework for the delivery of forum working sessions.

*Evening:* Social Gathering —informal get-together and introductions.  
Planning meeting—dinner meeting with facilitators to review the framework for forum working sessions.

### Day Two: Friday, March 14th

- Goals:**
- To provide participants with an opportunity to share learnings and experiences relating to the work of supporting healthy communities and environments.

*Morning:* Introductory Remarks: Don Onischak, Health Canada and Peter Blackall, Environment Canada.  
Keynote Speech: Brian Fawcett, Author and Activist.  
Working Session I: What Should We take Action On?



*Afternoon:* Working Session II: How Do We Take Action?  
Home Page Discussion: Colin Young, Web Networks.

*Evening:* Working Session III: How Can We Create Opportunities to Achieve Positive Results  
More Effectively?

### Day Three: Saturday March 15th

- Goals:**
- To provide participants with the opportunity to reflect on major forum themes and ideas;
  - To provide participants with an opportunity to take part in discussions related to their own specific interests and needs;
  - To enable participants to take part in a demonstration of Internet linkages.

*Morning:* Interactive Internet Demonstration—Colin Young, Web Networks  
Open Space Technology—Myles Kitagawa, Toxics Watch Society  
Session Panel Discussion—Session Facilitators  
Concluding Remarks—Penny Mosmann and Sara Baker—Health Canada



# PART II:

## Brief Summary of Working Session Findings

# Brief *Summary of Working Session Findings*

**Participants** broke into eight, concurrent working groups made up of a cross-section of representatives from both the health and environment sectors. The diverse make-up of the groups supported the expression of rich and diverse ideas on key areas of concern. Facilitators for each group used a similar process to guide discussion so that parallels and contrasts could be drawn among our conclusions.

As the forum brochure indicates, groups were asked to focus on the following areas of discussion:

## **What is the destination?**

What common ground are we seeking? We work in widely different areas—stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS, protecting habitats, ensuring that mothers and babies get nutritious food, smoking cessation and preventing environmental pollution—to name just a few. How do we describe this common ground in ways that we all understand?

## **What paths will take us there?**

Let's say the results of our individual work might be reduction of the spread of HIV/AIDS, protected wilderness that supports grizzly bears, healthy families, reduced smoking among teenage girls, and clean air and water... How did our work result in healthier people and environments? Let's describe the frameworks rather than the strategies used to approach problems and get results.

## **What resources and opportunities exist to reach our destination in the most effective ways?**

How can we "graft" the best parts of these frameworks together to reach our destination... healthier people and environments!!

Through these discussions, participants identified the following themes as being key to their understanding of sustainability:

- Focus on a sense of community;
- Recognize that participation is essential to produce meaningful change;
- Focus on defining values and on understanding how values affect our actions;
- Create an atmosphere of inclusiveness;
- Acknowledge and learn from our history;
- Seek out spirituality in the way we live;
- Recognize that the journey towards healthier communities and environments is equally important as the destination;
- Meet real human needs;
- Move beyond turf protection to support common goals;
- Identify and use a variety of relevant resources to make positive change happen.

# Part III:

## An Analysis of What the Forum Accomplished

# An Analysis *of What the Forum Accomplished*

## **Building Sustainability—The Steps to Take**

The major themes and concepts participants identified helped to shape the following steps for working towards sustainability:

### 1. Identify Your Own Strengths and Resources

Draw on your own truth and wisdom, and confront your own fears about survival. Look for balance in life while recognizing and embracing paradoxes. Recognize the human potential for growth and change.

### 2. Move Outward and Build Connections

Identify models which show us what we want change to be. Renew values and renew the quality of relationships: this is the key factor which supports ongoing, meaningful activities. In turn, values, relationships and meaningful activities lie at the heart of sustainability.

### 3. Understand the Implications These Steps Have for Power and Politics

Recognize that there is a need to talk about values, and to focus on values that create people-friendly policies. Look carefully at the language used to describe values in the political arena as it sets the tone and context for political change.

Consider the fact that promoting meaningful change may involve not only creating and using new language, but also creating our own agenda based the values which this language conveys.

## **Achieving “Healthy Planet” Results More Effectively**

Based on these steps, participants identified the following opportunities for working together more effectively:

### **Opportunities That Exist Now**

Overall, it is important to recognize and acknowledge the gains that we make as opportunities in themselves.

We are able to identify the factors and reasons that contribute to quality outcomes, and we can apply these learnings to different situations. To do this, we need to focus on what people did well, i.e., on the effective ways in which they worked. The dynamics which support quality results in one setting may well be transferable to another situation. Effective ways of working will allow us to achieve success within our own individual areas, while also working toward “healthy planet” outcomes.

For example, peer education may be the strategy used by a coalition of youth groups to achieve successful outcomes of reducing dependency on alcohol and other drugs. Let’s ask ourselves what made peer education work.

The task is to analyze what was key about the way you worked and made your strategies work well, i.e., building trust, analyzing work to be done, and resources which you have or need—which resulted in creative staffing or “interagency swaps” of personnel; or, using your skill in business management, applying it to the flow of project activities, and determining a key moment to inject funds or other resources.

Opportunities for skill-building and development can be built into the working process. Ongoing skill-building creates the capacity to develop frameworks and dynamics that sustain the work itself. Skill-building must take place in all areas of our work, whether it is building technical expertise or learning how to facilitate an examination of ethics.

We know we can create partnerships which foster community dynamics that work well. We must also recognize and use the knowledge that rapid change makes it easier to break down barriers. Thus, sharing knowledge and skills becomes more possible.

Get involved in the political process. Become informed about politicians and other decision-makers and their role in the community process. Become familiar and comfortable in bringing issues to the attention of elected decision-makers.

### **Opportunities We Can Create**

Develop and support management systems that encourage risk-taking. This supports creativity and opportunities for learning.

Work towards creating a more integrated society with fewer separate compartments. Begin to see our lives and the life of our community and planet in a more holistic way.

Develop frameworks that encourage communities to identify the issues and concerns that affect their lives.

Draw on the passion and strengths of all community members and channel this into positive action. Everyone has a contribution to make to the whole.

### **Some Key Themes Relevant to Sustainability**

#### ***Diversity and Complexity***

The world in which we live is very complex. We work in different ways and at different levels to promote change and development. We all have legitimate roles to play. The key lies in understanding our individual roles and strengths, when the right times are for us to link into larger systems, and at what level these links should take place.

