

AES to Take Leading Role in World Conference

Toronto will be the scene of the World Conference on "The Changing Atmosphere: Implications for Global Security", a major meeting of some 300 experts from around the world to be held between June 27 and 30, 1988.

Taking its cue from the recent United Nations report put out by the Brundtland Commission, the conference will attempt to examine humanity's "Common Future" in the face of such threats as climate change, ozone layer depletion and the destruction of lakes and forests by acid rain.

Based on the views of scientific experts concerning man-made changes in the global atmosphere, the conference will examine the socio-economic impacts of those changes in such sectors as energy development, water resource management and food production. Prospects for adapting to or mitigating these impacts will be evaluated and recommendations will be made for national and international action.

The meeting will be held at the Toronto Conference Centre and will be hosted by our Minister, the Hon. Tom McMillan, in association with several of his cabinet colleagues. The conference chairman will be Stephen Lewis, Canada's ambassador to the United Nations. AES is playing a lead role in organizing the event.

ADMA Howard Ferguson is conference director and the conference secretariat, located at AES Downsview is headed up by Gordon McKay, former Director of Climate Applications in the Canadian Climate Centre. Several AES staff have already been seconded to the secretariat on a full or part-time basis. Many others will have a role to play in organizing and participating in the conference.

In bringing together some of the world's leading decision-makers, economic planners and scientists from many disciplines, the conference promises to be one of the major departmental events of 1988.

AES Organizes "Conference of Conferences"

Based on an interview with Gordon McKay with comments by ADMA, Howard Ferguson

Two years of planning, led by AES, recently resulted in a landmark international conference. The World Conference on The Changing Atmosphere: Implications for Global Security (Toronto, June 27-30) attracted more than 300 delegates from 46 countries with over 200 media and was by all standards a major success.

The Conference discussed the broad range of socio-economic impacts associated with man-made changes to the chemistry of the atmosphere. It recommended specific national and international strategies and policy initiatives for dealing with the harmful effects of greenhouse warming, acid rain and the depletion of the ozone layer. Canada's lead

questioned. Of course the Service had been involved in scientific conferences before, but the main objective of this Conference was to convince politicians and decision makers of the urgency of combatting major atmospheric threats. "AES rose to the occasion and proved that it could handle a World-class policy conference professionally and with resounding results", added Mr. McKay.

Mr. McKay says planning for the Conference drew in part on the work of the Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development. That helped set the tone of the Conference and led to Mrs. Brundtland attending to deliver a stern warning about environmental threats to the planet being second only to nuclear war.

When the Brundtland Commission visited Canada in the spring of 1986, Environment

Ottawa to become a special advisor to ADMA in Downsview. Over the ensuing months, several basic plans were developed and discussed with the minister and his staff. Advisory Committees at the Service, Departmental, Interdepartmental and International levels contributed their expertise. Consultative meetings were held with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and other international bodies.

Dianne McKay's illness and untimely death left a tremendous gap to be filled in the Secretariat. Gordon McKay, who was available at that time, joined the Secretariat under contract in the late spring of 1987.

The Beijer Institute of Sweden had planned two workshops to formulate responses to the



One of the main Conference "photo opportunities" took place at the Ozone Layer Protection display at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Left to right: Alex Chisholm, director general, Atmospheric Research Directorate, Norwegian prime minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, prime minister Brian Mulroney and Environment minister Tom McMillan.

in seeking solutions to these planetary threats and the role of Environment Canada received wide recognition in the media and elsewhere. But the key parts played by many AES staff, away from the glare of publicity, are not so well known.

