



JPAC RESOLUTION OF ADVICE TO COUNCIL No. 97-02

Views regarding CEC Public Consultations

According to Article 16 of the NAAEC and to the Vision Statement of JPAC signed in Washington on 26 July 1994, the three fundamental responsibilities of JPAC are to act as a CEC public liaison mechanism, advise the Council and provide technical and scientific information to the Secretariat.

The Council has requested that JPAC explore various public liaison mechanisms, of which the public consultations are the most relevant. This responsibility is set forth clearly in the Vision Statement of JPAC:

Our vision is to promote continental cooperation in ecosystem protection and sustainable economic development, and **to ensure active public participation** and transparency in the actions of the full Commission.

During the initial three years of the CEC, JPAC, with the support of the Secretariat and at the Council's request, organized and held a number of public consultations on subjects of interest to the CEC.

Based on this experience, JPAC hereby wishes to assess the situation as regards the public consultations held by the Committee and to advise the Council on future directions.

It should be acknowledged that JPAC, at the Council's request, has played a central role in creating links between the North American public and the CEC, and that public consultations have served as an important tool to this effect. The JPAC accepted this responsibility enthusiastically, including the duty to advise the Council on any issue covered by NAAEC as stipulated in paragraph 16 (4) of NAAEC. Nevertheless, JPAC has not had the opportunity to exercise its full role as set forth in paragraph 16 (5) of NAAEC, which stipulates that JPAC may provide the Secretariat with all relevant scientific or other information, particularly for establishing a factual record under Article 15.

We believe that the public consultation process is well underway and that it constitutes an essential component of the CEC's functions of communicating with and informing the public. The JPAC wishes to continue to participate in the public consultations.

In view of the foregoing, JPAC recommends to the Council that:

1. public consultations be more integrated into the CEC's programs and that additional efforts be made to ensure wider distribution of information on the CEC's role;
2. that JPAC continue to provide Council with proposals for the themes to be discussed during the public consultations and that these themes be concerned with subjects related to the CEC's work program;
3. that the CEC continue to promote public participation in general and, more specifically, participation by organizations with a local mission, particularly by continuing to offer financial assistance to individuals and nongovernmental organizations;
4. that public consultations be spread throughout the year rather than concentrated in a short period, with procedures and adequate time for JPAC to report to the Council on such consultations;
5. that the national advisory committees be invited to participate in the public consultations and that they be given a specific role;
6. that, at the same time, JPAC give its advice to the Council on all questions covered by NAAEC, including the strategic planning related to the CEC's work program, and provide the Secretariat with information that is relevant to the work of the CEC.

APPROVED BY THE MEMBERS OF JPAC

11 December 1997