#### ***Evaluation, Reflection, Questioning***

Part of our ongoing role must be to question and challenge what we all do, as well as the larger systems in which we work collectively.

#### ***Responding to the Full Range of Human Needs***

We must all work not only to respond to the basic human needs for food, shelter, clothing and safety, but also to the higher needs related to the development of an inclusive society—a respect for human rights and ethics as well as spirituality. There is a need for a sense of balance on both the individual and community level.

### *A Sense of Purpose*

It is difficult to deal with the paradoxes and dualities that exist in our lives. However, we all need to feel grounded and to have a sense of purpose and meaning. This groundedness can come in part from sharing our knowledge and our history. In order to provide a setting which nurtures this state, let's consider recreating the "salon." A salon is not a place, but rather it is a coming together of people to share wisdom and to build ideas for action. This can help create the energy and momentum needed to make positive changes happen.

### *Participation and the Rate of Change*

We must challenge the idea that faster is necessarily better. Let's respect the process by which we do things, as well as the outcomes we achieve. People who are affected by situations must be involved in the decision-making about which strategies are used to make changes. This takes time, but results in a greater sense of community control and offers the potential for greater sustainability of action.

### *Importance of the Preventive Focus*

The preventive focus is key in working towards a "healthier planet." Every decision concerning change has human, economic and environmental components, and there are "costs" in all these areas. We need to incorporate reflections on all these costs with a life cycle perspective in our decision-making, if we are to plan effectively for future generations.

### *Nurturing Resiliency... Valuing Openness*

We must value resiliency, demonstrate what resiliency is through our own actions, and nurture its growth in ourselves and within our communities. Similarly, we must be open to ideas coming from diverse sources and leave turf wars behind us.

Openness also means equity of access. We must ensure that everyone has an opportunity to gain and build on their knowledge and skills.

We need to challenge the conventional measures of success and identify measures that describe the dynamics and frameworks which support sustainability.



*"Looking at different paths that can lead us towards a healthier planet."*



# Part IV:

## Our Approach to Evaluation

# Our Approach *to Evaluation*

From the beginning, the forum was conceptualized as a starting point for future community initiatives supporting sustainability of meaningful activities in the health and environment fields. With this in mind, the forum advisory committee and the planning group wanted to ensure that the major forum learnings and experiences were clearly documented and recorded.

The evaluation framework developed for the Sustainability Forum drew on the approach presented in *The Guide to Project Evaluation: A Participatory Approach* (published by Health Canada in August, 1996). The Guide poses five evaluation questions as the core of the framework:

- What?** • Did we do what we said we would do?
- Why?** • What did we learn about what worked and what didn't work?
- So What?** • What difference did it make that we did this work?
- Now What?** • What could we do differently?
- Then What?** • How do we plan to use evaluation findings for continuous learning?

Four types of data collection were used to gather information:

- Minutes from advisory committee and planning group sessions, including the forum orientation package for facilitators;
- Informal interviews with participants and facilitators during and after the forum with a focus on key issues, outcomes and conclusions;
- Surveys of Forum Participants—brief forum surveys were distributed to all participants as part of the forum registration package;
- Participant Observations—five observers/recorders worked to capture the content and nature of discussions within the various group discussions.
- The learnings gained through asking these five questions are given in Appendix I. Two follow-up surveys will be sent to participants at 6 and 12 month intervals to identify longer term results linked to the forum.

# Part V:

## Conclusions

# Conclusions—*Ideas for Future Action . . . Next Steps*

## 1. **Sharing of learning**

We invite you to make ongoing use of the forum website at <http://www.web.net/~susforum/> Here you will find the complete proceedings of the forum (including flipchart notes from all group working sessions, Brian Fawcett's keynote presentation "After the Future" (included in Appendix V), participant information, tips on open space technology, and more). A discussion group on the Internet may be set up as the need becomes apparent.

## 2. **Checking in with you, 6 months and 12 months from now**

You can expect to hear from the Edmonton Social Planning Council on behalf of Health Canada and Environment Canada as a follow-up to the forum. We will be interested in finding out how you used or applied forum learnings and networking links and the results you have had.

## 3. **Ideas to consider in the future**

Please think about the following suggestions for our next steps, when you complete the "Feedback Form" on the page 25.

### a. ***Asset-Mapping***

You will remember the big map of Alberta we posted and the invitation to identify resources, talents and skills that you had to share, and those that you would like to have access to. We got a start on this, and hope that you might like to pursue the development of a Forum Asset Map, or perhaps you might like training in how to do asset-mapping in your community.

### b. ***The Salon***

Many groups brought forward the "salon idea" . . . Getting together informally to discuss issues, successes, and challenges would help us all to profit from others' wisdom and to see our work against the backdrop of a healthier planet. We wondered if you would like to be part of a small group of people who would organize the first few gatherings . . . and if you would like to participate.

### c. ***Possible Training Opportunities***

A lot of good suggestions came forward about how we could enhance our skills through workshops or training sessions targeted at community capacity-building. We have a few collective suggestions to pass on to you, and invite you to add more.

The March 1997 Sustainability Forum was only the beginning. Let's keep the momentum going.

# Appendices

# Appendix I

## Evaluation Findings: *Responses to the Five Key Questions*

### I. **WHAT?** • Did we do what we said we would do?

The broad goal of the forum was to work towards sustaining the health and vitality of the communities and environments where we work and live.

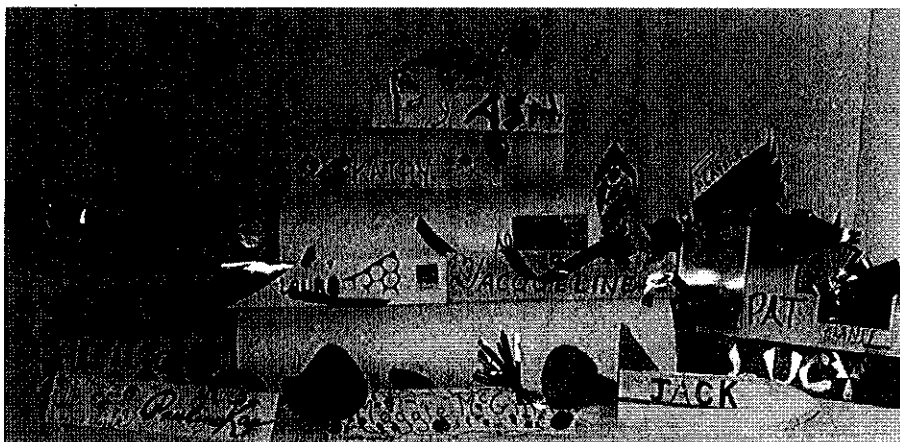
Consistent with this overall goal, two key considerations helped to shape the forum structure and content:

- the creation of a safe environment to support participants' sharing of experiences and ideas;
- the facilitation of inclusive, honest, open dialogue both within and between health and environment groups.

