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**REPORT TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS STANDING COMMITTEE
ON ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**ON THE
*FEDERAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACT***



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INTRODUCTION

On October 6, 2016, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change committed to return to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development (the Committee) within the year with a report on action taken in response to the Committee's second report, [*Federal Sustainability for Future Generations*](#) (the report).

The Government of Canada is pleased to report back to the Committee on the progress it has made in implementing the recommendations provided by the Committee.

The Government commends the members of the Committee, and the witnesses who appeared before it, for their insight and commitment toward addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with sustainable development within the federal government. The Government supports the positive approach and the constructive thoughts and ideas put forth by the Committee. The Government agreed with the Committee's premise that changes to the [*Federal Sustainable Development Act*](#) (the Act) are required. The Committee's work was instrumental in shaping the renewed federal approach to sustainable development presented in this report.

THE FEDERAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACT

The purpose of the Act, which came into force in 2008, is to provide the legal framework for developing and implementing a [*Federal Sustainable Development Strategy*](#) that will make environmental decision-making more transparent and accountable to Parliament.

The Act requires that, at least every three years, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change table a Federal Sustainable Development Strategy that includes goals, targets, an implementation strategy for each target, and a minister responsible for meeting each target. Three federal strategies have been tabled to date under the Act. The most recent, covering 2016–2019, was tabled on October 6, 2016.

The Act also requires departments named in Schedule I to the [*Financial Administration Act*](#) as well as agencies named in the Act's Schedule—a total of 26 departments and agencies—to prepare and update departmental sustainable development strategies that comply with and contribute to the federal strategy.

Each draft federal strategy must undergo a public consultation period of at least 120 days before it is finalized. As part of this consultation, the draft must be provided for review and comment by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Advisory Council established under the Act, the appropriate committee of each house of Parliament, and the public.

The Act requires the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to table a report on the progress of the federal government in implementing the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy at least every three years.

THE SECOND REPORT OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In the context of public consultations on the draft 2016–2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development conducted a review of the Act. The resulting unanimous report, [*Federal Sustainability for Future Generations*](#), was tabled on June 17, 2016. The report highlights ways in which changes to the Act—as well as other steps—would facilitate more effective strategies. It presents 13 recommendations, including:

- ◆ broadening the Act’s purpose to require a Federal Sustainable Development Strategy that leads Canada on a path towards sustainable development and contributes to the global Sustainable Development Goals, and to clarify that sustainable development encompasses and requires thorough consideration of economic, social and environmental factors;
- ◆ taking action to ensure a whole-of-government approach to federal sustainable development;
- ◆ incorporating a list of sustainable development principles into the Act;
- ◆ expanding the range of parliamentary committees receiving documents under the Act;
- ◆ determining which federal entities not currently obliged to prepare sustainable development strategies should be required to do so and facilitating changes to the Act’s Schedule;
- ◆ establishing sustainable development goals in the Act that take into account international commitments;
- ◆ ensuring that the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy includes short-, medium- and long-term targets that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).
- ◆ increasing the frequency of strategies and progress reports, requiring updates in response to new information and indications of insufficient progress, and clarifying section 12, which relates to performance-based contracts;
- ◆ simplifying Federal Sustainable Development Strategy progress reports;
- ◆ introducing additional measures to improve enforceability and accountability;
- ◆ establishing an advocate for future generations to improve the integration of their concerns in current decision-making processes;
- ◆ holding a public consultation on “The Canada We Want” to build and maintain an ongoing conversation with Canadians; and
- ◆ reporting back in one year.

In her response, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change recognized the positive contribution made by the report and agreed that amendments are needed to strengthen the Act and strategies developed under the Act. The Minister also stated that she is prepared to lead these efforts out of Environment and Climate Change Canada.

DEVELOPING THE 2016–2019 FEDERAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Committee's report was instrumental in guiding the development of the 2016–2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy. The strategy reflects the report's recommendations in six main ways.

First, it responds to the Committee's call for sustainable development goals that take into account Canada's international commitments by presenting thirteen long-term, aspirational goals that are a Canadian reflection of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Reflecting the Committee's comment that sustainable development goes beyond the environment, the strategy includes goals with strong social and economic dimensions, including Clean Growth, Clean Drinking Water, Sustainable Food, and Safe and Healthy Communities.

