



COMMISSION FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
COOPERATION

COMISIÓN PARA  
LA COOPERACIÓN  
AMBIENTAL

COMMISSION  
DE COOPÉRATION  
ENVIRONNEMENTALE

## 2023 CEC Council Statement:

### **“Canada, Mexico, U.S. Launch Ambitious Environmental Agenda in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada”**

*Within the framework of the trade agreement between Canada, Mexico, and the United States (CUSMA, T-MEC, USMCA) and the Environmental Cooperation Agreement, the top environmental officials of Canada, Mexico and the United States convened for the 30<sup>th</sup> Council Session of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation.*

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**Victoria, Canada, 29 June 2023**—We, the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) Council Members, representing Canada, Mexico and the United States, met today for the annual Council Session in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. The Council addressed many of the most pressing environmental challenges facing North American communities, particularly vulnerable communities and Indigenous Peoples that are oftentimes disproportionately burdened with environmental impacts.

This year’s CEC Council Session builds on the January 2023 North American Leaders’ Summit, in which Prime Minister Trudeau, President López Obrador and President Biden recognized the critical nature of taking rapid and coordinated measures to tackle the climate crisis and respond to its consequences. This includes achieving our respective 2030 nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement and coming together to align approaches on estimating the social cost of greenhouse gas emissions. We collectively understand the important role of the CEC for enhancing trilateral cooperation amongst our countries to drive collaborative efforts on environmental protection and climate action that contribute to the health of our shared environment and our people.

The CEC is continuing to help our countries build and implement the region’s ambition on climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience, helping implement regional commitments stemming from the North American Leaders’ Summit, including new regional priorities to reduce methane emissions from the waste sector; accelerating the deployment of clean energy solutions, particularly for remote and Indigenous communities; and promoting climate adaptation solutions, such as developing a regional climate adaptation workplan to improve early warning systems for extreme events.

Through our trilateral work at the CEC, and in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, we reiterate our pledge to protect biodiversity, to work toward ending deforestation, and to do our part to conserve 30 percent of the world’s land and waters by 2030, consistent with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

We committed to building on the progress of the CEC’s successful grant programs. Through 39 active grants valued at more than C\$6 million, the CEC is supporting climate resilience and environmental action at the community level. With the Environmental Justice and Climate

Resilience (EJ4Climate) and the North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA) grant programs, we are taking collaborative action to promote a healthier environment and building back a prosperous and equitable economy for all.

We expressed a shared commitment to further empower our citizens and communities to establish Indigenous and urban approaches to climate adaptation, seeking to ensure a sustainable future for all communities across North America as climate change continues to impact our region.

In particular, we support action to preserve traditional ecological knowledge and practices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities as part of our trilateral model and regional approach to environmental collaboration.

Our shared vision to lead the way in promoting complementary regional environmental and trade policies rests on our unwavering commitment to sustainable development and environmental justice and equity. Through the CEC, we will continue to drive an ambitious agenda that promotes awareness, participation and engagement of local actors in environmental governance and stewardship, mobilizes collective action, and facilitates the inclusion of a diverse network of stakeholders and partners.

### **Indigenous and Urban Approaches for Climate Adaptation**

This year's theme for the 2023 Council Session, "Indigenous and Urban Approaches for Climate Adaptation," focused on the CEC's engagement with Indigenous climate leadership and the consideration of actions to promote environmental justice in urban environments. The Council Session was aimed at identifying ways we can help communities be more resilient and better prepared for intensifying climate impacts while also ensuring that we are effectively engaging the most climate-vulnerable and disadvantaged groups that are suffering disproportionate consequences of climate change across North America. The significance of this theme is timely, as it promotes the development of local and context-specific strategies as well as an international cooperative approach for managing and responding to environmental and socio-economic risks across the whole of society.

This year's Council Session addressed several topics supporting the development of community-led projects and initiatives. Our exchange with the Joint Public Advisory Committee, the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Expert Group (TEKEG) and the CEC Secretariat led to a constructive discussion of immediate priorities and pressing needs, including opportunities ranging from specific, innovative, and nature-based solutions to the improved use of traditional and local knowledge that incorporates Indigenous perspectives to tackle our most pressing environmental priorities.

As part of the Council Session, we were pleased to benefit from the two open public forums, which provided an invaluable space for sharing information with many of our partners and other stakeholders, along with an opportunity for questions, comments, and suggestions from the public on the CEC's trilateral work. This year's Session included both in-person and virtual attendance, with broad representation of diverse groups of interested individuals and stakeholders from across North America.