Observations of forum activities, interviews with participants, and data from participant forum surveys indicate that the general atmosphere and tone of the forum was inclusive and supported the sharing of information and ideas. A number of specific activities intended to promote sharing and interaction were important in contributing to the overall environment:

- Thursday evening gathering: a chance to meet people and to sit down and chat informally (not a formal, stand-up reception);
- Design and production of personal name cards ("tents");
- Group meal times and time-outs;
- Production and performance of forum song written by several of the participants.

The initial consultations that supported the forum called for a non-traditional event, that encouraged interaction between health and environment organizations within small working sessions. Consistent with this intent, the major part of forum activities centred on facilitated group discussions. The three connected working sessions held on the Day Two provided participants with the opportunity to share learning built on group wisdom, and to make new links both within and between the health and environment fields.



*"Distinctive name tents (tags) created by participants."*

## Some of the Challenges

- Pre-Forum Planning—A small steering group representing both health and environment organizations met to develop the plan for the forum. The planning was inclusive, but wider participation would have been desirable.
- Forum—A weekend of bad winter travelling weather prevented many of those registered from coming. This impacted on the make-up of the discussion groups which had been projected to include a balanced cross-section of participants from various sectors.
- Group Dynamics—There were eight working groups set up for each of the three, concurrent sessions. Participants engaged in open dialogue and shared experiences. They also grappled with the difficulties which arise when divergent viewpoints are brought together.

While eight groups worked on the first two sessions, the third session was compressed to six groups as some participants grew tired and withdrew from discussion. The forum session on Saturday morning was attended by only 70 per cent of the participants, resulting in a quiet finale to the event.

- Time Remaining for Summation Session—The summary of facilitator observations from the working sessions, scheduled for Saturday morning, was reduced in time to accommodate participants' desire to continue with the open space technology activity, as well as the need for prompt departures for out-of-town participants. Facilitators only had time to present the broader conclusions and major themes which the groups shared in common. Some participants stated that this was inadequate, given the richness of the discussions.

## II. WHY? • What did we learn about what worked and what didn't work?

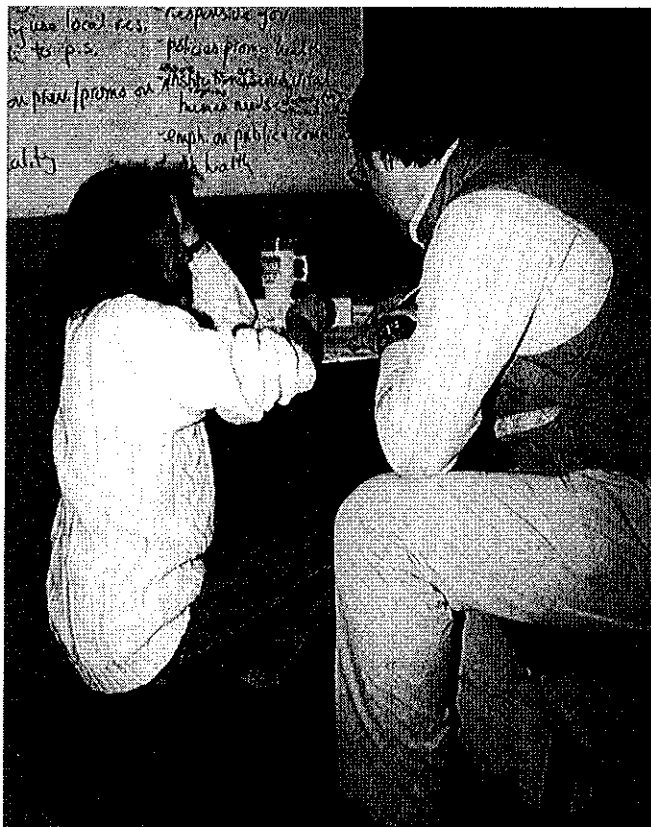
### *What Worked*

1. Bringing Together Health and Environment Agencies
  - good discussion on areas of mutual and complementary concern;
  - many participants reported gaining a different perspective on their work and learned more about the motivation and issues of others.
2. The Positive Atmosphere
  - despite the many challenges individual organizations face, participants highlighted positive experiences and activities which may form a basis for future work.
3. Focus on Working Sessions
  - active involvement of participants helped organizations work together constructively for change.
4. Keynote Address
  - challenging, insightful speaker who encouraged participants to take back their own agenda from other interest groups. See Appendix IV for the full text of the address.

5. Creation of a Greater Sense of Camaraderie
  - built up by working together in the different sessions
  - culminated in several participants writing and composing a song *Sustainability (What I Can Be)*, and leading everyone in singing it to bring a special closure to the forum. See Appendix III for the full text of the song.

### *What Didn't Work*

1. The Long Working Day
  - resulted in fatigue and less participation in the evening sessions.
2. Working Group Composition
  - mixing participants with different roles (frontline worker, program planner, board members, etc.) created tension in at least two groups; frontline workers needed strategies they could implement right away, while senior staff and board members sought more long term planning goals.
3. Lack of Verbal Report-Backs from Working Sessions
  - forum organizers had planned on cross-group sharing only through posting flipchart notes in the plenary room after each session and asking facilitators to give a brief summation of themes at the end of the forum.



*"Pulling together common themes on sustainability."*



III. **SO WHAT?** • What difference did it make that we did this work?

See Part II (Brief Summary of Working Session Findings) and Part III (An Analysis of What the Forum Accomplished) in the main body of the report as this summarizes the learnings.