Second, it addresses the recommendation for strong targets and increased accountability by including more ambitious and measurable targets compared with the draft 2016–2019 strategy and past strategies. For example, it establishes a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from federal government operations by 40 percent by 2030—significantly more ambitious than the draft strategy's 30 percent reduction target. It also reflects the Government's commitment to address long-term drinking water advisories in First Nation communities, replacing a previous target that did not directly address drinking water safety or quality.

Third, reflecting the Committee's recommendation to include short, medium and long-term targets, the strategy includes new short-term milestones that complement its long-term goals and medium-term targets. These milestones will help the Government to gauge progress toward the strategy's goals and targets and, if necessary, to make course corrections during the strategy's three-year cycle.

Fourth, it responds to the Committee's recommendation for a suite of well-accepted sustainable development principles by providing a clear commitment to principles beyond the two set out in the Act (the precautionary principle and the basic principle that sustainable development is based on an ecologically efficient use of natural, social and economic resources). These principles include polluter pays, reconciliation, intergenerational equity, public participation, and integration.

Fifth, reflecting the Committee's recommendation for a whole-of-government approach, the 2016–2019 strategy provides broader participation across the federal government than ever before. Fifteen federal departments and agencies participate voluntarily in the strategy in addition to the 26 required to do so by the Act. This brings the total number of departments and agencies to 41—eight more than in 2013–2016.

Finally, the strategy includes key commitments for implementing and reporting on the strategy that address recommendations of the Committee. These include:

- ◆ a commitment to adopt a dashboard approach for future progress reports (directly implementing a recommendation of the Committee);
- ◆ a commitment to update the strategy on an ongoing basis to incorporate new decisions and actions (responding to the Committee's recommendation to issue strategies and progress reports more frequently and to make revisions in response to new information); and
- ◆ a commitment to maintain an ongoing conversation with Canadians beyond the public consultation period required by the Act (addressing the intent of a recommendation for a public consultation on The Canada We Want).

IMPLEMENTING THE 2016–2019 FEDERAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

With the 2016–2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy in place, the Government has continued to take the Committee’s recommendations into account in implementing the strategy.

Fulfilling a commitment in the 2016–2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, the Government has maintained an ongoing conversation with partners, Canadians and stakeholders since the strategy was tabled, including through an interactive website that continues to enable Canadians to provide their comments and ideas to Environment and Climate Change Canada.

The Government has continued to engage partners and stakeholders to share information about the strategy and learn about their sustainable development initiatives. The Government also continues to engage directly with Canadians by hosting webinars on sustainable development and the strategy. To date a number of webinars have been held. Webinar topics have included an overview of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, how the Government is measuring progress, and how Canada’s actions on sustainable development compare with those of other countries.

Updates to the strategy support this ongoing engagement. Initial updates, published online this spring, note that a number of the strategy’s short-term milestones have already been achieved. For example, the [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) has been adopted by First Ministers of the federal government and 11 provinces and territories, Canada has ratified the Paris Agreement, and Canada’s Mid-Century Long-Term Low-Greenhouse Gas Development Strategy has been released.

The updates also incorporate investments announced in [Budget 2017](#) that support the strategy’s goals and targets, including increased financing support for Canada’s clean technology sector; funding to support research, development, demonstration and adoption of clean technologies; measures to enhance collaboration and establish new ways of measuring success; and new broad-based innovation initiatives such as a \$1.26 billion five-year Strategic Innovation Fund.

Indicators are essential to measuring our progress in implementing the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, and the Government continues to build its suite of environmental and sustainable development indicators to enable Parliamentarians and Canadians to track implementation and results. By implementing a system of continuous updates to key indicators, the Government has in place the means to provide updates on progress on an ongoing basis.

Efforts by the new Centre for Greening Government within Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat—announced in November 2016—are solidifying the Government’s commitment to lead by example by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from federal government operations by 40 percent by 2030.