According to Conference secretary, Gordon McKay, the ability of a scientific service like AES to organize a major policy conference was at first

minister McMillan proposed to host a follow-up international meeting to discuss ways of improving forecasts of global change. An AES offer to assume the lead role in planning and implementing such a meeting was accepted and ADMA, Howard Ferguson, took on the responsibility of Conference director. The late Dianne McKay transferred from the Corporate Planning Group in

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greenhouse gas issue. As it became clear that strong linkages should be made to the Toronto Conference and to the Second World Climate Conference in 1990, ADMA was invited to join the Steering Committee for the Beijer Workshops. Several members of that Committee were also recruited to the Toronto Conference Statement Committee chaired by ADMA. Gordon McKay attended the first Beijer Workshop, held in Villach, Austria, in September, 1987. About 50 highly-qualified scientists from many countries put together a current consensus on the greenhouse gas problem. ADMA attended the follow-up workshop of senior policy advisors held in Bellagio, Italy, in November, 1987. The report of these workshops provided much of the scientific background and conceptual basis for many of the recommendations in the Toronto Conference Statement.

A final framework for the Toronto meeting was established in the Fall of 1987, encompassing local, dates and format. It was to be a four-day conference, which would include keynote speeches

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The Conference in a Nutshell

The implications, and complexities of the Conference are too vast to cover in the limited space available in Zephyr. We will therefore confine ourselves to briefly outlining the main Conference achievements, listing the principal participants, with a mention of the policy makers and organizers who shaped the Conference and delineating the key stages in the overall conference evolution. Finally, as a tribute to AES, a breakdown is given of some of the main areas from which the many dedicated volunteers were drawn.



The Metro Convention Centre Auditorium was packed for the opening session of the Conference. This was just part of the scene.

Brief Notes on some of the Main Conference Participants

Brian Mulroney, prime minister of Canada, gave the opening address at the Conference and among points raised, announced that safe consumer products in Canada would bear logos labelling them environmentally friendly.

Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, prime minister of Norway, chairman of the Brundtland Commission and author of the report on Our Common Future, gave an important speech at the opening session and held several press conferences.

Tom McMillan, Environment minister, also made a speech at the Conference opening. During a four-day period he participated in a large number of conference activities and during a major press conference gave out details of the newly passed Canadian Environment Protection Act.

Stephen Lewis, Canada's recently retired ambassador to the United Nations acted as Conference general chairman. His finest hour was chairing a marathon three-hour session in which participants argued the fine points of the Conference Statement.

Marcel Masse, minister of Energy Mines and Resources and a prominent member of the final panel discussion, advocated joint energy conservation programs with Environment Canada.

E.H.T.M. Nijpels, minister of Public Housing, Physical Planning and Environment of the Netherlands, was also a prominent panelist.

E. Salim, minister of State for Population and Environment for Indonesia presented forceful environmental arguments for the developing countries at the Conference.

Timothy Wirth, U.S. senator was an active participant in debates on the U.S. Clean Air Act and was the dinner speaker at a banquet hosted by the Canadian Government.

C. Cissakho, minister of Rural Development for Senegal, presented the case for responsible environmental development during the final panel discussion.

Howard Ferguson, assistant deputy minister, Atmospheric Environment Service, was Conference director as well as convenor of working groups on Policy Implications.

Evolution of the Conference

1. Pre-planning stage: Following the Brundtland Commission's visit to Canada in May 1986, Tom McMillan proposes that Canada host an international meeting on appropriate action to be taken on climate change. Plans are drawn up by AES and discussed with the minister. Advisory committees bring in other DOE experts and other government departments. The support of world bodies like the (UNEP) and the (WMO) is solicited. Strong links are forged between the Conference and the Beijer Institute in Sweden responding to the greenhouse gas issue. (Some 50 top scientists form a consensus on the issue.) The second Beijer workshop in Bellagio, Italy provides scientific background and some pre-recommendations for the Toronto Conference Statement. The Conference framework is drafted in the fall of 1987. By this time a Conference Secretariat has been set up.

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Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Marcel Masse (left) and ambassador Stephen Lewis greet each other on the stage of the Metro Convention Centre Auditorium.

Conference of Conferences

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by top international experts, the preparation of proposed socio-economic responses by a dozen specialized workshops, speeches by political leaders and a major conference statement.

