



# Canada Scores a “C” on Sustainability

Report Card released on the opening of the UN Sustainable Development Summit

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As the United Nations prepares to endorse a new set of 17 goals for sustainable development, Canada receives an overall mark of “C” in a report card, *The Future Canadians Want*, released by Canada Conserves.

The UN goals blend quality of life issues with environmental responsibility, and thus they offer an important framework for planning a better future. This prompts the question, how good a job is Canada doing at translating the vision of a sustainable future into action on the ground?

“Canada used to be a world leader in promoting sustainability,” says the report’s author Chris Winter, who has over 30 years of experience in conservation and sustainability planning. “While there is an absolutely tremendous amount of activity on the ground, we currently lack the vision, planning, and support for the transition to a better future.”

The report looks at the flow from the global goals for sustainability down to action on the ground. It includes 20 indicators, ten related to planning and ten that are green solutions. In general, it finds a baseline level of activity in all areas, which points to a deep-rooted commitment to environmental sustainability in Canadian culture. The weakest points however, are in our social vision and the high-level government plans, an indication of a steady erosion of core Canadian values over the past twenty years.

Two positive initiatives singled out in the report are the Leap Manifesto and the Province of Quebec’s Sustainable Development Plan. “The Leap Manifesto is an example of how the dialogue about the future we want in Canada needs to be led by Canadians, not politicians,” Winter comments, “and Quebec’s Sustainable Development Plan is the best in the country at translating the principles of sustainable development into a government-wide commitment. These are two initiatives which serve as a model for the kind of leadership we need to see by citizens, politicians, and business leaders alike.”

With an eye on improving our commitment to sustainability, the report also includes a rating of the 2020 potential for Canada. “We could raise our mark to a B+, and be back on track to ensuring that Canada remains a great place to live,” Winter believes.

“Canada is a great place to live,” Winter notes. “I think that most Canadians want to keep it that way, not by squandering and selling off the resources we have left, but by shifting to a focus on quality of life and the efficient and sustainable use of our resources. We want to live better with less.”

The report, *The Future Canadians Want*, is available on the Canada Conserves website: [www.canadaconserves.ca](http://www.canadaconserves.ca).

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