

Follow-up from the Plenary Sessions with the Public in 2000

The following table, prepared by the Joint Public Advisory Committee of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), provides an overview on how the main recommendations from the public, presented during the JPAC Plenary Discussions held in 2000 in Dallas and the Public Portion of the 2000 Session of Council, were taken into consideration in the CEC program plan for 2001–2003 and related activities.

The CEC program plan for 2001–2003 is centered around four core program areas: Environment, Economy and Trade; Conservation of Biodiversity; Pollutants and Health; and Law and Policy. Within these areas, a number of programs are set out to further the goals and objectives of North American Agreement for Environmental Cooperation. Specific projects are presented as a means to implement the goals of the programs. The programs will continue to evolve over a three-year cycle in response to the results achieved each year.

The CEC program plan for 2001–2003 is available electronically on the CEC web site at <www.cec.org> as well as several others information and documents. You can also find on the web site the CEC Calendar of Events. To request a hard copy, please contact the CEC Secretariat at <info@ccemtl.org>. The CEC Program Plan and others information and documents are available electronically on the CEC web site at <www.cec.org>.

The draft CEC 2002–2004 program plan should be released for public comments in September 2001. JPAC encourages the North American citizens to comment on this document. Public input on this important issue is essential to JPAC.

Recommendations	Follow-up
Environment, Economy and Trade Program	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council was encouraged to give full support and resources to the October 2000 North American Symposium on Understanding the Linkages between Trade and Environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The North American Symposium on Understanding the Linkages between Trade and Environment was held on 11–12 October 2000 in Washington, DC. It was considered a great success.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up on the results of the Trade and Environment Symposium was strongly encouraged. For example sectors could be selected and working groups established to take a closer look at indicators, criteria, etc. and then develop policy recommendations. That could be the basis for a future gathering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A summary report on the Symposium will be released in June or July 2001. A second report, which contains revisions of the research papers and proceedings of the Symposium, will also be released in July 2001. When these two publications are available, JPAC will develop an Advice to Council about possible follow-up work.

Recommendations	Follow-up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soliciting input on emerging environmental trends was a feature of the JPAC public sessions in 2000. Many comments were received. In summary, water management, the link between poverty and health, population growth, unsound agricultural practices, urban development, vulnerability of coastal areas, habitat loss, cumulative impacts of pollutants, need for coordinated energy conservation, environmental and social impacts of increased transportation, GMOs and biotechnology, and invasive species were identified as important trends and issues where the CEC could contribute. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In December 2000 the Secretariat presented the findings of two analytical reports. The first examined potential pressure on freshwater resources to the year 2020. The second pulled together data from Canada, Mexico and the US in the forestry and agriculture sectors to examine changes in material resource flows. In May 2001 the CEC prepared an executive summary of the key lessons learned thus far from the trends work. A questionnaire on emerging trends was designed and posted on the CEC web site to seek public input on the issues that warrant attention today, as well as the public's vision of what the North American environment will look like 20 years from now. A document summary of the approximately 475 persons that responded to the questionnaire was prepared.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is increasing public concern about the lack of progress in developing an institutional relationship between trade and environment officials as specified by Article 10(6) of NAAEC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts were made in 2000, but progress has fallen far short of the expectations of the public and JPAC in this regard. In particular, the public remains concerned about the lack of organizational relationship between the Council and Free Trade Commission on trade-environment issues, including environment-related NAFTA Chapter Eleven disputes. JPAC has requested that a meeting be organized, with the public and JPAC attending in 2001.
Conservation of Biodiversity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoration of habitat, for example migratory bird habitat, should be a priority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The North American Bird Conservation Initiative is (2.1.2) specifically established for this purpose. Coordinated national strategies and action plans have been completed. In 2001 work will begin to implement these national strategies, develop fund raising strategies, help build bird conservation capacity and undertake communication and outreach activities.