"Since this was a major World Conference sponsored by the Canadian government, we had to have speakers and working groups of the highest calibre", says McKay. "It was a major coup getting both prime minister Brian Mulroney and Mrs. Brundtland as well as ambassador Stephen Lewis. We also were fortunate in getting a galaxy of other prominent people (see Conference in a Nutshell). Gordon McKay says "The Conference was unique, it bridged science and policy, and it was exciting to see scientific arguments fuelling calls for political action. The Conference was timely, urgent and highly motivating."

ADMA and Mr. McKay both give much credit to the efforts of other government departments and services participating in joint planning and advisory committees. They are also grateful of the tireless efforts of AES employees. (see Conference in a Nutshell).



Copying machines were a boon at the Conference. Here is a group of AES helpers who knew this all too well, left to right: Joan Le Drew, Marion Hurlburt, Blair Kuntz, Gloria Korson.

Right in the middle was the Conference Secretariat. Four or five hard-working individuals did the bulk of the letter writing and detailed program planning as well as organizing scores of meetings to iron out the countless questions that arise when a government service ventures into areas covered by many different disciplines and policy views on a global basis. The Secretariat used people of various backgrounds, growing gradually until at Conference time they numbered about 20. Among those who devoted major portions of their time, from the start, were Nicole Sauve, Henry Hengeveld, David Phillips, Stewart Cohen, Pierre Martel and Margaret Costea.

As the Conference deadline drew closer, Secretariat work grew more hectic. "Secretaries, clerical staff and translators worked long hours and got very little sleep," adds McKay, who claims he was more a morale booster than an administrator. "They were extremely dedicated and their efforts often heroic."

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Conference in a Nutshell

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2. **Day-to-day preparations:** The Secretariat invites participants from around the world, and makes preliminary hotel, accommodation and transportation arrangements. It produces a guide book and Conference background material and works on the myriad fine details of the Conference program. Meanwhile, Communications Directorate invites international media and prepares media accreditation documents. A graphics firm is hired to produce an impressive co-ordinated "look" for the Conference. A striking poster and series of fact sheets are produced. CD produces many press kits, press releases, and backgrounders. They arrange media interviews and stage some press previews. In short, CD begins to tell the Conference story before the Conference begins. AES scientists are recruited as advisors and dozens of other volunteers are sought.

3. **During the Conference:** As June approaches, final conference preparations reach a crescendo. A whole range of hard working volunteers are recruited, some to "shepherd" the VIPs, others to brief the media on their areas of expertise, still others to take care of the myriad last minute conference details. (Please see list of categories below). The speeches, presentations, receptions and workshops are a success and Environment Canada, dealing with the more than 200 media at the Conference, feels convinced that the hundreds of articles and television programs produced succeed in raising the consciousness of a considerable part of the world's population regarding life threatening dangers to the atmosphere.



More AES employees at the World Conference; left to right: Jean-Guy Cantin, Lucie Vincent, Roger Street, Monique Loiselle, Real Gagnon.

Conference Achievements

General: In a strongly worded statement, participants agreed that changes in the earth's atmosphere represent a major threat to global security and are already causing damage in many places.

They further agreed that such damages will imperil human health and well-being, diminish global food supplies, disrupt fresh water supplies by altering rainfall patterns, increase the potential for international conflict, jeopardize prospects for sustainable development and increase the extinction of species as well as alterations in forest patterns.