Finally, the Government is working to build a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to implementing the strategy and achieving sustainable development—for example, through a workshop held on March 23 and 24, 2017, involving approximately 30 federal departments and agencies. Among other objectives, the workshop sought to establish priorities and plans for implementing the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy over the next year.

A RENEWED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT APPROACH FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

The *Federal Sustainable Development Act* established the foundation for a sustainable development approach that provides an integrated picture of federal sustainable development priorities, actions, and results; effective measurement, monitoring, and reporting; and engagement of Canadians. Guided by the recommendations of the Committee, the Government is reforming its approach to build on these strengths. Proposed amendments to the Act, outlined in the next section, would support this renewal, along with commitments set out in the 2016–2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy.

Once fully implemented, a renewed sustainable development approach would provide improvements at every stage of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy process—from developing, consulting on and tabling the strategy, to implementing it, to reporting on results (see Figure 1). This would include strengthening the role of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in monitoring progress and holding the Government accountable for results.

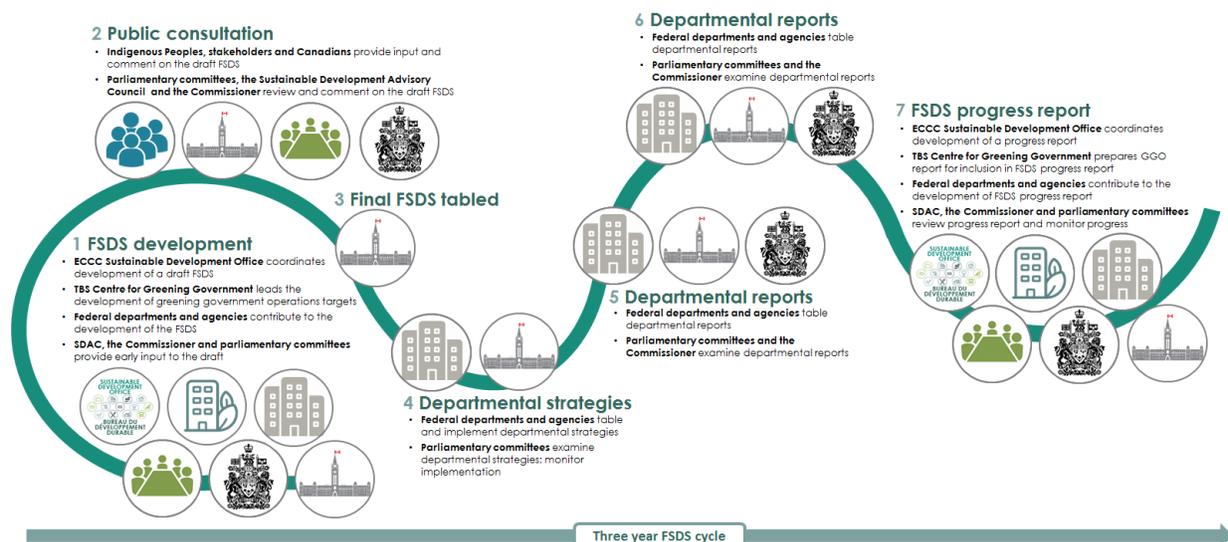


Figure 1: A renewed federal sustainable development approach

Developing and consulting on the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy

The Government proposes that the role of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development be elevated to ensure that the Committee—along with the appropriate committee of the Senate—has a clear responsibility for overseeing implementation of the Act. As part of this role, the Committee would have the opportunity to review and comment on each new Federal Sustainable Development Strategy before it is finalized.

Under a renewed sustainable development approach, Treasury Board Secretariat would work with Environment and Climate Change Canada and other departments and agencies to develop the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, with Treasury Board Secretariat leading the development of goals, targets and actions related to greening government operations—a major component of the strategy.

A revised purpose would guide the development of the strategy, clarifying that its role goes beyond transparency and accountability to include promoting coordinated action, advancing sustainable development, and improving Canadians' quality of life. It would also support a strategy that furthers Canada's international commitments to sustainable development. A suite of sustainable development principles—building on the two currently set out in the Act—would also inform the strategy's development.

Recognizing the importance of public consultation, the strategy would benefit from the participation of a more diverse and effective Sustainable Development Advisory Council, ensuring that Indigenous Peoples, youth, and stakeholders have an opportunity to provide input.

