



Commission for Environmental Cooperation of North America

Comisión para la Cooperación Ambiental de América del Norte

Commission de coopération environnementale de l'Amérique du Nord

Final Communiqué

Ninth Regular Session of the CEC Council

Ottawa, Canada, 19 June 2002—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”), met for our annual regular session on 18 and 19 June 2002. We reviewed activities of the Commission over the past year and received input and advice from the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) and the public.

As nations prepare for the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, we uphold the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) and the CEC as examples of successful regional environmental cooperation supporting sustainable development in our three countries.

Our discussions centered on continuing to collaborate through the CEC, and particularly with JPAC, to address environmental priorities in the areas of energy and environment, environment and human health, and partnerships for sustainable development.

Energy and Environment

Protecting our environment as we seek to expand the generation, distribution, and trade of energy between our three countries is a complex challenge. We received a briefing on the activities of the North American Energy Working Group and agree to pursue our efforts in a complementary fashion to those of the Working Group. We thank the CEC Secretariat and the Electricity and Environment Advisory Board for their timely and useful study of the opportunities and challenges associated with North America’s evolving electricity market. Our three countries are already working to address these challenges through the CEC and other bilateral and trilateral efforts. We have given serious consideration to the recommendations of the Secretariat, the Advisory Board, issues raised by the public, and to the question of how the CEC can contribute most effectively to meeting these challenges. We also look forward to receiving further JPAC input on this issue. Based on these considerations, we have agreed to:

- Establish a North American Air Working Group to provide guidance to the Council and facilitate future cooperative work on air related issues.

- Conduct a comparative study of the air quality standards, regulations, planning, and enforcement practices at the national, state/provincial, and local levels in the three countries, building on previous research and work undertaken by the CEC on air management systems of the three countries.
- Conduct a survey to obtain information on the comparability of North American environmental standards governing construction and operation of electricity generating facilities.
- Identify, explore and address issues related to barriers, challenges, opportunities and principles under which emissions trading systems might evolve.
- Continue the Secretariat's work on renewable energy, including continuing the dialogue on the transparency and scientific and technical basis of renewable energy definitions.
- Support further analysis related to the environmental aspects of development of renewable energy markets; public awareness and education; consistency of databases; emerging renewable low-impact energy technology development and commercialization; transmission and distribution of emerging renewable electricity; and promotion of energy efficiency and combined heat and power.
- Make further progress toward a shared North American emissions inventory by producing a shared emissions inventory for electricity generating stations, a summary report of emissions, and an analysis of the availability and comparability of additional useful data by the end of 2004.

Environment and Health

Children's Health and the Environment

Nowhere are the links between environment and health more important than when we look at children.

We remain committed to integrating children's environmental health considerations throughout the work of the CEC and have asked for continued advice from JPAC in this area.

Based on advice from the public and JPAC, and following discussion with the Expert Advisory Board on Children's Health and the Environment, we have agreed to a cooperative agenda to protect children from environmental risks. Over the next two years, we will focus on the following elements of this long-term agenda:

- Selecting and publishing a core set of children's environmental health indicators for North America;
- Advancing understanding of risk assessment approaches with a view to increasing collaboration on addressing potential risks posed by toxic substances; and
- Enhancing the understanding of the economic impacts of children's environment-related illnesses in partnership with other international organizations.

We welcome the offer of the Expert Advisory Board to take a leadership role in focusing attention on children's environmental health in the education and training of health care professionals in North America, and stand ready to work with our health counterparts to support this initiative.

Moreover, we join the health and environment ministers of the Americas, as well as the G-8 environment ministers, in calling for partnerships to exchange information and develop international indicators on children's health and the environment.

Sound Management of Chemicals

Since 1995, the Sound Management of Chemicals (SMOC) program has helped protect our environment and health with a focus on reducing persistent toxic substances, notably DDT, PCBs, mercury and chlordane. SMOC is a highly successful working example of the implementation of Agenda 21 through regional partnerships and cooperation, including capacity building.