Recommendations	Follow-up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CEC has an important role to play in protecting transboundary species and the habitat upon which they depend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CEC has contributed by identifying key issues affecting North American conservation and those that could benefit from coordinated action through Project (2.1.1) Strategic Directions for the Conservation of Biodiversity. The specific projects dealing with transboundary species and habitats are: Project 2.1.3 Species of Common Conservation Concern has developed a list of species for priority action, and started the development of joint recovery plans for grassland species; The Marine Protected Areas project is in the process of identifying a list of Marine species of Common Conservation Concern.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is considered very important to use independent scientists in the CEC's work on biodiversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent scientists will be involved in the implementation, evaluation and review of the Strategic Plan and the Regional Action Plans in Project 2.1.1 Strategic and Cooperative Action for the Conservation of Biodiversity in North America. Likewise, such individuals will be important partners in all other projects within the Conservation of Biodiversity Program. One of the goals of the Program is create networks of experts to analyze threats to biodiversity and recommend actions for responding to them. Indeed the Program for 2001–2003 has adopted a strategic approach to take advantage of the CEC's interdisciplinary structure and its capacity to work with regional stakeholders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a specific concern expressed about the list of species of common conservation concern and the process used to establish it. The lack of listing of the grizzly is conspicuous by its absence. It met three of the criteria, and some of the species that only met two of the criteria are on the list. This is a very vulnerable species and habitat loss continues today. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Species of Common Conservation Concern initiative is not an end product but a dynamic process to engage three countries in developing priorities and a framework of cooperation. Once the Biodiversity Strategy is approved projects (and in particular this one) will be revisited every five years.

Recommendations	Follow-up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous peoples have much to contribute to work in the area of biodiversity and should be involved. All work with Indigenous peoples should be based on respect for their traditions and perspectives, which can only enrich the work of the CEC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In March 2000 a workshop with indigenous peoples from throughout North America was organized in connection with Project 2.1.1. Strategic and Cooperative Action for the Conservation of Biodiversity in North America to seek guidance on key conservation challenges as well as on action the program could take to deal with these challenges. There is a commitment to continue to involve indigenous peoples as the project progresses. Furthermore, the Integrated Baseline Study Report for the Strategic Directions for the Conservation of Biodiversity Project contained a recommendation to develop an aboriginal component to the biodiversity strategy in order to take into account the unique perspective, knowledge and needs of native populations in the three countries.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The issue of invasive species is not receiving sufficient attention both from the perspective of better scientific understanding and adequate regulation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts to develop a coordinated approach to invasive species are beginning with an initial focus on aquatic and marine. The goal of the Project 2.1.7 “Closing the Pathways of Aquatic Invasive Species across North American” is the elimination of pathways of transboundary exchange of invasive alien species among coastal and freshwater ecosystems of North America. Recommendations from this workshop can be find at www.crossdraw.com/marinet.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was strong support for the upcoming workshop on grasslands. Similarly, the CEC is urged to look at northern forests as a next step. It is facing massive change and deserves urgent attention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In one of the first collaborative efforts of its kind in North America, leading ecologists from the three countries attended a workshop to identify North American priority regions for conservation. Northern forest is among those priority regions for CEC. Please visit our website to consult CEC’s map of North America’s most biologically significant and most threatened regions at: http://www.cec.org/programs_projects/conserv_biodiv/priority_regions/index.cfm?varlan=english.