Implementing the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy

While the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy provides an overarching plan, implementing it and achieving results requires concrete action by federal departments and agencies. It is proposed that all departments and agencies within the core public administration work in a coordinated manner to implement the strategy. Departmental sustainable development strategies would set out the specific commitments of individual federal entities.

Fulfilling a commitment made in the 2016–2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, as the Government implements the strategy it will continue to engage Canadians on sustainable development and will update the strategy on an ongoing basis to ensure it remains relevant over its entire three-year cycle and to provide timely information on progress and results.

Reporting on results

Under a renewed approach, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development would play a central role in holding the Government accountable for sustainable development results. As departments and agencies implement departmental sustainable development strategies and contribute to the broader federal strategy, they would report annually to the Committee and to the appropriate committee of the Senate on their actions and results. This would enable parliamentarians to closely monitor the Government's sustainable development progress.

Complementing departmental reporting and ongoing updates on progress, the Government would continue to issue a whole-of-government Federal Sustainable Development Strategy progress report at least every three years, incorporating indicators as well as information on actions and results from across the federal government. These reports provide a clear and comprehensive picture of what was achieved over the entire Federal Sustainable Development Strategy cycle.

Along with Environment and Climate Change Canada, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat will play a lead role by ensuring that information on progress in reducing the federal government's environmental footprint can be included in the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy progress report. As the Government committed in the current strategy, future progress reports will be developed using a simple dashboard approach.

AMENDING THE FEDERAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACT

While the Government has made progress toward a renewed federal sustainable development approach under the current Act, it is clear that amendments are needed in order to realize this progress. Accordingly, the Government is introducing into legislation measures to modernize the Act, incorporate the Government's strong focus on results into legislation, promote close collaboration and coordinated action across government, set a higher bar for transparency, and promote a constructive dialogue with Indigenous Peoples and Canadians.

This renewed approach is aimed at addressing all of the Committee's recommendations, found in the Annex of this report, as follows.

Recommendation 1

The Government recognizes that the Act's current purpose is limited. Given its exclusive focus on transparency and accountability of environmental decision-making, it does not fully reflect the role and potential of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy.

As a result, and in response to the Committee's recommendation, a revised purpose is proposed to clarify that the role of the Act and the strategy go beyond making environmental decision-making more transparent and accountable to Parliament. While retaining transparency and accountability as important objectives of the Act, a revised purpose would also include promoting coordinated action, advancing sustainable development, and improving Canadians' quality of life.

Addressing the intent of the Committee's recommendation to embed goals in the Act that take into account Canada's international commitments to sustainable development (Recommendation 6), revising the purpose would include specifying that the Act respects Canada's domestic and international commitments such as the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

Recommendation 2

Recognizing that sustainable development is a shared responsibility across government, the Government proposes to support a whole-of-government approach and set a higher bar for transparency.

To enable a whole-of-government approach, it is proposed that the Act be applied to all federal departments and agencies within the core public administration (Schedules I, I.1 and II to the [Financial Administration Act](#)), and additional selected agencies. This would significantly increase the reach of the Act by going from 26 to more than 90 departments and agencies, extending its requirements to federal institutions that are not currently covered but have a significant environmental footprint—for example, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

As well, this would be accomplished by building on departmental responsibilities currently set out in the Act. To strengthen the role of the Committee and support enhanced parliamentary oversight of the Act and strategies, federal organizations would be required to report annually to the Committee and the appropriate committee of the Senate on actions and results. A formal requirement would also be set for federal entities to contribute to the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy.

Measures are proposed to formalize the role of the Treasury Board Secretariat in developing policies related to reducing the environmental footprint of federal government operations, and to ensure

that federal entities bound by the Act take these policies into account in preparing their departmental sustainable development strategies. Implementing these proposed measures would build on the creation of the Centre for Greening Government within Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat in November 2016, establishing a key role for that central agency in leading greening government operations efforts.

Recommendation 3

Regarding this recommendation, a list of well-accepted sustainable development principles is proposed to complement the Act's two existing principles. Additional principles include the following.

