

HALIFAX DECLARATION

McGill University is one of the sixteen Canadian signatories of the Halifax Declaration (December 1991). The University Senate, on March 25, 1992 and on motion by former Vice-Principals Buckland and Prichard, voted in favour of supporting the Halifax Declaration and of asking "that all academic units within the University be informed of this Declaration". The Halifax Declaration called for the University's dedication to a number of actions to be taken within the University and at the local, national and global levels. The Halifax Declaration reads as follows:

Human demands upon the planet are now of a volume and kind that, unless changed substantially, threaten the future well-being of all living species. Universities are entrusted with a major responsibility to help societies shape their present and future development policies and actions into the sustainable and equitable forms necessary for an environmentally secure and civilised world...

The Halifax meeting (held in December 1991) added its voice to those many others world-wide that are deeply concerned about the continuing widespread degradation of the Earth's environment, about the pervasive influence of poverty on the process, and about the unsustainable environmental practices now so widespread. The meeting expressed the belief that solutions to these problems can only be effective to the extent that the mutual vulnerability of all societies, in the South and in the North, is recognised, and the energies and skills of people everywhere be employed in a positive, co-operative fashion. Because the educational, research and public service roles of universities enable them to be competent, effective contributors to the major attitudinal and policy changes necessary for a sustainable future, the Halifax meeting invited the dedication of all universities to the following actions:

- 1. To ensure the voice of the university be clear and uncompromising in its ongoing commitment to the principle and practice of sustainable development within the university, and at the local, national and global levels.*
- 2. To utilise the intellectual resources of the university to encourage a better understanding on the part of society of the inter-related physical, biological and social dangers facing the planet Earth.*
- 3. To emphasise the ethical obligation of the present generation to overcome those current malpractices of resource utilisation and those widespread circumstances of intolerable human disparity which lie at the root of environment unsustainability.*
- 4. To enhance the capacity of the university to teach and practice sustainable development principles, to increase environmental literacy, and to enhance the understanding of environmental ethics among faculty, students and the public at large.*
- 5. To cooperate with one another and with all segments of society in the pursuit of practical capacity-building and policy measures to achieve the effective revision and reversal of those current practices which contribute to environmental degradation, to South-North disparities and the inter-generational inequity.*
- 6. To employ all channels open to the university to communicate these undertakings to UNCED (the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Brazil in 1992), to governments and to the public at large.*