Recommendations	Follow-up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a direct relationship between pollutants and wildlife. Now we must move quickly to look at pesticides that are less persistent though acutely toxic with lethal or sub-lethal effects for wildlife. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project 2.1.6 Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities in North America recognizes this important link and has connected with work on the Bight of the Californias, the Gulf of Maine and PRTR. Within the Sound Management of Chemicals Project (3.2.1) are links with the Ecosystem Monitoring Initiative through the NARAP on monitoring and assessment. By involving a wide array of stakeholders the GPA pilot projects are implementing regional strategies to cope with land based sources, in the case of the Bight of the California's a binational monitoring effort and the development of a binational web-based inventory of pollutants; in the Gulf of Maine the actions have moved towards coastal wetlands, environmental education and outreach, and scientific assessment of the natural and environments. The Baja California to Bering Sea pilot initiative is going to be the region at which both –biodiversity and pollution- start integrating, since many of the stakeholders engaged in the GPA Bight of the Californias are already involved in the Marine Protected Areas project. One of the objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy Plan (not endorsed yet) is about jointly coping with common threats, particularly pollutants and biodiversity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CEC was asked to review whether Canada is complying with its signed agreement to have effective laws to protect endangered species and their habitats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In regards to endangered species, the CEC has developed a list of terrestrial transboundary/migratory species of common conservation concern, identified major opportunities for collaboration, and started the development of joint recovery actions for this species in the grassland ecoregion. A list of Marine Species of Common Conservation Concern is being developed and will be available at the end of 2001.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The effects of transgenic seeds in North America need to be studied, standards developed, a map of production areas created and information on the relationship between trade and environment of these products be made available. Considering the priority of this issue, effects on farmers and producers should also be studied. Further, the transboundary of shipment of these products into Mexico should be stopped because of the impacts on Mexican agriculture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Biodiversity Strategy Plan (not endorsed yet) considers this important issue within one of the objective. Addressing common threats to biodiversity. This and related topics have preoccupied JPAC for the past two years. After careful review of the subject, JPAC itself has concluded this complex issue is being dealt with by many agencies and there was no obvious role for the CEC though JPAC will continue to follow this topic. It is not specifically addressed in the 2001–2003 Program.
Pollutants and Health	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary systems have their limitations. There should be more pressure for industry-wide mandatory reporting in Mexico. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In early 2001 members of the multi-stakeholder Consultative Group for the PRTR Project met in Mexico City. The meeting featured a roundtable discussion on opportunities for advancing PRTR in Mexico. Representatives of Semarnat affirmed their government's commitment to evolving the currently voluntary RETC with a view to making it mandatory within two to four years.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs should be more involved in standard setting and full information should always be provided to the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within Project 3.4.1 Capacity Building for Pollution Prevention the Round Table project contemplates the participation of practically all sectors of society. The working groups comprise a broad variety of individuals and institutions including NGOs. NARAP's are developed with full stakeholder input. Public sessions are arranged as part of SMOC meetings to provide updates on NARAP implementation and other relevant activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade and transportation corridors are of concern. The growth and expansion of transportation corridors has significant impact on the environment. Concerned NGOs will be taking this matter up at the environment and trade symposium in Washington in October. NGOs are generally satisfied with the work of the CEC in this area and urged continuing efforts, particularly in its role of assembling and disseminating information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project 3.1.3 Trilateral Air Quality Improvement Initiative: North American Trade and Transportation Corridors was developed to address this issue specifically. A CEC discussion paper on trade and transportation corridors was presented for public comment and discussion at a joint meeting with JPAC in Winnipeg during March 2001. The public responses are currently under review to guide the CEC's future work in this area.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dioxin should receive attention in the Sound Management of Chemicals project. The CEC was urged to publish as soon as possible the important report on dioxin transfer to Nunavut prepared by Dr. Commoner. The Inuit (indigenous peoples of the Arctic) were involved and the state of the art model developed in this report will be useful when discussing mercury and PCBs. Furthermore, it is only through effective modeling and monitoring that northern indigenous peoples will ever know if regional and international measures are effective in reducing contaminants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Commoner's report was released in 2000 on this issue. The work plan of SMOC includes the completion of Phase I NARAP development and beginning development of Phase II NARAP on dioxins (furans and hexachlorobenzene). There is a representative of indigenous peoples on both the dioxins (furans and hexachlorobenzene) Task Force and the Monitoring and Assessment NARAP Development Task Force. One of the activities of this latter Task Force is to build capacity into the NARAP for long-term monitoring and assessment. Additionally the Task Force may undertake continental modeling exercises in support of NARAPs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CEC's efforts to combat pollutants were acknowledged. It is hoped that there will be more information about the impacts of pollutants on human health and to open the discussion in Mexico on an urgent basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The human health dimension underscores much of the CEC's work in this Program Area. Specifically, there is a new initiative on Children's Health and the Environment in North America (3.4.2). The goal of this project is to work with the Parties in developing a long-term cooperative agenda to protect children from environmental threats to their health and providing. The work also affirms that parents have a right to know about the presence of potentially harmful substances that may affect the health of their children. In the context of the PRTR project, CEC is preparing a special feature report on selected chemical pollutants that can adversely affect the health and development of children.