- ◆ The principle of **intergenerational equity**, implicit in the definition of sustainable development, which is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This core principle is reflected in all major international agreements related to sustainable development.
- ◆ The principle of **openness and transparency**, which serves to maximize the release of information to support accountability and citizen engagement. This principle aligns with the Act's requirement for the Government to consult with Canadians on the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy as well as the Government's commitment to continue the conversation beyond the required public consultation period. It also reflects the importance of the Act and strategy in ensuring that Parliamentarians and Canadians can track the Government's progress on advancing sustainable development.
- ◆ The principle that **it is important to involve Indigenous Peoples** because of their traditional knowledge and their unique understanding of, and connection to, Canada's lands and waters. The Government is committed to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership. The Act supports this relationship through provisions for consultation on the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy and by ensuring representation of Indigenous Peoples on the Sustainable Development Advisory Council chaired by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.
- ◆ The principle of **collaboration**, which is the collaboration between stakeholders in the pursuit of common objectives. Putting this principle into action will ensure that federal entities work together in a coordinated way to achieve shared sustainable development goals.
- ◆ The principle that **a results and delivery approach is key** to achieving measureable objectives. The government has committed to achieve real results for Canadians. The current Act supports this commitment through a requirement for measurable sustainable development targets. Additional guidance for developing sustainable development targets, as well as clear accountabilities for federal organizations, including a proposed requirement to report annually to parliamentary committees, would strengthen the results and delivery focus.
- ◆ The **polluter-pays principle**, which recognizes that users and producers of pollutants and wastes should bear the responsibility for their actions. Measures to implement the 2016–2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy support this principle—for example, the approach to protecting coasts and oceans outlined in the strategy includes holding polluters accountable for any spill to the marine environment. Incorporating it into the Act would help to ensure it continues to be reflected in future strategies.

- ◆ The **principle that the value of goods and services must reflect all the costs they generate for society** during their whole life cycle, from their design to their final consumption and their disposal. This principle of internalization of costs is fundamental to sustainable development and will inform the development and implementation of sustainable development strategies.

Along with the proposed revised purpose for the Act, an expanded suite of principles would provide clear guidance to federal entities in preparing, implementing and reporting on sustainable development strategies.

Recommendation 4

Parliamentary oversight is critical to implementation of the Act. The Government proposes to enhance this oversight by clarifying that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, along with the appropriate committee of the Senate, has responsibility for monitoring implementation.

It is proposed that the Committee's role be elevated by requiring federal organizations to report to the Committee each year on their progress in helping to achieve Federal Sustainable Development Strategy targets. As a result, the Committee would play a central role in holding the Government accountable for sustainable development results.

Recommendation 5

The Government agrees with the Committee that the Act's requirements should apply to additional federal entities. Over successive strategies, an increasing number of departments, agencies and Crown corporations have begun to participate voluntarily in the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (15 in the current strategy, up from seven in the previous strategy), further emphasizing that many organizations across the federal government have a role to play in advancing sustainable development.

Recognizing the need to increase the reach of the Act and strategy, it is proposed that a whole-of-government approach be enabled by applying the Act to all departments and agencies in the core public administration (Schedules I, I.1 and II to the [Financial Administration Act](#)), and additional selected agencies such as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the National Research Council.

This would increase the number of federal institutions required to contribute to the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy from 26 to more than 90, and would include federal entities that are not currently covered but have a significant environmental footprint, such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Also proposed is the ability to add or remove entities from the Act's application.

Recommendation 6

The Government recognizes the importance of working with the international community to advance sustainable development—for example, by supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Accordingly, the 2016–2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy includes 13 aspirational goals that are a reflection of the global Sustainable Development Goals and highlights key international agreements that guide Government action, including the Paris Agreement, the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

To ensure the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy continues to take into account Canada’s international sustainable development commitments while retaining flexibility to respond to new priorities, and to address the intent of the Committee’s recommendation, a revised purpose is proposed to specify that the Act respects Canada’s domestic and international commitments such as the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To ensure that future strategies include strong sustainable development goals, it is proposed that the Act include additional guidance on the content of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, specifying that goals must be aspirational, long-term, focused, and clear.