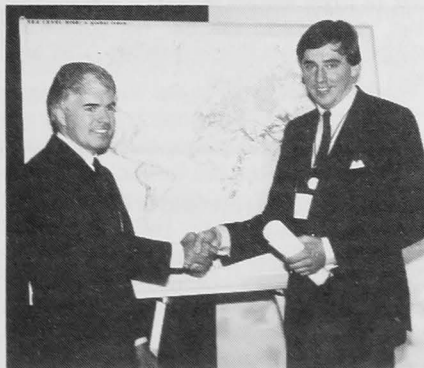
An informal group of AES workers and volunteers joined Environment minister Tom McMillan and ADMA Howard Ferguson on stage at the Metro Convention Centre Auditorium during a poster presentation ceremony. They are left to right: Jean-Guy Cantin, Gilles Tardif, Jeanette Carter, Blair Kuntz, Julie Young, Ed Millar, Barb Grogan, Una Ellis, Janie Hubert, Doug Russell, Jean de Gaust, Brenda O'Connor, Henry Hengeveld, minister Tom McMillan, Hans Teunissen, ADMA Howard Ferguson, Stewart Cohen, Al Godin, Theresa Hazaire, Nicole Sauve, Margaret Costea, Jean-Guy Cote, David Phillips, Heather Mackey, Andrew Budden, Darlene Lavigne, Joan Le Drew, Michael Peters, Marion Hurlburt, Gordon Black.

The Conference improved awareness of the issues and encouraged action NOW. It demonstrated a new willingness of governments and industry to work together with specialists from a broad range of disciplines and backgrounds.

Participants agreed to a strong agenda for action to avert the impending crisis. Challenging goals were set and nations were urged to develop strategies to meet them. Finally, global co-operation was called for since no one country can tackle problems in isolation.

General Recommendations: The Conference urged nations and institutions to work urgently towards an Action Plan for the Protection of the Atmosphere with an Atmosphere Fund financed partly by taxes on fossil fuel use in industrialized countries.

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This map of the world symbolizes the global aspect of Climate Change as Environment minister Tom McMillan shakes hands with E.H.T.M. Nijpels, minister of Public Housing, Physical Planning and Environment of the Netherlands.

Conference of Conferences

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The small group of people at AES Downsview helped turn this need for dialogue into a major communications campaign. The media campaign was launched almost a year in advance and intensified as the conference approached. The Communications Directorate, led by Brenda O'Connor, sent out hundreds of invitations to world media, organized press briefings, media interviews and photo opportunities. The resulting media coverage was overwhelming and generated large numbers of requests for information from both public and media.

The hard-working Downsview communications group received assistance from communications officers in two Environment Canada regions.

Conference spokesman and CO₂ specialist Henry Hengeveld said, "Media interest in the Conference, whetted by Western drought and Eastern heat waves, exceeded all expectations in terms of both intensive coverage and international scope."

A summary published by Kempton Kingsley, media analysts, said that during the time frame, 68% of all Canadian media reports on the environment focused on Conference proceedings. This meant some 600 references to the Conference in Canadian print and electronic media and a grand total of nearly 1,000 world wide.

The bustling Conference Media Centre saw journalists at work from the United States, England, France, West Germany, Japan, Philippines and Scandinavia and elsewhere. The Conference was covered by about 150 Canadians, from a huge range of publications and radio/TV public affairs programs.

Another indispensable AES group were the scientists who played a key role in identifying conference themes, from the greenhouse effect to transport of pollutants. They attended many planning meetings, using their expertise to suggest what to put on the program and whom to invite. Some AES scientists gave media briefings, Dr.

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Conference in a Nutshell

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More Specific Recommendations:

Greenhouse Effect; To reduce gases contributing to global warming, the Conference recommended that there should be: a 20% cut in CO₂ emissions by 2005 AD as a realistic beginning; virtual elimination of certain chlorofluorocarbons and reductions in other greenhouse gases; protection of temperate and tropical forests (since they absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere); finally that nuclear power could be used, provided it is made safe.

Protecting the Ozone Layer; Following the 1987 signing of the Montreal Protocol agreeing to reduce use of CFCs by 50% by 1999, the Conference recommended that the Protocol be quickly ratified by all concerned nations; that the most damaging CFCs be virtually eliminated; and that there be reductions in other ozone-destroying chemicals such as halons.

Acid Rain; The Conference urged vigorous application of existing technologies to reduce acid rain-causing pollutants.