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Law and Policy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the important challenges faced by the public is obtaining the necessary information to effectively participate in public policy or enforcement. Citizen participation depends on information. Many NGOs have highly qualified people working who are very competent to analyze and work with technical data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through JPAC, a seminar on public participation in enforcement was held in 2000. This has led to NAWEG shifting focus from CITES training to public participation issues to ensure that the views of the public are considered in selecting priorities for cooperative action. Project 4.2.3 Enforcement/Compliance Reporting will produce reports on specific topics to attempt to respond to public demands for more transparency in this area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A methodology needs to be developed for gauging “effective enforcement” and a scholarly review of impacts of enforcement activities could contribute to this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project 4.2.1 North American Regional Enforcement Forum over the next three years will work to enhance the capacity of the Parties’ environmental and wildlife enforcement agencies to work cooperatively in meeting the obligation of effective enforcement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforcement work should shift from its focus on illegal trophy hunting and trade to the primary cause of wildlife loss - habitat destruction. Work on legal mechanisms should be expanded to enforcement and compliance with laws on wildlife conservation. This work should be connected with the biodiversity program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2001 Project 4.2.1 North American Regional Enforcement Forum will explore ongoing and new avenues for cooperation through the Enforcement Working Group. The EWG is also a subgroup of the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management helping facilitate additional regional dialogue on both enforcement and broader policy matters. Project 4.2.2 Enforcement and Compliance Capacity Building will work with the Biodiversity Conservation program on matters such as invasive species and NABCI.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern was expressed about the status of environmental legislation in the three countries. There is a perception that there has been a weakening of environmental legislation and enforcement. The Parties should commit to strengthening enforcement and improving laws. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Law and Policy Program addresses issues and concerns about environmental enforcement and compliance brought to the attention of the CEC by government, industry, NGOs, etc. with a view to strengthening cooperation among the Parties in enforcement and compliance.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the development and effective application of laws for the use and management of chemicals and pesticides. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within Project 4.2.2 Enforcement and Compliance Capacity Building, a priority area for enforcement capacity building is the tracking and enforcement of pollution control laws. Part of this work will be linked directly to SMOC projects.
Specific Obligations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase efforts to finalize an agreement on transboundary environmental impact assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council is continuing its efforts to reach an agreement. The Mexican government has expressed a renewed interest in these discussions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased support for NAFEC was recommended. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No increases are provided. However, Council has agreed to explore alternatives for additional funding from sources other than the CEC's budget.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many comments were received throughout the year concerning the implementation of Articles 14 and 15. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In June 2000 Council adopted Resolution 00-09 mandating JPAC to conduct a public review of any issues concerning the implementation and further elaboration of Articles 14 and 15 referred to it by Council. JPAC was also tasked with reviewing the public history of submissions and providing a report on lessons learned. The lessons learned report will be submitted to Council in June 2001. JPAC also developed a public review process and it is now in place. Please visit the CEC web site under the JPAC's section to consult the JPAC Report on Lessons Learned and the public review process.

Recommendations	Follow-up
Other Issues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CEC has a role to play in harmonizing standards for public health and labeling in North America. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project 1.2.1 Supporting Biodiversity Conservation through Green Goods and Services recognizes that increased consumer demand reflects both environmental as well as human health concerns related to the types of agricultural products consumed. While it is not the role of the CEC to engage directly in establishing public health standards, the work of this project will contribute support for the viability and desirability of further developing a market niche for natural or organic foods.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CEC should seek better support from the business community in Canada and the United States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the current of 2000–2001, the Secretariat organized meetings to favorise the participation and involvement of the business community in Canada and the Unites.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear message was sent to governments that it is time create a space for children and children's concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2001-2003 Program Plan contains a project on Children's Health and the Environment in North America (3.4.2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A basic principle of all programs and decisions should be consideration of the social and economic imbalance existing between the three countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During he North American Symposium on Understanding the Linkages between Trade and Environment this and related topics were discussed. It is likely that it will continue to be addressed as follow up work is developed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat was urged to work more closely with civil society who possess a great capacity to contribute to research and action towards public policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on the direction contained in Council's <i>A Shared Agenda for Action</i>, the Secretariat continues to convene stakeholders and work with civil society to facilitate the work of the CEC.