IV. **NOW WHAT?** • What could we do differently?

1. Have a shorter working day but add a day to the forum to counteract fatigue and burnout.
2. Consider having some sessions where all frontline workers or all board members gather, so that there could be more focussed discussion on development of strategies.
3. Integrate the theme on electronic linkages as well as the sessions on Internet access more effectively into the forum.
4. Build more opportunities and time for verbal feedback from **all** group sessions.
5. Plan for longer facilitator summation sessions to ensure a more effective wrap-up to complex discussions.
6. Explore different structures and formats for future working sessions.
7. Develop more effective strategies for getting a higher return on participant evaluation forms.

V. **THEN WHAT?** • How do we plan to use evaluation findings for continuous learning

See Part V Conclusions— Ideas for Future Action.

# Appendix II

## Summary of Information from Participant Evaluation Forms

### *Number of Responses*

Limited to 18, or 28 per cent return rate

### *Participant Rating of the Forum*

Overall forum identified as useful (average of ratings on scale of one to four was 2.8)

11 rated the forum as either useful or very useful, two rated the forum as not useful

### *Description of the Forum*

Generally, positive descriptions were provided, including: provocative (2), invigorating (2), stimulating (2), energetic, refreshing, empowering;

Critiques included:

stagnant, unfocussed/too loose, affluent, too long, not a good use of time

### *Increased Understanding of Common Health and Environment Goals*

Comments:

- "not aware before of initiatives between health and environment"
- "small group work created a sharing of ideas and resources people are willing to share"
- "open space technology very useful in this regard"
- "health and environment are still distinct societies with few connections"
- "opportunities (through the forum) to share: an excellent start in bringing the two groups together"
- "forum revealed that many people are working towards common goals"
- "demonstrated the benefit of shared experience and knowledge"
- "people are open to new ways of working...an "alert" to commonalities"
- "now (we) have a framework for understanding issues"
- "did not get much from the forum"
- "people are "still in their own little boxes"
- "didn't realize that the above (increased understanding...) was the forum goal"

### *Opportunities for Working in New and Effective Ways*

Participants identified that:

- we need more intersectoral dialogue
- sustainability and evaluation must be integral to all project development and work
- importance of communicating and sharing more...having fun and letting your spirit guide you
- we must be clear on expectations relating to partnerships
- we must keep informed on environmental issues
- need for shared expertise around advocacy...the development of a common mission
- need for further networking
- caring for people and caring for the environment goes hand in hand...and there are many shared experiences to build on

- need for using the Internet both to advertise (agency/group) services and to access information
- need for using the open space technology approach
- need for values (overall) and the value (that is inherent) in small steps

#### *Possible Uses of Learnings from the Forum*

- develop own regional forums . . . more focussed and with a clear definition of sustainability
- encourage organizational board members to share information on partnership opportunities
- point to the need for support for our faith and cultural groups
- opportunities to using the sharing exercises—challenging each other—and (making) a greater use of partnerships
- bring in an environmental group to broaden perspectives to a health organization . . . expand partners
- use itself of information relating to chemicals and plant life
- use of the Internet to visit other environmental sites
- taking action to ensure participation
- will use information gathered in the forum to frame future actions; will write articles for publication and discussion; will suggest future use of resource people identified through the forum

#### *Expected Results*

Participants reported that they expect the following results will come from their involvement with the forum:

- a new awareness (of the links between health and the environment)
- increased participation and new partnerships
- review of partnership opportunities relating to training and employment
- sharing of knowledge and experiences
- stronger advocacy skills and broader networks
- increased partnerships between health and environment agencies
- a more holistic approach in working with the community
- an expansion of available resource bases
- a renewed energy and commitment

## Appendix III

# Sustainability *(What I Can Be)*

A special song written by David, Kerry, Jacqueline and Gilbert  
for Health Canada / Environment Canada Sustainability Forum, March, 1997

What I can be is only me  
Each day with more integrity  
Live for myself and others too  
Celebrate each day with you  
Celebrate each day with you

What I can do is know myself  
And then be true to what I know  
Learn to listen, learn to fight  
Guided by that inner light  
Guided by that inner light

**So I must do and I must be  
And laugh at this my destiny  
Yet in some small way I may be  
A link to build community  
A link to build community**

I need to know to grow to feel  
And with others, myself to heal  
In the crowd to find my voice  
It is my birthright, yet my choice  
My birthright, yet my choice

To face my fear is courage too  
To love the questions, still too few  
Discover passion deep within  
For this my planet and my kin  
My planet and my kin

Chorus

(With generous assistance from Mark Sadler-Brown of Calgary)

## Appendix IV

# Feedback *and Ordering Form: The 1997 Sustainability Forum*

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Fax:

I. Forum Follow-up: Would your organization be interested in:

- |                  |   |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|---|
| 1. Asset Mapping | a). We want training in how to do asset mapping.                        | Y | N |
|                  | b). We want to contribute resource information to "The Forum Asset Map" | Y | N |

Comments:

2. Pursuing the idea of a "salon."

We define salon as the "coming together of people to share ideas and to build ideas for action."

- |                                       |   |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| a) we want to help set up "salons"    | Y | N |
| b) we want to participate in "salons" | Y | N |

Comments:

3. Training in Community-Building Skills

Do you want to participate in training on:

- |                              |   |   |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| consensus based management   | Y | N |
| holistic resource management | Y | N |
| participatory evaluation     | Y | N |
| Internet skills              | Y | N |
| visioning                    | Y | N |
| healthy planet workshop      | Y | N |
| other (please specify)       |   |   |

\*Please note: for Forum Follow-up offerings, availability will depend on interest and resources.

II. Please add any additional ideas you have about "our next steps" after the Forum.

**If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact  
Penny Mosmann (403-495-4280) or Sara Baker (403-495-4866) at Health Canada.**

## Appendix V

# After the Future

**Brian Fawcett**

Keynote Speech

Sustainability Forum

Friday, March 14, 1997

Inn on 7th, Edmonton, Alberta

# After the Future

Some unconventional approaches to coping  
with a present we don't seem able to control  
and a future that doesn't seem to belong to us

The Sustainability Forum Keynote Speech, March 14, 1997  
by **Brian Fawcett**

Good morning. My name is Brian Fawcett, and I'm from Prince George, B. C., which has the world's largest clearcut a few miles southeast of the city and 25 per cent structural unemployment. I now live in Toronto, Ontario, which Michael Harris wants to turn into the same thing as Prince George.

