

## The Montreal Process

The final theme in this module looks at the development of an international agreement called the Montreal Process (<http://www.montrealprocess.org/>). The agreement concerns the sustainable management of forests in a range of temperate boreal countries, specifically: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Russian Federation, USA and Uruguay. The forests in these 12 countries represent 90% of the world's temperate and boreal forests and 60% of the world's forests.

The meeting in Montreal was a direct consequence of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, popularly known as the "Earth Summit" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth\\_Summit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth_Summit)), held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. This major conference reached a number of important agreements, including the Framework Convention on Climate Change ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate\\_Change\\_Convention](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_Change_Convention)), the Convention on Biological Diversity ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention\\_on\\_Biological\\_Diversity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention_on_Biological_Diversity)), and Agenda 21 ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agenda\\_21](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agenda_21)). Discussions about forests were particularly protracted, and eventually led to the production of a document called the *Non-Legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests*, otherwise known as the Forest Principles ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest\\_Principles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest_Principles)). This document described in very broad terms the principles by which forests should be managed.

The Montreal Process got its name because it originated in a meeting in Montreal in September/October 1993 organized by the CSCE Seminar of Experts on Sustainable Development of Temperate and Boreal Forests. At this meeting, the concept of developing criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management was discussed, using the ITTO documents as an example. Another very influential document at the meeting was the US Forest Service report: *Ecosystem Management: Principles and Applications*. This report was one of the outcomes of the Eastside forest ecosystem health assessment, published by the US Forest Service in 1994. A draft of the chapter (*An Overview of Ecological Principles for Ecosystem Management*) by P. Bourgeron and M.E. Jensen, who were both at the meeting, was available and was used heavily in the formulation of the meeting documents.

The meeting divided into two main parts, one looking at the physical and biological aspects of forest management, and other dealing with the socio-economic and cultural aspects. By the end of the meeting, criteria and indicators for the physical and biological aspects had been hammered out, but the socio-economic group failed to reach any level of significant agreement. This problem has persisted throughout the history of the Montreal Process and to this day the criteria and indicators for the socio-economic and cultural aspects of forest management remain very unsatisfactory.

After the Montreal meeting, a formal process was set up, and a group of negotiators began the task of drawing up a list of criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management. This list, which drew heavily on the work of the 1993 meeting, was finalized quite quickly and was published in 1995 in the form of the Santiago Declaration ([http://www.montrealprocess.org/documents/publications/techreports/1995santiago\\_e.pdf](http://www.montrealprocess.org/documents/publications/techreports/1995santiago_e.pdf)). Since then the Working Group has continued to meet, and the criteria and indicators have continued to evolve.

The most recent edition of the criteria and indicators is available in the resources section for Module 1, Topic 4, or online at [http://www.montrealprocess.org/documents/publications/general/2009p\\_4.pdf](http://www.montrealprocess.org/documents/publications/general/2009p_4.pdf). It forms the basis of this course. It identifies seven criteria:

- Conservation of biological diversity
- Maintenance of productive capacity of forest ecosystems
- Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality
- Conservation and maintenance of soil and water resources
- Maintenance of forest contribution to global carbon cycles
- Maintenance and enhancement of long-term multiple socio-economic benefits
- Legal, institutional and economic framework for forest conservation and sustainable management.

Around the world, similar processes were occurring at the same time as ITTO and the Montreal Process were developing their criteria and indicators. A vast number of indicators have been proposed, and many of these have been listed at the following website: <http://www.sfmindicators.org> (a Chinese version is available at <http://www.sfmindicators.cn>). This website was initially set up to enable new indicators to be added, but following abuse of this, it is now a read-only site.