The Government of Canada has committed to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and will consider ways to ensure our sustainable development commitments are met.

Recommendation 7

Putting in place measurable targets was a priority for the Government in developing the 2016–2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, resulting in stronger and more ambitious targets than were presented in the consultation draft or in previous strategies.

To support further improvement, a renewed approach would build on the current requirement to include targets (defined as “measurable objective[s]”) in the strategy by incorporating a principle on results and delivery into the Act, and by providing additional guidance on the content of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy to specify that targets must be measurable and time-bound.

Recommendation 8

Measures are being proposed to significantly strengthen accountability for sustainable development. Notably, the role of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development would be elevated by requiring departments and agencies to report annually to the Committee on results. The Government also proposes to build on departmental responsibilities currently set out in the Act by explicitly requiring departments and agencies to contribute to the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy.

The Government has committed to update the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy on an ongoing basis to incorporate new decisions and actions. Initial updates were published this spring through the [interactive Federal Sustainable Development Strategy website](#), incorporating key decisions since October 2016—including announcements made in [Budget 2017](#)—and providing an early indication of results on short-term milestones.

To resolve current confusion in relation to Section 12 of the Act, which relates to performance-based contracts, the Government proposes to repeal this section in favour of other mechanisms for ensuring accountability.

Recommendation 9

The Government has committed to implementing the Committee’s recommendation by adopting a dashboard approach to future Federal Sustainable Development Strategy progress reports, including the next progress report prepared for the 2016–2019 strategy.

Recommendation 10

Accountability and enforceability are critical to effective implementation of sustainable development across government.

As already described, measures are being proposed to strengthen them, including requiring departments and agencies to contribute to the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, codifying the current practice of annual departmental reporting, and requiring that reports be provided to parliamentary committees.

As the Committee recommended, the Government has consulted with the office of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development in developing these proposed measures.

The Government also reaffirms its commitment to the [Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals](#).

Recommendation 11

Intergenerational equity is at the core of sustainable development; the definition of sustainable development set out in the Act, development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, reflects this principle.

Building on this definition, it is proposed that the principle of intergenerational equity be incorporated into the Act. The Sustainable Development Advisory Council would also be made more representative by requiring that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change seek to reflect diversity—including youth representation—and inclusiveness when appointing members of the Sustainable Development Advisory Council.

The Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development helps to support intergenerational equity. The role of the Commissioner, as currently set out in the [Auditor General Act](#), includes consideration of the needs of future generations. To address the intent of the Committee's recommendation, the Government is considering options to better reflect and reinforce this aspect of the Commissioner's mandate.

Beyond the [Federal Sustainable Development Act](#) and strategy, the Government is engaging youth through the Prime Minister's Youth Council, which includes 26 members aged 16 to 24. The Youth Council provides non-partisan advice to the Prime Minister on national issues, including issues related to sustainable development such as climate change, clean growth, and building stronger communities.

Recommendation 12

The Government proposes to build on this through measures to make the Sustainable Development Advisory Council more representative and effective, including by requiring the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to reflect diversity and inclusiveness when appointing Council members by taking into account demographic considerations such as Indigenous Peoples, youth, and gender; by removing a restriction on remunerating and reimbursing Council members to facilitate more effective engagement; and by clarifying that the Council's role includes providing advice on matters related to sustainable development.

Input from Indigenous Peoples, stakeholders and Canadians—including the Sustainable Development Advisory Council established pursuant to the Act—have significantly strengthened

the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy and supported improvements over successive strategies.

Continuing to fulfill the Government's commitment to continue its public engagement efforts beyond the public consultation period required by the Act will also support an ongoing conversation with Canadians on sustainable development. The Government's engagement approach includes continuing to gather feedback from Canadians through the [interactive Federal Sustainable Development Strategy website](#), engaging key stakeholders, and engaging directly with Canadians through webinars.

Recommendation 13

This report implements the Committee's recommendation—and the Government's commitment—to report back to the Committee on progress in implementing all of the recommendations contained in the Committee's second report.

CONCLUSION

The second report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development had a significant influence on the development of the 2016–2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy and continues to inform the strategy's implementation.