When I asked myself why I'd been invited to stand in front of you people and offer advice about how to cope with a present we don't seem able to control and a future that doesn't seem to belong to us, I came up with the following answers:

1. I suspect that I've been invited because I'm an unconventional thinker, and the conference organizers recognize that the situation facing the health and environmental sectors — along with nearly everyone else — has more or less steamrolled the conventional approaches. If so, the organizers knew what they were getting. I'm not John Naismith, I'm not Tom Peters, and I'm about as far from Anthony Robbins as you can get. This will not be conventional inspiration.

2. I also suspect that I was invited here, at least in part, because I have a background in urban planning, and tend to see related fields of public administration through that lens.

The 13 years I spent in planning were mainly spent building (and later, unsuccessfully defending) master planning projects in Greater Vancouver. That suited my appetite for big, broad brush conceptual thinking. It wasn't until later that I realized that planning's broad brush was sweeping away precisely the things we should have been protecting. Urban planning, since the Second World War has defined "quality of life" almost exclusively as a simple matter of getting people to and from wherever they wanted to go easily and conveniently: amenity over culture, in other words.

Planning should have defined quality of life as getting people to stop running around, sit down, relax and think about what they're doing: culture over amenity.

Planning's obsession with transportation, meanwhile, has nearly ruined the planet. It gave us freeways, it gave us the suburbs, it gave us malls, and it gave the vast majority of us the dubious privilege of wasting our days sitting in traffic congestion.

So. Whether or not you agree with what I just said, the conference organizers have probably calculated that what I have to say will make sense to you despite its unconventional elements.

I hope so. These are worthwhile challenges, and I accept them gladly. I hope I'm able to deliver something that you can make use of.

3. One of my personal motives for coming is because I am a Westerner and a Northerner by temperament and outlook, even though I've been seduced into living in the mysterious East. I was born and raised in Northern B. C., but I have deep roots in Alberta, particularly in its northern parts.

Both my parents grew up in and around the Strathcona district of Edmonton. As a matter of record, my father was arrested in 1928 for riding a motorcycle down the middle of the High Level bridge. That may seem like a fairly minor accomplishment, but in those days the bridge carried traffic in both directions, and I'm reliably informed that my father was going at least 75 miles an hour. Some part of me, I suppose, hopes I can do an equivalent feat of intellectual daring this morning.

One thing is for sure. The conference organizers haven't flown me in from Toronto because I'm a confidant of Michael Harris and will put a favourable spin on his public policies for you. I'm sure, given the results of the election a few days ago, that everyone here is intimately acquainted with leaders and governments that have become very successful and popular by refusing to govern, or by governing for the gratification of a small minority that for the most part, lives outside the province and the country—Moody's Bond Rating Service, I think it's called.

Not that I'm going to take an "hurrah for our side" approach today. Having come from a family of right-wing small business people, I have a sense of where men like Harris and Klein are coming from. I don't agree with their policies or their political programs, but I don't think they're crazy, either.



I can illustrate what it is I do in a way that will also explain why I've been writing books lately, and haven't been getting much work as a planner. A few years ago, I published a book titled *Public Eye*. It was a detective story, sort of, about why all the particular and specific elements of human environments appear to be disappearing beneath the onslaught of a new strain of commercial generics. I wrote the book as a way of wondering out loud—very much out loud, as it turned out—why we can't cross the street any more without being harrassed by Ronald McDonald or Mickey Mouse.

My editor for the book, a nice young man from St. Louis who had no real idea what he'd gotten himself into, remarked to me one afternoon that I seemed to have a pretty clear idea what was wrong with the world, but that he hadn't seen much evidence that I had any positive suggestions to make about how to make it better.

It was the kind of remark I've been hearing all my life. There's my 90 year old father, who has believed since I can remember that there are only two kinds of people in the world—rotarians and parasites—and complains bitterly and often that I'm not Rotary club material.

"Question, question, criticize, criticize," he says. "If you're so damned smart, come up with the better way of doing things. Us Rotarians are busy people, and we get mighty tired of all your parasitic bickering."

I'd never been much stung by that sort of thing. The world, it seems to me, is filled with busy men and women—shall I call them Rotarians and Rotary-Annes?—with pat answers to infinitely complicated questions. Mostly their answers are to questions no one has asked, and they come in the form of commodities that solve problems we don't have, ideas that benefit only a grinning few, or they're pushing notions of religious virtue that seem to circle around fundraising, Jimmy Swaggart-style.

As a matter of fact, I'd argue that we live in a society with altogether too many answers. What we lack are the right questions, along with the will to ask those questions in public once we've figured out what they are. I'm talking about the really big questions of life, like:

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ALIVE AND WHAT ARE WE MEANT TO DO ABOUT IT?

WHY ARE PEOPLE FREEZING TO DEATH ON THE STREETS?

WHY DON'T WE TAX THE CORPORATE SECTOR?

WHY ARE BANK PROFITS SO ASTRONOMICAL?

—Or, a little closer to home:

WHY ARE THE ONLY NEW BUILDINGS IN OUR SMALL TOWNS BANK BUILDINGS?

WHY IS JIM KEEGSTRA'S SON AS DUMB AS HE IS?

I notice that his son has also been shooting his mouth off, and is from the same chapter of Mensa his father frequents.

Notwithstanding the above, when my editor from St. Louis remarked that I ought to be more constructive, I decided that just once in my life, I'd not only ask the questions about why the generic I is overwhelming the specific and the particular across our environments, but that I'd also offer practical suggestions about things we could do to prevent it from succeeding.

Coming up with practical suggestions turned out to be easy—perhaps a little too easy. My suggestions got me into an enormous amount of trouble, amongst other things, ending what had been to that point a fairly lucrative subcareer as a planning consultant.

I won't regale you with all the suggestions I made because there were a lot of them. Most were deliberately playful, and some of them were very silly. One of the more serious ones, for instance, pointed out that the stock market and currency speculations that fill our media was really a major contributor to economic instability and that both were quasi-criminal parasitic activities in which unproductive speculators bet on the productivity and economic luck of real participants in the economy. Having said that, I went on to suggest that we ought to close the stockmarkets and make stock trading semi-legal, so that stocks could be obtained only by cash transactions in the two or three darkest alleys in each city, with no police permitted within a two block radius.

