



# CEC Council Communiqué

**Guadalajara, Mexico, 29 June 2001**—We, the environment ministers of Canada, Mexico and the United States, members of the Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC or "the Commission"), have met for our annual regular session on 28 and 29 June 2001 in Guadalajara, Mexico. We have reviewed the program activities of the Commission and received input and advice from the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC), members of our national advisory bodies and the public.

This is the first session of the Council since our heads of government met in Quebec City in April for the Summit of the Americas and issued the North American Leaders' Statement (22 April 2001). Our discussions in Guadalajara have taken into consideration their vision of working to deepen a sense of community, promote our mutual economic interest, ensure that the North American Free Trade Agreement's (NAFTA) benefits extend to all regions and social sectors, develop and expand hemispheric and global trade, and promote broader trilateral and international cooperation.

Through our discussion, new directions for the work of the CEC over the coming years have emerged that build on the strengths of the existing work program and incorporate additional initiatives in areas such as water and hazardous wastes. To optimize the Commission's effectiveness in promoting protection, conservation and sustainable use of the environment, we have established a framework that will emphasize:

- gathering, compiling, and sharing **high-quality environmental information**,
- promoting the use of **market-based approaches**,
- **cooperating regionally** in the implementation of **global commitments**,
- **building capacity** for stronger environmental partnerships,
- **strengthening strategic linkages to improve sustainability**, and
- promoting **public participation** in the CEC's work.

## **Environmental Information**

Timely and accurate environmental information is essential for rational decision making and the development of sound environmental policies. Strengthening our capacity to acquire and share knowledge among all sectors of society is fundamental to the ability of citizens to take informed action.

In this context, we will undertake the following new initiatives:

- incorporate the core set of environmental indicators of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in the CEC's periodic reports on the state of the North American environment, to assess environmental outcomes and track progress in relation to environmental goals,

- address the information gaps existing in the region and the effective use of information technologies, especially in the priority areas established by the Council,
- regarding Mexico's decision to seek legislation to establish a mandatory reporting system for pollutant releases and transfers, support Mexico through capacity building,
- develop a North American inventory of air emissions, as elaborated in Council Resolution 01-05, and
- continuously improve the quality, usefulness and accessibility of environmental information made available to the public, and recommend that JPAC participate in this effort.

### **Market-based Approaches**

The Commission recognizes that long-term success in protecting and conserving the environment will depend on our ability to foster innovation and develop creative solutions that address our shared environmental objectives in parallel with our economic and social objectives.

In this light, we will undertake the following initiatives:

- analyze issues relating to local water pricing and watershed management, and promote accessible, affordable technologies for improving water management,
- assess how the market-based approaches identified in the OECD Sustainable Development report are currently used in the North American context and could be further developed;
- building on the experience with shade-grown coffee, develop options for certification and labeling regimes,
- while the CEC is not the forum for negotiating climate change, the Council asks the Secretariat to explore further opportunities for market-based approaches for carbon sequestration, energy efficiency and renewable energy in North America.

### **Regional Cooperation for the Implementation of Global Agreements**

Building on the Commission's progress in addressing issues of global concern, we agree to:

- continue work through the Sound Management of Chemicals (SMOC) program in support of our implementation of the recently signed Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, which we wish to bring into force rapidly, and
- initiate the development of a North American approach to the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes, recognizing the serious environmental and human health consequences of improper tracking and disposal.

### **Capacity Building**

A crucial component of our ability to make progress together on a variety of environmental issues is the presence of relevant capacity in each of the three countries. We:

- agree to place greater emphasis on capacity building in all aspects of the CEC's work, and have asked the Secretariat to explore opportunities for leveraging funds from multilateral agencies and other sources, and
- requested more information on the Plan Puebla-Panama, and direct the Secretariat to assess the role the CEC might play in this program, including possible collaboration with the IDB and other institutions.

## **Building Partnerships and Strategic Linkages**

Advancing environmental goals demands collaboration across sectors and building relationships with key partners. In this regard, we have identified the following initiatives:

- Consistent with NAAEC Article 10(6), we will explore with our trade counterparts the possibility of convening a joint meeting between the CEC and the North American Free Trade Commission, aiming for 2003. As a first step, we instruct our senior officials to work with their counterparts on an agenda and outcomes for our consideration.
- With regard to our continuing work on Children's Health and the Environment, we have established terms of reference for the expert advisory group, as described in Council Resolution 01-04. We welcome Mexico's initiative to adopt a national policy on health and environment. In addition, we have agreed to ask the Secretariat to explore expansion of this work to include other vulnerable segments of the population and to explore how it can assist the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO)/United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) hemispheric initiative on this issue.
- Our continuing studies of the environmental dimensions of freight traffic in North America will focus on the reduction of vehicle emissions through improved management practices, technologies and infrastructure.
- We acknowledge the Secretariat's continuing effort to examine the opportunities and challenges of the evolving North American electricity market, and look forward to the upcoming symposium and final report.
- We have created the Biodiversity Conservation Working Group as described in Council Resolution 01-03, and look forward to the completion and implementation of the CEC Conservation of Biodiversity program's Strategic Plan for North America.
- We support the work that is being done within the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) and are looking forward to a progress report next year.
- We will promote the use of the CEC guidance document on environmental management systems by small and medium-size enterprises and explore mutual recognition of programs to improve industry performance. In addition, we will promote closer collaboration with the private sector to facilitate the development and diffusion of environmental management principles and best practices among industry in North America. We also encourage industry to promote capacity building regarding pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs) through joint training among reporting companies.
- With respect to transboundary environmental impact assessment, an informal, productive process is continuing.
- We encourage the CEC to strengthen its relationship with the private sector.

- We encourage the Secretariat to explore mechanisms, within the NAAEC framework, for long-term financing in order to undertake projects approved by Council.

### **Public Participation**

We recognize the valuable contribution the public makes to the CEC's activities and are committed to strengthening public participation in all aspects of the CEC's work.

We appreciate the valuable role that the JPAC has played since the last Council Session in reviewing the Articles 14 and 15 submission process and engaging the public with respect to the development of its recommendations on the submission process. We are pleased with JPAC's 'lessons learned' report. As outlined in Council Resolution 01-06 on this report, we have agreed to take action on many of JPAC's recommendations. Other recommendations will require further consideration.

Mexico announced its decision to withdraw its confidentiality claim with respect to its reply to the citizen submission regarding *Metales y Derivados*. The Council agreed to request the Secretariat to provide a summary of confidentiality regulations in Canada, the United States and other countries, with a view to providing Mexico with examples in this area.

### **CEC Budget and Next Meeting of Council**

The Parties will continue to support the CEC at the level of US\$9 million for the year 2002. We will meet in Mont Tremblant, Canada, for the next Regular Session of Council in June 2002.

*The CEC was established by Canada, Mexico and the United States to build cooperation among the NAFTA partners in implementing the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC), the environmental side accord to NAFTA. The CEC addresses environmental issues of continental concern, with particular attention to the environmental challenges and opportunities presented by continent-wide free trade. The Council, the CEC's governing body, is composed of the federal environment ministers (or equivalent) of the three countries, and meets at least once a year. Attending this eighth session of Council were Karen Redman, Parliamentary Secretary to, and on behalf of, Canadian Environment Minister David Anderson, Mexican Secretary for the Environment and Natural Resources Victor Lichtinger, and US Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Governor Christine Todd Whitman. The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) is a 15-member, independent, volunteer body that provides advice and public input to Council on any matter within the scope of NAAEC.*

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