The Government has made progress under the current Act, tabling a strategy that is more aspirational, more measurable, and more inclusive of federal departments and agencies, Indigenous Peoples, stakeholders, and Canadians than past strategies. The 2016–2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy reflects recommendations of the Committee in its principles, goals, targets, milestones, coverage of departments and agencies, and commitments for implementation and reporting.

But more remains to be done. In responding to recommendations presented in the Committee's second report, the Government has an opportunity to modernize the Act and build on its strengths. Accordingly, the Government is proposing measures to amend the [Federal Sustainable Development Act](#) that would support a renewed federal sustainable development approach. This includes provisions to modernize the Act and address the intent of all of the Committee's recommendations.

ANNEX: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation 1 – The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada introduce amendments to the purpose provision of the *Federal Sustainable Development Act*. The new purpose should be to require the Government to develop a strategy to lead Canada on a path towards sustainable development and contribute to meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The purpose should clarify that sustainable development encompasses and requires thorough consideration of economic, social and environmental factors.

Recommendation 2 – The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada introduce amendments to the *Federal Sustainable Development Act* to enable a whole-of-government approach and comprehensive engagement of all central government agencies in the development and implementation of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy and in championing federal sustainable development government-wide.

Recommendation 3 – The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada introduce amendments to the *Federal Sustainable Development Act* to add a list of well-accepted sustainable development principles on which to base the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, as well as departmental sustainable development strategies.

Recommendation 4 – The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada introduce amendments to the *Federal Sustainable Development Act*, as appropriate, to provide:

- ◆ that the draft of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy be submitted to all appropriate committees of each House of Parliament for review and comment;
- ◆ that a Federal Sustainable Development Strategy that is tabled in a House of Parliament is deemed to be referred to all relevant committees of that House;
- ◆ that a report on the progress of the federal government in implementing the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy that is tabled in a House of Parliament is deemed to be referred to all relevant committees of that House; and
- ◆ that a report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development relating to the Government's progress report, as well as the Commissioner's reports relating to departmental sustainable development strategies, be referred to all relevant parliamentary committees.

Recommendation 5 – The Committee recommends that the central agencies of the Government of Canada that may be assigned responsibility for federal sustainable development undertake a review process to determine which federal entities that are not currently obliged to prepare a departmental sustainable development strategy should be required to do so. The Government should introduce any amendments to the *Federal Sustainable Development Act* necessary to facilitate the process of amending the Schedule of the Act.

Recommendation 6 – The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada introduce amendments to add to the *Federal Sustainable Development Act* specific federal sustainable development goals that take into account Canada's international commitments to sustainable development, including those made under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement.

Recommendation 7 – The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada introduce amendments to the *Federal Sustainable Development Act* to specify that the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy must include short-, medium- and long-term targets that meet the SMART criteria (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound).

Recommendation 8 – The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada introduce amendments to the *Federal Sustainable Development Act*:

- ♦ to establish a new two-year, staggered time frame for developing a new Federal Sustainable Development Strategy and for producing the report on the Government’s progress in implementing the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy;
- ♦ to require the Government to revise the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy to respond to indications of insufficient progress or new information; and
- ♦ to clarify that section 12, which relates to performance-based contracts, applies in respect of all targets in the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy relevant to a specific department, agency or other federal entity.

Recommendation 9 – The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada adopt a concise and simple format for its biennial report on the progress of the federal government in implementing the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, including performance metrics and a plain-language scorecard.

Recommendation 10 – The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada develop additional measures for improving enforceability and accountability in support of meeting the sustainable development targets. In developing these measures, the Government should seek the advice of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development.

Recommendation 11 – The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada establish an advocate for Canada’s future generations. In developing the mandate of the advocate, the Government should be informed by the mandates of similar entities established in other jurisdictions as well as international best practices in promoting intergenerational equity.

Recommendation 12 – The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada undertake a public consultation on “The Canada We Want” in order to build and maintain an ongoing conversation with Canadians towards the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Recommendation 13 – The Committee requests that, one year following the tabling of its comprehensive response to this report, the Government report back to the Committee on its progress in implementing all of the recommendations contained in this report.