I argued that since stock traders are forever crowing about what adventurous risk-takers they are, my alterations would inject some real adventure and risk into their activities—while creating a much-needed redistribution of wealth.

I was denounced by the Fraser Institute for that piece of insolence, and condemned by several major newspapers and about half the economics departments in North America. But what cost me my career as a planning consultant were the suggestions I made about professionals, their egos and their privileges, which, it seemed to me, had become a little inflated. Here's what I proposed for them:

- A. All medical doctors ought to display signs on their office, home and automobile doors revealing gross and net incomes, along with a statement of non-medical assets and the location and duration of all vacations in the past three years;
- B. Lawyers ought to have the option of dressing in clown or vampire costumes during court trials, and be prohibited from entering restaurants and bars after 10 p.m. unless wearing their chosen court costumes. No lawyer ought to be permitted to wear a business suit.
- C. All accountants, general or certified, male or female, ought to be required to wear open-necked shirts, gold neck chains and pastel-coloured leisure suits during business hours.
- D. Any architect involved in designing residential developments larger than fifty living units ought to be required to reside in the development and work as its caretaker and janitor for a period of one year. This would ensure more socially responsive designs and would also relieve unemployment within the profession.
- E. Offices for urban planners and architects must be relocated to the most economically depressed areas of cities, with street level access for citizens.
- F. Public transit planners and executives shall not be allowed to own or operate private motor vehicles... etc.

Well, I'm sure you can imagine what happened: The work dried up more or less instantly. I tried to get myself off the hook by telling people I was no more serious about my suggestions than, say, NORAD was about Mutually Assured Destruction, or Brian Mulroney was about sitting on Ronald Reagan's knee singing Irish lullabies while he gave away our national autonomy.

But the truth is that I was serious, and it didn't seem at all like a contradiction that I was also making, and having fun. I'm planning to do the same sort of thing today: be perfectly serious, and have some fun.

Now, I don't want you to take this the wrong way, because my insistence that serious things should also be occasions for laughter isn't frivolous. Recent history is beginning to tell us in no uncertain terms that any way of organizing human beings that doesn't include healthy doses of fun is doomed to failure. In the end, that's what brought down the Soviet Union—not SDI or the inherent superiority of capitalism. The relations between Soviet institutions and Soviet citizens were chronically, maniacally, without joy or laughter, and the absence was fatal. Closer to home, a variation of the same thing brought the Ontario NDP down. Their sense of aggrieved righteous took over and made them

unable to defend themselves or their policies. They'd decided that they were right, and that rightness was no laughing matter.

What I'm saying to you here, among other things, is that over the last fifteen or twenty years capitalism has quite consciously set about to make itself a lot of fun, particularly if you're on the operating side of it. It has become astonishing good at kicking up shiny attractive commodities, recreational opportunities and wealth for anyone willing and able to be seduced with acquiring those things.

Those of us, meanwhile, who remain dedicated to other, more humane goals — things like social and political justice, high levels of public health, an environment able to support a variety of lifeforms — haven't had a chance.

What you, as health and environmental specialists have been up against over the past several years may seem like little more than an overproud economic system bent on replacing custom and civility with a religion of private aggression, near-term profits, and the further enriching of the already wealthy at the expense of the poor, the weak, the needy and the non-human.

It is all of those, but there is more to it. Behind that grinning ascendancy is some deadly serious intentions.

When Frances Fukiyama declared, in a 1989 magazine article and then in a 1992 book called *The End of History and the Last Man*, that human progress had ended with Liberal Democracy (American style) and that history was over, he wasn't simply giving expression to a monumental piece of right wing myopia and arrogance. He was citing a specialized aspect of a more general—and perhaps more generously humane—recognition that our planet's resources are finite, and that the military/industrial strategy of launching ourselves into space to colonize the universe just before this planet's gravy runs out, simply wasn't going to happen. For many of us, that recognition was long overdue, and we welcomed its implications. It meant we would have to husband our resources, distribute what remains with care and equity, get control over our population growth, radically reduce our consumption of non-renewable resources and put an end to the idiotic waste and violence of warfare.

But for others, the recognition was a terrible surprise, and occasion for the rebirth of a brutal sort of Darwinism. Their reasoning went something like this: If we can no longer grow by exploiting the planet, and if, with the collapse of imperialism, it is no longer possible to exploit the Third World, then we are going to have to get our future growth and wealth by redistributing the resources we have left—from the weak to the strong. What those who thought

this way did next — and there are more of them around than I care to admit — was to make an new inventory of exploitable resources. Among the first things they saw, I suspect, was what we think of as the public sector. Around 1980, it must have looked to them like a herd of plump, white rabbits.

In a nutshell, this is what has happened in the last fifteen or twenty years: the transformation of the public sector. It's 1997 now, and the rabbits aren't so plump and white, and the fences are littered with rabbit pelts. But the harshest and most profound elements of the decimation of the public sector sort of crept up on us without many of us recognizing it: a huge transfer of assets from the public sector to the private and corporate sector in the form of public debts.

Make no mistake. We have those those public debts because we chose, all across Western civilization, not to tax the corporate world or the very wealthy. In most cases, we thought it was impossible to achieve because of the transnational nature of the corporations. But the changes have been ratcheting upwards and onwards from there: our governments gradually found themselves paralyzed, close to insolvency yet unable to bring themselves to tax the wealthy.

When, in the late 1980s, the corporations began to seriously pressure them to stop borrowing, using the seductive but specious argument that to borrow further was to sell out the birthright of our children and grandchildren, the the massacre of our social programs began. Along with it has come a loosening of labour and environmental standards, and all of it explained by simple reference to the one necessity we all agree on: we have to compete in the global marketplace; what is happening is inevitable.

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You people are here today to talk about sustainability. In the public sector's longstanding traditions of terminal indirectness and of high-mindedly emphasizing the positive until everyone passes out from lack of oxygen, there's very little being said—here or elsewhere—of what it is we're trying sustain, and even less about what the impediments to sustainability are. We all know, so don't ask.

But do we? For nearly a half decade now, health professionals have been asked to sustain universal medicare in an atmosphere of funding freezes and cuts, and increasingly expensive non-human technologies. In Toronto, for instance, the

Harris government is forcing the closure of ten hospitals in a situation where waiting lists for elective surgery already take months.

