

Ottawa, 19 June 2002

COUNCIL RESOLUTION: 02-08

**Adoption of a North American Regional Action Plan (NARAP) on
Environmental Monitoring and Assessment**

THE COUNCIL:

RECOGNIZING that many persistent toxic substances, including persistent organic pollutants and certain heavy metals, can be transported long distances by the atmosphere and in marine, estuarine, and freshwater ecosystems;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that these pathways of transport often cross international boundaries and are of regional or global significance;

NOTING that many persistent toxic substances, once they have entered marine, estuarine, freshwater, and terrestrial ecosystems, have been shown to bioaccumulate to unacceptable levels in living organisms, including humans;

AWARE that the concentrations of persistent toxic substances found in human tissue and in the tissues of other living organisms may, under some circumstances, pose an unacceptable risk to human health and ecosystem integrity;

FURTHER NOTING that persistent toxic substances can have acute effects as well as long-term chronic effects that may become evident long after the initial exposure has occurred;

CONCERNED about the relative paucity of reliable information linking concentrations and fluxes of persistent toxic substances in ecosystems with concentrations in human tissue, including tissues from human populations likely to be more exposed, or more vulnerable, to persistent toxic substances in the environment;

NOTING the importance of bio-monitoring of persistent bioaccumulative toxics in infants, children, pregnant women, and women of child-bearing age;

RECOGNIZING the importance of having access to reliable, comparable, and relevant data and information on the levels, trends, and pathways of persistent and toxic substances in the North American environment and in human tissue;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the importance of having access to such data and information in order to assess progress that is being achieved as a result of actions to date, to determine and assess the levels and pathways of exposure to humans and ecosystems, and to identify emerging issues relevant to monitoring and assessment of persistent and toxic substances in North America;

REALIZING that the insights and expertise of experts involved in monitoring, research, and modeling of persistent toxic substances will be required to obtain reliable, comparable, and relevant data and information on these substances;

FURTHER REALIZING that, in many instances, new insights and understandings resulting from monitoring, research, and modeling activities will enhance the value of assessments of the status, pathways, and effects of persistent toxic substances;

CONVINCED that effective regional actions to promote greater regional cooperation and collaboration in the development, quality assurance, management and use of data and information on the levels, status, and trends of persistent and toxic substances in the North American environment will significantly improve the reliability, comparability, relevance and availability of such data and information;

SUPPORTING international efforts to reduce risks posed by toxic chemicals such as the 2001 *Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants* negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme and the recommendations contained in Chapter 19 of *Agenda 21* on reducing these risks;

RECALLING that, in accordance with Council Resolution 95-05, the Council established the North American Working Group for the Sound Management of Chemicals (SMOC Working Group) to work with the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) in implementing its sound management of chemicals (SMOC) program;

HAVING subsequently endorsed NARAPs on DDT, chlordane, PCBs, and mercury that were developed pursuant to Council Resolution 95-05; having directed in Council Resolution 99-01 that a NARAP on dioxins and furans and hexachlorobenzene be developed; and having directed in Council Resolution 02-07 that a NARAP on lindane be developed;

HAVING RESOLVED in Council Resolution 99-02 that the SMOC Working Group and the CEC should develop a NARAP on environmental monitoring and assessment in support of the SMOC initiative and, as provided in Council Resolution 00-10, that the SMOC program should ensure a strong focus on children's health in the development of such a draft NARAP;

RECALLING that Council Resolution 02-06, concerning the Cooperative Agenda for Children's Health and the Environment in North America, called for a NARAP 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;

NOTING that the SMOC Working Group established a North American Task Force to work with the CEC and others to develop the draft NARAP on environmental monitoring and assessment for the Council's consideration;

FURTHER NOTING that the SMOC Working Group has received a draft NARAP that was developed under the guidance of this Task Force and that this draft has been reviewed, revised, and endorsed by the SMOC Working Group;

HAVING RECEIVED the NARAP on environmental monitoring and assessment dated 3 June 2002 that was forwarded to the Council on 18 June 2002 after endorsement by the SMOC Working Group;

HAVING REVIEWED this proposed NARAP on environmental monitoring and assessment; and

RECOGNIZING that while some of the funding to implement this NARAP will be provided through the CEC, the implementation of some of the action items included in this action plan, especially those taking place in Mexico, could be greatly enhanced and accelerated if additional funds became available from other sources;

HEREBY:

ADOPTS this NARAP on environmental monitoring and assessment;

ESTABLISHES, in accordance with Action item 1 of this NARAP, a North American Standing Committee on Monitoring and Assessment that, under the guidance of the SMOC Working Group, will oversee and coordinate the ongoing implementation of this NARAP; and

DIRECTS the Standing Committee, the SMOC Working Group, and the CEC Secretariat to seek additional funds from national and international agencies, when required to assist in the implementation of those action items that could be enhanced and accelerated through provision of such funds.

APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL:

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