Miscellaneous; A comprehensive Law of the Atmosphere ensuring global protection was urged; the Conference recommended that manufactured products should be labelled to help consumers identify and select items that minimize damage to the atmosphere; it was felt necessary to increase funding of research programs to fill gaps in scientific knowledge and further alternative developments like renewable energy. Finally, it was decided to increase funding for environmental education and public awareness campaigns, particularly in schools.

Lastly the policy people, planners and other major participants hold arduous meetings and hammer together the final Conference Statement.

AES Volunteers

The Conference planners, policy makers, Communications people and Secretariat worked for the longest period but as the Conference approached, more and more dedicated AES volunteers joined the fray. Here is a breakdown of just some of the areas from which volunteers were recruited:

Printing experts
Publications editors
Translators
Display people (Especially for the Ozone display)
Finance officers
Secretaries
Warehouse personnel
Scientific advisors
Telephone operators
Messengers
Clerks
Librarian
Electronics technicians



An Environment Canada team welcomes prime minister Brian Mulroney to the Conference, led by deputy minister Dr. Genevieve Sainte-Marie, seen shaking hands with the PM. Others in the picture, left to right: Pierre Martel, Howard Ferguson, Gord McKay and just visible over Mr. Mulroney's shoulder, Al Malinauskas.

Conference of Conferences

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Tom Brydges, an acid rain expert for DOE gave an address at two specially arranged public forums, held in the Metro Convention Centre Auditorium. Dr. Hans Martin's expertise in inter-governmental affairs was exploited fully and he also gave a breakfast talk to journalists on the Law of the Atmosphere. Dr. Alex Chisholm, director general of Atmospheric Research, and a veteran organizer of the International Ozone Agreement in Montreal last September, was a prime advisor on international protocols.

Howard Ferguson said "The major goals of the Conference were met or exceeded. We produced a strong and comprehensive consensus statement, with challenging policy recommendations to governments and international organizations. A strong call was made for initiating work on a global Law of the Atmosphere." The Conference was also an important vehicle for encouraging both north-south and east-west dialogue. An invisible achievement was the highly effective networking among countries, government, industry, Non-government Organizations, scientists, economists — all who have a stake in our future!

Partial list of outside agencies or Government Departments involved

Dept. of Energy Mines and Resources
Privy Council
Prime Minister's Office
Secretary of State
Justice Department
Agriculture Canada
External Affairs
Environment Minister's Office
National Research Council
United Nations Environmental Program
World Meteorological Organization
The Beijer Institute (Sweden)

Despite its overwhelming success, pre-conference problems included some unforeseen delays in getting invitations approved and sent to major delegates. Up until the last minute there were uncertainties about the participation of the two prime ministers due to other compelling engagements. (Mr. Mulroney was at one time believed to be about to call an election).

Almost at the last minute External Affairs warned the Conference Secretariat that the Metro Convention Centre might not, after all, be available due to the Economic Summit being held there only a week earlier.

At the end of the Conference a session chaired with wit and authority by Stephen Lewis ran overtime and threatened to cut short a panel discussion of the world's most influential environmental decision makers.

Mr. Lewis explained later that he had decided to give delegates from the floor as much say as possible in the final wording of the Statement to achieve a consensus.

Mr. McKay believes the Conference firmly put AES on the environmental map, making it far more than a world-class meteorological Service. It is now recognized for its contribution toward ensuring a better future for human kind.

With the Conference barely into its second day, Environment minister Tom McMillan was requested to join a group of about 40 AES "helpers" on the stage of the Auditorium for an informal souvenir photograph. Standing in front of the spectacular cloud backdrop, the minister suddenly stepped forward and made a short spontaneous speech. "If the Conference were to end right now, it would have all been enormously worth while", he declared euphorically, and he went on to say that the gathering's success was largely due to the efforts of the AES workers all around him.

Remarks such as these are typical of the esteem in which AES staff at all levels are now held ... thanks to their help in setting up and running the "Conference of Conferences".

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Delegates to the World Conference on the Changing Atmosphere attended an opening reception atop Toronto's CN Tower which dominates the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, scene of their deliberations.