We've heard much sabre-rattling about preventing the two-tiering of medicare, but it's clear, where I live, that another round of radical cuts are going to create a system with more tiers to it than just two. Worse, nearly everybody believes that this is an inevitability.

Similarly, Environment Canada has fewer people in the field than it had 20 years ago, and governments at every level are cutting environmental budgets. In B. C., the government is diverting monies earmarked for reforestation into general revenues.

About 15 months ago, I had a number of conversations with the Suzuki Foundation on the subject of sustainability. The Suzuki Foundation's officials began by approaching me to write the base document for the Foundation's book series. The working title for the book was "The Basic Needs," to which end the Foundation had commissioned a position paper on the subject of sustainable development.

I read the technical paper with interest, but interest soon turned into bewilderment. Not once in the paper was the basic terminology of sustainability defined or even interrogated. Instead sustainability was treated as a matter not in dispute, a simple matter of educating the uncooperative masses—corporations and individuals—to recognize the truth.

Leaving that aside I asked them the obvious question: how can we talk about sustainable development without broaching the question of population control? We have, I argued, a planet with long term carrying capacity, at the levels of industrially-based amenity to which people like you and I are accustomed, of about 200 million. Sure, technological advances like nuclear fission and other material and energy conserving technologies might get us up to a billion.

But that's admittedly very optimistic. If we look at the history of technology we'll have to admit that it has never, at any point, resulted in overall material or energy efficiency. Fuel injection may be more efficient than carburetors for automobiles, but the gains there have been more than offset by more cars, more people using them. Consumption of resources grows, and the environment degrades unabated. There are nearly six billion of us, and this is a level of population we simply can't sustain for more than a few hundred years without utterly exhausting the planet's resources.

I didn't have to do chapter and verse on this because Suzuki's people all knew about it, just like most of you people do.

Yet in the end, the Suzuki Foundation and I had to part company. Part of the reason was to do with the fact that population control is so mind-numbingly difficult a problem to conceptualize that few can do it without concluding that suicide is the only sane course—with eugenics and euthanasia hovering in the wings. For me, sustainable development was an oxymoron, sort of like “military intelligence” and “educational television”.

We hassled and haggled over it on a theoretical level until someone pointed out to me that the Suzuki Foundation couldn't approach the question anyway, because of a practical problem. As part of that loose and now-ragged collective of the political centre and left that has operated from the premise that human beings have an obligation to treat one another and their planet with respect and kindness, the Foundation couldn't even get to the table to examine the problem without giving major offense to that part of its coalition that believes that population control is an abrogation of women's reproductive rights, not to mention a major religious affront to a number of prominent players within the multiculture environmental groups it operates with. Suzuki's people just weren't willing to risk offending their allies by getting into the deep and dirty of population control.

Okay. I'm really opening Pandora's box here, aren't I? But I have to do it in order to get at the extraordinarily simple nature of the coalition we're all part of. It holds a key to the future, one that proposes an alternate strategy.

The key is there in the phrase, “loose and now-ragged collective of the political centre and left that has operated from the premise that human beings have an obligation to treat one another and their planet with respect and kindness.”

That coalition almost certainly includes everyone here today, even though some of us might feel a little uncomfortable being defined with what appears to be a huge generality. But as environmentalists and health professionals, your work is integral to the failing social democracy created in Canada and in most other industrialized nations over the last hundred years. That's because at the root of that social democracy is the notion that we ought to treat one another with respect and kindness.

As nations fail, and competing tribes and factions grow more violent in their attempts to carve out a safe niche for themselves, that little definition of community may be the only workable definition we'll have.

As a writer and as a planner I don't have a problem with seeing myself as a functionary of social democracy. I remind myself from time to time the reason why I don't go off and make a killing in real estate derives from that obligation toward respect and kindness.

I believe in the practical and moral obligation to treat others with respect and kindness even though I'm pretty much committed to the idea of doing in a non-Rotarian way.

If that makes me a social democrat, so be it.

If it makes me a socialistic crypto-commie, as Mr. Klein and Mr. Harris appear to think people who accept the the obligations of social democracy are, then okay. I haven't ingested the ideas of the reacticons (my shorthand for "reactionary conservatives", the peculiarly aggressive conservatives that are so common these days) who believe that treating people decently corrupts their character, and that they would be better off being dragged bodily behind the Darwinist instruments of the global marketplace.

I hope you people haven't bought into that, because it's a big mistake.

You're all going into workshops aimed at guiding you to a more efficient and relevant grappling with the difficult professional situations in which you work. I'd like to get you to see those situations in the context of the larger societal situation we're all in, and to challenge some of your ideas about the dimensions, functions and scope of the present and the future.

To begin with, let's not fool ourselves. Behind the careful wording of the purpose of this conference lies a depressing prehistory. Let me read those words to you, so you can see what I mean: Forum participants are here today, it says, to "look at their own work in a broader context, to examine how their work could contribute to the overall health of local communities and environments, and to consider how communities and groups could work together to identify new opportunities for collaboration and innovation during times of change."

Let me translate this into the baldest possible terms:

You're looking at ways to accommodate the cuts, to redeploy budgets to cover the growing gaps in the social net. But behind that, you're looking to form new and wider coalitions to fight future cuts. Is that about right?

Let me put it a slightly different way:

You people are trying to deliver services that governments are now reluctant to fund, and which the public is suddenly sceptical about the value of. The environmentalists among you are trying to protect a rapidly degrading environment that governments have lost the will to regulate, and the health professionals are trying to maintain levels of service and social entitlement that



are egalitarian and adequate to maintain individual and body politic health—but which governments either can't afford to fund or don't want to.

The answer to every and all of your budget requests and regulatory initiatives—correct me if I'm wrong—is identical: governments can't afford to fund these things and compete successfully in the global marketplace.

You've been losing most of the battles, and you're definitely losing the war. Right?

Part of the reason is that we've been underestimating just how profound what the reacticons are up to really is.

We are, as a society, in the middle stages of a genuine ideological revolution, one that is challenging all our basic values and ideas. We've grown up in a society that valued public service, selfless charity, and the enrichment of the commonwealth through public education and other democratic institutions.

