

Canadian Roundtable on the Green Economy

Nearly 200 Business People and Environmentalists From All Over Canada Reach Important Consensus

Québec City, Monday, April 13, 2015 – Nearly 200 decision-makers from Canada's various economic, financial, non-profit and environmental sectors gathered in Québec City today to discuss key actions to be taken to accelerate the country's shift towards a green economy. The aim of this unusual meeting between business people and environmentalists was to discuss issues of shared concern. Participants agreed on the importance of carbon pricing and of promoting sustainable and innovative urban development. The event was also an opportunity to recognize the Government of Ontario for its decision to set a price on carbon by joining the Québec-California carbon market.

In the months leading up to the Paris Conference, which is expected to usher in a new climate change agreement that will require contributions from everyone, Canadian organizations and businesses need to step it into high gear. "It's clear that many within civil society and industry across Canada are ready to do their part, and that they see the transition to a green economy as an opportunity to create wealth while also protecting the planet. There's momentum in favour of accelerating the transition to a green economy, which is clearly seen in the Government of Ontario's decision to adopt carbon pricing. Canada is ready to take action. Today's discussions are proof of that," said one of the Roundtable's co-chair Sophie Brochu, President and CEO of Gaz Métro,

"We are seeing unprecedented mobilization around climate and environmental issues. The global shift towards a green economy is gaining momentum. The historic climate march that brought together over 300,000 people in New York last fall, the hundreds of billions of dollars invested in renewable energy in recent years, and the call for carbon pricing by 73 countries and 1,000 businesses are all clear signs that there is strong support for more sustainable and less environmentally damaging modes of production. The interest in the Canadian Roundtable on the Green Economy is yet another demonstration of that," said Ed Whittingham, Executive Director of the Pembina Institute and the Roundtable's other co-chair.

Canada's major environmental and business leaders gathered in attendance

The Roundtable was a sign of a welcome agreement of perspectives between environmental and business leaders, bringing together the heads of many large organizations, including the Canadian Wind Energy Association, the David Suzuki Foundation, the Aluminum Association of Canada, Greenpeace Canada, the



Canadian Solar Industries Association, the Pembina Institute, Sustainable Prosperity, Canada's Ecofiscal Commission, RECYC-QUÉBEC, Fondation CSN, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Equiterre, the Regroupement national des conseils régionaux de l'environnement du Québec (RNCREQ), Gaz Métro, Climate Action Network Canada, the Conseil du patronat du Québec, Réseau Environnement, the Association québécoise pour la maîtrise de l'énergie, the Canadian Hydropower Association, the Quebec Business Council on the Environment, Ecotech Québec, Vivre en Ville, Clean Energy Canada, Cascades and the International Emissions Trading Association.

Also in attendance were ministers of environment responsible for climate change Randy Delorey of Nova Scotia, Glenn Murray of Ontario and David Heurtel of Quebec, as well as the Quebec Minister of Finance, economist Carlos Leitão.

Carbon pricing and encouraging cities' green innovations

Participants quickly agreed on the importance of carbon pricing, in the form of a carbon tax like in British Columbia, or in the form of a carbon market like in Quebec and California. "There is growing interest from businesses and governments in carbon pricing. The Government of Ontario's decision to join the Western Climate Initiative is good news and will certainly lead the way for other provinces to do the same. This is more tangible proof of the momentum we're seeing across the country," said Steven Guilbeault, host of the panel on carbon pricing.

Discussions also addressed the importance of cities' roles in making the transition to a greener economy. "Cities are at the heart of this transformation. They are major contract givers, and they can quickly react to any issues that greatly affect our ability to build a low-carbon economy, such as transportation and land-use planning," said the host of the panel on innovation as a driver of urban development Jean Simard, President and CEO of the Aluminum Association Canada and a Steering Committee member at SWITCH, the Alliance for a Green Economy in Quebec.

Canada can lead the transition to a green economy

"With a wealth of renewable resources, tens of thousands of jobs created to date in the clean energy sector and the recent implementation of major joint initiatives promoting green taxation and the reconciliation of environmental protection with economic prosperity, Canada is uniquely poised to become a leader in the transition to a green economy," said the two co-chairs of the 2015 Canadian Roundtable on the Green Economy.

The Canadian Roundtable on the Green Economy – Québec City 2015 is an initiative by SWITCH, the Alliance for a Green Economy in Quebec. It receives financial support from Clean Energy Canada, the lead partner of the event, as well as from the Quebec government's Green Fund, the Aluminium Association of Canada, the David Suzuki

Foundation, Sustainable Prosperity, TD Bank Group, Fondation, Deloitte, SNC-Lavalin, Gaz Métro, Écotech Québec and Cycle Capital Management.

About SWITCH

SWITCH, the Alliance for a Green Economy in Quebec, hopes to accelerate the shift towards a green economy in order to build an innovative, resilient and economically competitive society that balances social equality, the environment and quality of life. The Alliance works towards clear social, political and economic vision and leadership, greater consistency in government policies and actions, and the convergence of initiatives for a green economy in the public, private, cooperative/mutual, non-profit and civil society sectors.

The Alliance brings together organizations from different economic, financial, non-profit and environmental sectors: Cycle Capital Management, the David Suzuki Foundation, Écotech Québec (Quebec's Cleantech Cluster), Équiterre and the Aluminium Association of Canada. It also collaborates with a number of partners that make up its advisory committee: Desjardins Group, Enerkem, Innergex, WWF, the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), Gaz Métro, the Conseil du patronat du Québec (CPQ) and the Regroupement national des conseils régionaux de l'environnement du Québec (RNCREQ). For more information: www.allianceswitch.ca.

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