Building on success of the SMOC program, we have agreed to develop a new North American Regional Action Plan (NARAP) targeting lindane. A persistent organic pollutant—one of the most abundant and pervasive insecticide contaminants in our environment—lindane is known to have a number of harmful effects. These are of particular concern in colder northern climates and for children who are placed at increased risk through direct application of lindane-containing products for head lice and scabies control.

In order to better understand pathways of exposure and assess our progress in controlling pollution, we have adopted a new environmental monitoring and assessment NARAP in support of the SMOC initiative. Data gathered and assessed in the implementation of this NARAP will also provide critically important information to support other CEC programs and the national programs of the three CEC partners.

We acknowledge the contributions made by the public in the areas of education and capacity building for the SMOC initiative, look forward to additional JPAC advice, and encourage the SMOC Working Group to take these considerations into account.

Hazardous Waste

Last year, we directed that a continental approach be developed for the sound environmental management and tracking of transboundary hazardous waste movements.

Based on recommendations from the Enforcement Working Group and Hazardous Waste Task Force, we have agreed to:

- Continue development of a common North American approach for environmental sound management of hazardous waste;
- Proceed with a pilot project to track hazardous waste movement between Canada and the United States by means of an electronic notification system; and
- Conduct a feasibility study for a pilot project on electronic tracking of hazardous waste movements between Mexico and the United States, with particular attention to capacity building in Mexico and starting with a prioritized list of substances.

North American Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs)

We consider improved comparability among our respective national PRTRs to be of great importance, since these provide everyone—the public, industry and governments alike—with a better understanding of the sources, management, and opportunities to reduce pollutants affecting the environment and human health. We commend Mexico for the efforts it is making to implement a mandatory and publicly accessible PRTR.

We have approved the Action Plan to Enhance the Comparability of North American PRTRs, including measures to:

- Adopt the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) codes for the national PRTR reporting systems of Mexico and the United States;
- Pursue comparability in the manner in which data on persistent, bioaccumulative, toxic substances—particularly, mercury, dioxins and furans and lead—are collected in the three national PRTR programs, subject to the technical, economic, and regulatory capacities of each country.
- Use activity-based reporting thresholds that are nationally determined to ensure consistency of approach across the three systems.
- Support Mexico’s efforts to operationalize a mandatory PRTR reporting system and provide public access to data on a chemical-specific and facility-specific basis.

North American Partnerships for Sustainable Development

Partnerships among governments, the private sector and civil society are key to advancing sustainable development. It is important that we draw on the energy, enthusiasm, and potential of all—in particular, that of local communities and the private sector. We have reviewed a number of key partnerships and initiatives supporting cooperation on sustainable development:

North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI)

Birds are a key indicator of the health of our continent’s ecosystems. More than a thousand species of birds are found in Canada, Mexico and the United States. Many use habitats in more than one country as they migrate. Over the past century the populations of many birds have declined significantly, often because of habitat loss or deterioration.

NABCI seeks to foster greater cooperation among the nations and peoples of the continent to achieve regionally based, biologically driven, habitat-oriented partnerships—delivering the full range of bird conservation across North America for all birds and all habitats. We have reviewed NABCI’s progress and reiterate the CEC’s continued support for this initiative. We acknowledge the importance of regionally based partnerships for project delivery and the use of networks and databases that promote conservation delivery and projects that demonstrate NABCI principles. We look forward to working closely with the Biodiversity Conservation Working Group to strengthen the CEC’s Conservation of Biodiversity program.

Trade and Environment

We remain committed to engaging civil society in understanding the complex links between trade and environment. We welcome the establishment of the Advisory Group on Assessing the Environmental Effects of Trade and the Call for Papers for a second symposium on assessing the environmental effects of trade in North America. We have agreed to:

Examine links between trade and the environment through a second symposium on the subject, to be held in early 2003. The Council views the symposium as providing an opportunity to compare approaches underway at the national and international levels on environmental assessments of trade in North America, further engage the public in this work, and identify opportunities for policy integration in support of sustainable development.