But now we're moving rapidly toward a new kind of society governed by entrepreneurial values—(I like to remind myself that the word “entrepreneur” means one who enters and takes) in which aggression and selfishness is openly promoted, and singlemindedness is admired and desired.

What's peculiar about this revolution is that it's the first in history with the aim of enriching the already wealthy. It's also peculiar because there's no revolutionaries, and no conspiracy. This is all being done to us in the open, with our tacit consent.

It is also—already—a massively successful revolution, having succeeded in transferring about to ten trillion dollars world wide from the public to the private sector in a couple of decades, which is to say, from the general public to corporations and private individuals.

We've agreed to go along with this with astonishing passivity, and in abject ignorance, at least fiscally, of what and who it is really for. From an accounting point of view, the public debt that so terrifies and cows us is really an asset transfer we've agreed to let take place through the various taxation policies of our governments.

I make these remarks not just as a leftist cultural whiner, which I am by choice, but as a right-wing small business dork, which I am by birthright and upbringing. As a whiner, I oppose their values. But the small-town pragmatist in me, which knows that you have to live with what—and who—you do, sees the reacticon program as little more than a bunch of hare-brained corporate financial

planners drunk on their own testosterone, and willing to sacrifice two hundred years of social progress in order to maintain quarterly corporate dividends. No matter which side is looking at this, it's clear there really isn't any farsighted philosophical system at work here, just a narrowly focused fiscal strategy that's gotten so far out of hand that it looks like both a philosophy and a religion.

It isn't. Nor is it a rational response to global absolutes, and there are no inevitabilities involved. These are people cranked up on a half-baked ideology who are fouling their own nests. Since it also happens to be our nest, we need to understand what they're doing better than we have.

What we all sense about it is in fact its reality: it is myopic, it isn't socially efficient, and it isn't, as the reacticon enthusiasts enthuse, a speeded up version of natural selection.

More than anything I want to get across to you this morning is that you mustn't lose heart about the future because you've been, to date, so helpless to stop these people. What you're facing is a pyramid scheme built of smoke and mirrors, and it's going to fall apart.

First, our economists haven't been able to predict a single economic event in the entire twentieth century, so all the predictions they've been making aren't going to pan out. And anyway, you can't see the future.

The West's ludicrously elaborate intelligence network couldn't see the Soviet collapse coming until three days before it happened, nobody in the public sector predicted the hysterical budget cutting mania we're currently experiencing, and no one, anywhere, would have predicted twenty years ago that government would become utterly discredited as an instrument for determining change and dealing with its effects.

There is an up side to this. The great urbanist philosopher Jane Jacobs, who lives just a few blocks from me in Toronto, gave me two pieces of advice about this recently, and I'll pass them on to you:

"The only thing about the future that can be predicted," she said, "is that it will surprise everyone. Linear projections from the immediate past never turn out to be accurate."

"We've gotten into mess after mess," she went on, "because we're so busy trying to see what's coming at us that we miss what's there in front of us. What happens there is what really counts. So look at what's around you, be interested in it for what it is and what it does. Take care of the present, and the future will become what it is supposed to be. Since you can't know what it'll bring, it isn't worth fretting about. And it's never as bad as you think it will be."

Now, I don't entirely share Jacob's calm about this. She's in her late 70s now, and while she's been right about more things that almost anyone in this century, she hasn't seen the future either.

I think the future is worth fretting about, but her point about its unpredictability is well taken. We can't see where we're going. What we can see, and much more clearly than we do right now, is the present.

One of the things I can see is that those of us who care about the public sector have been pushed, by circumstances, into defending a status quo that can't be defended, and which we really didn't like in the first place. I'll go a step further: I think we've been manoeuvred into this, against our interests. The reason why Ralph Klein so easily won reelection—and why Michael Harris' popularity in Ontario remains so high—is that instead of imagining new ways of doing things, people like you and I have simply been fighting a war of attrition to keep things as they are. As we defend service after funding block after program—and mainly lose ground—we've ceased to imagine anything new or positive.

Let me summarize what I've been saying:

1. No matter how sincere or well-intentioned we are, we can't maintain the status quo. And anyway, how did we arrive at the point where we're defending a status quo we didn't like in the first place?
2. The future is unpredictable. History demonstrates that it has always been both in the distant and very recent past, a series of radical surprises.
3. What we can do, and mostly don't, is to see the full dimensions of the present. We are a nation hysterically fixed on seeing the future—a hopeless enterprise—and are frankly unaware—or under-aware—of what is around us. We have visionaries—who always turn out to be wrong—but few prophets. Jane Jacobs is one, and Marshall McLuhan had his moments, even though he had more bad ones than good. Prophets are supposed to be sitting up in the hills, as Jeremiah from the Old Testament did, watching their compatriots and matriots fight amongst one another as the barbarians advance on them from the adjoining valley—or opportunity. Their job is to see things as they are, to make the present visible to others.

So let me try my hand at prophesy. Here's what I see:

As environmental and health professionals, as writers, as citizens, we need to return to our basic premise—that people and things ought to have respectful and dignified treatment. If we decide it still holds, we have to find ways to act on it.

As for the future? Well, how about a few pieces of tactical advice?

1. Recognize that the future won't be a simple linear projection of the trends and issues of today—and be thankful for it.
2. Remember that the only surety the future holds is that it will be surprising. Adjust your receptor systems accordingly.
3. Remember that the solutions to the problems we face are primarily human and philosophical, not technical. You can help build stronger coalitions by using the internet, but it's important that you know why you're building a coalition, for what reasons, and towards what ends. Interactivity, unless you know these things, is a little like phoning someone and then forgetting what it was you wanted to tell them. It simply wastes everyone's time.
4. Remember that if it isn't fun, it isn't going to work.
5. Beware of tripping over your own wishes, prejudices and ideological values—unless you're willing to make a fool of yourself to get a laugh out of someone else.
6. Lastly, this:

Don't organize yourselves around the reacticon agenda, because so long as they're making the agenda, the field will belong to them. The only way you can control the agenda is to bring it back, constantly and in intelligent detail, to your basic values.

For them, the basic values are competing in the global marketplace and getting rich. For you, it's the necessity of treating people and things with respect and kindness.

Organize around that because there's no more seductive idea in the universe, and no greater practical necessity. But do it ruthlessly, and with a sense of humour.

Geez. Not so bad after all.