Specifically, as part of the Council Session we:

- Announced C\$500,000 to launch a new Council-led initiative, “Reaching Horizon 2030: An Environmental Outlook for North American Cooperation,” that will detail how to prepare for the emerging environmental and climate challenges North America is expected to face from the present until 2030 and beyond.
- Announced C\$500,000 to launch a cities initiative focused on sharing approaches and best practices to adaptation planning and implementation, as well as visiting concrete, on-the-ground projects that respond to the needs of urban citizens.
- Announced US\$2 million for the third cycle of the EJ4Climate grant program that will focus on projects to build resilience to climate change. The EJ4Climate grant program assists underserved and vulnerable communities and Indigenous communities in Canada, Mexico and the United States in preparing for climate-related impacts.
- Contributed C\$1,750,000 to fund a new cycle of the North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA) grant program to engage and empower Indigenous communities in climate adaptation. Since 2011, NAPECA has been supporting the delivery of projects led by non-profit and non-governmental organizations that build partnerships and drive action at the local level.
- Endorsed two new projects focusing on shared environmental priority areas, with Fast Mitigation Strategies for Short-Lived Climate Pollutants, with a particular focus on addressing methane, and Food Loss and Waste.
- Engaged with the winners of the 2023 CEC Youth Innovation Challenge from Canada, Mexico and the United States on their innovative and tangible water solutions for sustainable development. We were impressed with their skill, dedication, and vision and we look forward to the implementation of their solutions.
- Reviewed the progress made under the ongoing CEC Operational Plan and the projects we endorsed last year.

“The 30th session of the CEC Council has allowed us to hear the voices of different communities in North America and the efforts they are making to address the negative effects of climate change. The Government of Mexico values and listens attentively to these voices, as well as the learning and knowledge that indigenous communities share with us to find common paths to advance in the environmental challenges of the region.”—Iván Rico López, Undersecretary of Environmental Policy and Natural Resources, Semarnat

“It has been an honour to host the 30th annual CEC Council meeting in Victoria, BC. A beautiful urban center and home to diverse Indigenous peoples, it has been a perfect location to explore how Canada, the United States of America and Mexico can work with Indigenous and urban partners to adapt to climate change. I continue to be encouraged by the cooperation and progress our three countries make together, trilaterally through the CEC. Our shared commitment to North American environmental cooperation and climate action has never been stronger or more important, as we respond and adapt to the serious impacts of climate change.”—The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada

“The United States is proud of the work we are doing with the CEC to confront the climate crisis while also advancing environmental justice. We will continue building partnerships with our neighbors in Mexico and Canada, and with Indigenous communities and state and local governments to efficiently, effectively and equally implement climate change adaptation strategies for a resilient North America.”—United States Environmental Protection Agency Deputy Administrator Janet McCabe

## **Moving forward**

Building on our strengths and longstanding tradition of facilitating cooperation and promoting public participation, we will strengthen our resolve to modernize and enhance the effectiveness of our regional efforts to conserve and protect our shared environment. We will strive to expand our collaboration by promoting awareness of environmental issues of common concern as well as advancing solutions to our environmental challenges, with a view to ensuring a more sustainable future for our communities across North America, by sharing knowledge in support of evidence-based decision-making, and by contributing to building capacity in communities across the region.

We affirm the urgent need to tackle the devastating effects that climate change poses to the well-being of our communities. We emphasize the unequivocal threat of the unfolding climate crisis, ranging from increased, recurring and more intense extreme weather events, such as floods, wildfires, and drought, to the implications of climate change to our food systems, to our continent’s biodiversity, and to vulnerable and underserved communities, which all have lasting environmental, economic, and societal impacts. We recognize the importance of adequately assessing the impacts of climate change, including estimating the social cost of greenhouse gas emissions. We will continue to collaborate to advance this work.

We underline the importance of promoting collective action to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, including in relation to innovation and climate adaptation approaches, to ensure clean air, land, and water for present and future generations, and to conserve and protect our ecosystems and the rich flora and fauna found in our shared environment.

The path to a healthier environment and meaningful progress toward sustainable development in our region depends on our collective determination to succeed, as well as on the persistence to find and promote solutions that protect the environment, support the sustainable use and conservation of our natural resources, and maximize the socio-economic benefits from empowering our communities.

We greatly look forward to our continuing work on regional environmental cooperation and meeting together next year at the CEC’s 2024 Council Session in the United States.

APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL:

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