

Ottawa, 19 June 2002

COUNCIL RESOLUTION: 02-06

Cooperative Agenda for Children's Health and the Environment in North America

THE COUNCIL:

HAVING ADOPTED Council Resolution 00-10, whereby the Parties recognized the particular vulnerabilities of children to environmental risks and agreed to collaborate on the development of a cooperative agenda that promotes the protection of children's health from environmental risks;

IN ACCORDANCE with Council Resolution 00-10, whereby the Parties decided to focus, as a starting point, on specific health outcomes such as asthma and other respiratory diseases, the effects of lead including lead poisoning, and the effects of exposure to other toxic substances;

TAKING into consideration, with appreciation, Advice to Council 02-01 from the Expert Advisory Board on Children's Health and the Environment, Advice to Council 02-01 from the Joint Public Advisory Committee of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), and comments received from the public;

NOTING the productive and informative meeting held with the Expert Advisory Board members during the Council's Ninth Regular Session on 18 June 2002 in Ottawa;

ACKNOWLEDGING the progress of the CEC in integrating children's environmental health into its ongoing activities;

RECOGNIZING that effective domestic and trilateral solutions to address children's health and the environment require a solid knowledge base, education and outreach, and partnerships; and

RECOGNIZING that protecting children's health from environmental risks is an ongoing task and a long-term investment, and understanding that increased knowledge will continue to inform and shape planned activities and projects to maximize their effectiveness and relevance;

HEREBY:

ADOPTS the Cooperative Agenda for Children's Health and the Environment in North America (Cooperative Agenda);

CALLS UPON the Parties to work together with the CEC Secretariat to implement the Cooperative Agenda by undertaking the following new initiatives over the next two years:

- select and publish a core set of children's environmental health indicators for North America, working in partnership with the Pan American Health Organization, the International Joint Commission Health Professionals Task Force and others, and in coordination with parallel commitments made by the G-8 Environment Ministers and the Health and Environment Ministerial of the Americas;
- form strategic partnerships with health organizations, including the trilateral network of Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units, to strengthen professional training on children's environmental health, with a view toward enabling health professionals to serve as effective conduits of information and advice to parents, care givers, children, and communities;
- strengthen decision-making capacity by enhancing the understanding of the economic impacts of environment-related illnesses and effects on children, including the implications of action versus inaction;
- advance understanding of risk assessment approaches with a view to increasing collaboration on toxic substances and increasing the cadre of risk assessors trained in children's environmental health risk assessment; and
- work together trilaterally, in the context of increasing cross-border trade, to reduce the risks posed by lead in consumer products, in particular those intended for use by children.

AGREES to continue the integration of children's environmental health considerations into the CEC work program. This includes continuing work on the following projects:

- facilitating collaboration on longitudinal cohort studies with a view to improving our common understanding of children's exposures, body burdens, and health outcomes during the course of their growth and development, building on the National Children's Study in the United States;
- assessing the impact of diesel exhaust at congested border crossings as part of the CEC's Air Quality project, and exploring the use of the developed methodology to address other regions and contaminants of concern;

- working to prevent and reduce children’s exposure to lead by promoting increased public awareness and improved practices within selected cottage industries, such as the ceramics industry in Mexico;
- continuing to ensure the integration of a children’s environmental health perspective into the work of the CEC’s Sound Management of Chemicals program;
- analyzing and publishing data on toxic chemicals that are of particular concern to children’s health within the *Taking Stock* report series; and
- continuing efforts to build public awareness and facilitate access to information on issues of children’s environmental health and preventive measures, through existing CEC projects and publications and in partnership with other groups;

AGREES, in addition to the focus on asthma and respiratory diseases and the effects of lead and other toxic substances, to include water-borne diseases as a priority health endpoint, and DIRECTS the CEC Secretariat, in coordination with the Parties, to develop options for collaborative action in this area;

CALLS FOR the North American Regional Action Plan on environmental monitoring and assessment to include bio-monitoring of persistent bioaccumulative toxics - in particular, mercury and lead - in infants, children, pregnant women, and women of child-bearing age; and

AGREES to bi-annually review progress achieved, assess relevance of planned activities in light of new knowledge acquired, and further advance the implementation of the Cooperative Agenda with the input and involvement of interested parties and members of the public.

APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL:

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