Take the necessary steps to facilitate public input on the work on Chapter 11 of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) underway by the Chapter 11 Experts' Group of the NAFTA Free Trade Commission. We agreed to work with our trade counterparts to arrange a forum where interested parties can express their views on the operation and implementation of the Chapter.

As we approach the tenth anniversary of NAFTA and the NAAEC, we have decided to undertake, by 2004, in collaboration with JPAC and a wide selection of organizations and institutions, a retrospective of our achievements over the past ten years, including the environmental effects of NAFTA, with a view to charting our path for the next decade.

We reiterate our support for the CEC's work on the environmental assessment of trade in the agricultural and energy sectors. We look forward to further work in these areas, particularly analysis of emerging policy issues.

Finance and the Environment

The Council considered the status of current work in the area of finance and environment. Its discussion was framed by a general overview of the broad-ranging interrelation between finance and environment.

In light of this, we have decided to:

- Encourage efforts, in cooperation with the private sector and other institutions, to develop methodologies and information links to provide environmental information in a form more useful to financial institutions and to encourage the use of environmental information in credit, investment and asset risk management decisions;
- Consider how to advance work on existing requirements regarding disclosure of environmental information pertaining to financial reporting;
- Encourage further development of the concept of a North American Green Procurement Initiative; and
- Through a sustainable agriculture fund, encourage small and medium-size sustainable agricultural enterprises.

- We look forward to the results of the JPAC workshop on finance and environment, to be held in Monterrey in December 2002.

Corporate Environmental Stewardship

We believe public-private partnership, which includes governments at the national, state/provincial and local levels, is the best way to promote the widespread adoption of pollution prevention and the use of environmental management systems. To that end, we discussed the role of corporate environmental stewardship programs in recognizing and rewarding environmental leaders in business and government who make public, verifiable commitments to a high level of environmental protection.

We also discussed the role of our respective pollution prevention roundtables in advancing pollution prevention in North America, and we reviewed an update from the Parties on environmental management systems.

Following these discussions, we have agreed to:

- Recognize and support the concept of partnership amongst pollution prevention roundtables or with other relevant organizations in North America;
- Identify further work in the area of pollution prevention, focusing on where the CEC can add value to activities proposed by the pollution prevention roundtables;
- Explore, as appropriate, collaboration with the pollution prevention roundtables as well as other relevant organizations on the implementation of the information network for pollution prevention in North America; and
- Sponsor a CEC workshop in 2003 on the implementation of environmental management systems in small and medium-size enterprises to identify and draw on regional experiences and lessons learned.

World Summit on Sustainable Development

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) presents a crucial opportunity for the international community to reaffirm its commitment to integrating the economic, social and environmental goals of sustainable development. We affirm the importance of the international consensus reached at the WTO Ministerial in Doha and the Monterrey meeting on Financing for Development as a foundation for sustained growth and development, and express our commitment to provide constructive and substantial input to the WSSD. We have agreed to share with the Summit some of the relevant results and experiences gained through the CEC as an example of regional environmental cooperation in the context of economic integration. We have also explored our mutual interests in the importance of partnership initiatives at the WSSD.

Joint Meeting with the International Joint Commission and International Boundary and Water Commission

We held discussions with representatives of the (US-Canada) International Joint Commission (IJC) and (US-Mexico) International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) for the first

time. We shared related concerns and discussed a number of areas where coordination could be useful to enhance collaboration between these institutions. We have instructed the Secretariat to strengthen its working relationships with the IJC and IBWC at the staff level and explore possibilities for collaborative activities.

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 2003. We will meet in June 2003, in Washington, DC, for the next Regular Session of Council.

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 the 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 ninth session of Council were Canadian Environment Minister David Anderson, Mexican Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources Victor Lichtinger, and US Environmental Protection Agency Administrator 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.

For more information on any of the topics reviewed by Council, visit <www.cec.org>.