

## **SESSION 06-03 OF ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVES**

### **SUMMARY RECORD**

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) Council, represented by its Alternate Representatives, met via conference call on 24 May 2006. Mr. Jerry Clifford (United States) chaired the meeting, Mr. José Manuel Bulás and Mr. David McGovern represented Mexico and Canada, respectively. Mr. Doug Wright, acting CEC executive director, represented the Secretariat, Mr. Carlos Sandoval, JPAC chair, and Ms. Nathalie Daoust, Council secretary, acted as secretary for the session. Other officials of the Parties and the Secretariat were also in attendance.

#### **Item 1 Adoption of the agenda**

The Alternate Representatives adopted the agenda.

#### **Item 2 Interventions by the acting executive director and JPAC representative**

The acting executive director conveyed the regrets of the executive director who was in London taking care of personal matters. He reported that program implementation was moving forward with the full approval of the Operational Plan and mentioned that a report from the Executive Director would be distributed to the Parties the week of 28 May providing the complete status of program implementation. He also referred to the recent publication of the report, entitled *Toxic Chemicals and Children's Health in North America*, which represented the culmination of CEC's work on children's health and the environment carried out in recent years. He also mentioned his participation in the recent meetings of the Biodiversity Conservation Working Group and the Sound Management of Chemicals working group. He reported that both groups were looking forward to providing advice to Council on aligning their future work with Council priorities.

Referring to the Council Agenda, the acting executive director reported that significant progress had been made under the North American environmental atlas project and encouraged the Alternate Representatives to keep this item on the agenda. The Canadian Alternate Representative showed support for this request and asked whether the Secretariat would be including information on aquifers in 2007. The acting executive director responded that the project is meant to serve the Council's priorities and encouraged discussions at the Council level in June to future activities.

In reference to the planning process for the 2007–2009 Operational Plan, the US Alternate Representative confirmed that senior trade officials would be attending the Council session and that a joint discussion of the working groups to discuss areas of intersection among projects would likely be taking place. He committed the United States to being involved in the proposed summer planning process for the 2007–2009 Operational Plan.

The JPAC chair reported on the public workshop to be held on 27 June which will focus on energy alternatives, including biofuels, solar energy and windpower. He indicated that keynote speakers from the three countries would be participating. He added that the expertise of EPA on the subject could contribute to the discussion and welcomed the participation of one of their experts. The US Alternate Representative agreed to appoint someone from the energy department.

Finally, the JPAC chair made a reference to the Council joint meeting with JPAC and requested that the Parties consider extending the 45-minute meeting to one hour. He stressed the importance of this meeting for JPAC members. The US Alternate Representative promised to consider this request but pointed out that the overall agenda for the Council Session had been shortened and that bilateral meetings between the ministers were being organized.

### **Item 3 2006 Council Session**

The Alternate Representatives exchanged views on the General Program for the Council Session and Side Events as well as on the Council Agenda. Regarding the latter, the Canadian Alternate Representative presented an alternative format for the in-camera session, organizing the first portion of the agenda around the “greening” activities of the CEC, highlighting the involvement of the private sector. The second portion of the agenda could be dedicated to items requiring Council’s endorsement. He also recommended keeping fewer items on the agenda to allow more discussions between the Council members.

The Mexican Alternate Representative supported Canada’s latter comment and promoted holding an informal meeting on 27 June to allow Ministers to get acquainted with each other in a relaxed atmosphere. The US Alternate Representative indicated that the preference of Administrator Johnson was to invite his counterparts and the Alternate Representatives to a private breakfast in his office on 28 June. The Canadian Alternate Representative mentioned that the Canadian House of Commons would likely be sitting during that week and that he was not able to guarantee Minister Ambrose’s participation in all the events being scheduled.

The Alternate Representatives proceeded to review the agenda items for the in-camera session. They agreed to support a short presentation on the North American Atlas which would stimulate Council discussion. They also concurred that 15 minutes in total should be allocated for presentations under each pillar in order to allow a 15-minute Council discussion following the presentations. In order to address Canada’s proposal to organize the agenda around the “greening” theme, the United States suggested keeping the three-pillar format while presenting capacity building as the centerpiece. The Canadian Alternate Representative agreed to align the agenda with the three pillars but suggested that agenda items should be more interactive. The Alternate Representatives then directed the GSC to work together with the Secretariat in shortening the agenda to allow for two presentations under each pillar.

### **Item 4 Extension of use of 2005 funds for environment and trade projects**

The draft Council Resolution to extend 2005 funds for environment and trade projects was approved by the three Alternate Representatives. The Secretariat was asked to circulate a

formatted version of the Council Resolution for signature by the Alternate Representatives.

**Item 5 Use of 2005 surplus funds**

**5.1 Profepa audit**

The Alternate Representatives agreed to defer this discussion to their private conference call.

**5.2 Private sector initiative with automotive industry**

The Alternate Representatives agreed with the proposal presented by the United States. They agreed to allocate \$100,000 for this initiative in 2006. The Secretariat was asked to circulate a formatted version of the Council Resolution for signature by the Alternate Representatives.

**Item 6 Other issues**

The US Alternate Representative informed his counterparts that the United States was currently developing a proposal for a conference on capacity building for North American indigenous peoples, to be held in January 2007. He added that, if Mexico and Canada agreed with the proposal, Council could consider announcing this initiative during their news conference on 28 June. He indicated he anticipated the proposal would soon be distributed to the Parties and the Secretariat.

The JPAC chair expressed strong support for the US proposal. He indicated that capacity building for indigenous peoples was a very important issue for JPAC. The acting executive director also underlined its importance from the Secretariat's point of view.

**Item 7 Next meeting of the Alternate Representatives**

This item was not discussed.