

SESSION 05-05 OF ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVES

SUMMARY RECORD

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) Council, represented by its Alternate Representatives, met via conference call on 14 June 2005. Ms. Jenna MacKay-Alie (Canada) chaired the meeting in replacement for David McGovern. Mr. José Manuel Bulás and Mr. Jerry Clifford represented Mexico and the United States, respectively. Mr. William Kennedy, CEC executive director, represented the Secretariat, Ms. Jane Gardner represented JPAC, 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 Introductions and review of agenda and objectives (including interventions by the executive director and JPAC representative)

The chair opened the session and offered apologies on behalf of David McGovern who was not able to join the conference call.

The Alternate Representatives adopted the agenda for their teleconference based on the provisional agenda.

The executive director began by reminding everyone that the Council session was only one week away. He indicated that in past years more background material had been provided by the Secretariat in support of the Council agenda but that this year, given that Parties were taking the lead and developing presentations on the three pillars, fewer supporting documents had been produced by the Secretariat. Nevertheless, he wanted to ensure that this met the satisfaction of the Parties and reiterated the desire of the Secretariat to provide any additional support which might be required in the coming week.

Turning to item 8 of the Council Agenda, *Discussion with representatives of the business associations*, he pointed out that the format had not yet been agreed upon by the Parties and conveyed that, consequently, no background information had been forwarded to the business representatives in support of that discussion. He asked Parties to use the opportunity of this conference call to provide guidance to the Secretariat on these outstanding issues.

Jane Gardner, the JPAC representative, indicated she had specific comments on the Council agenda which she would like to raise when this topic would be discussed under item 2.

Item 2 June 2005 Council Session

The Chair suggested reviewing the Council agenda by discussing each item at a time. This met the approval of her counterparts.

The Alternate Representatives agreed that under items 4, 5 and 6, presentations would be made Parties' experts to stimulate discussion among the Council members on the three pillars (Canada: information for decision-making; United States: trade and environment; and Mexico: capacity building for environmental management). The Alternate Representatives confirmed that their respective presentations would be circulated to all Parties and the Secretariat by 15 June. Mexico pointed to an e-mail they had distributed with a proposed format for the presentations in order to ensure their uniformity. Canada agreed with the need to ensure uniformity and suggested that distributing the presentations enough in advance might make this task easier.

The Chair indicated that the trade and environment strategic plan was nearing completion and urged the Parties to finalize their review. The Mexican representative expressed general support for the document.

The Chair then invited the United States representative to present the US proposed format for item 8, *Discussion with representatives of business associations*. The United States representative indicated that, in response to Mexico's concern regarding their limited knowledge of the capacity building project involving the World Environment Center, US was comfortable with eliminating the presentation by John Mizroch. He reported that the United States had taken initial steps in identifying the potential for partnership with the private sector and, as such, would be happy to make introductory comments under this item in order to set the context for the discussion. He indicated that the United States could also defer to Canada, as Chair and host, to make these introductory remarks. He pointed out the intent was to ensure that interventions by the representatives of the business associations be focused on identifying ideas for future actions.

The Mexican representative expressed support for this presentation to be made by Jerry Clifford. He stressed, however, the importance of reaching commitment on the part of the private sector as it refers to key elements of the work program. He indicated that he perceived the resolution as representing a framework for this commitment. He underlined that this meeting should not be a missed opportunity and indicated that Parties should define what they hoped to achieve in order to communicate it clearly to the business representatives.

The Canadian representative conveyed that Minister Dion would certainly express a strong commitment to work with the private sector and agreed on the importance of achieving commitment on both parts. The United States representative also confirmed that Administrator Johnson would be forceful in expressing his commitment to engaging the private sector. He indicated, however, that representatives of business associations who would be meeting with the Council under this item only represented three institutions and that many businesses would not be represented. Consequently, the United States viewed this discussion as an opportunity to stimulate ideas, join hands and agree to strengthening cooperation as prescribed by the TRAC report. He added that the United States viewed the resolution as a commitment to engaging the private sector more broadly to support the work of the CEC through finding areas of common interest. They also envisioned that, in the coming months, the Secretariat and the Parties could work at identifying potential areas for cooperation.

The Mexican representative expressed support for the US position. He pointed out however that as much information as possible should be provided to the business representatives in advance of

the discussion. The Alternate Representatives agreed that the Secretariat should be providing the business representatives with the TRAC report, the draft 2005-2010 strategic plan, a summary of project descriptions (to be circulated by Canada for US' and Mexico's consideration), and a series of questions for the business representatives which would serve to frame their discussion with Council (to be circulated by the United States for Canada's and Mexico's consideration).

The Alternate Representatives agreed that the resolution should not be forwarded since it would not be discussed under item 8 of the Council agenda. They also agreed that it should be signed in the context of the closing news conference.

In relation to the ministerial statement, the Chair confirmed that comments had been received from the United States and Mexico and that Canada would be submitting theirs before 15 June. The Secretariat confirmed that a finalized draft of the ministerial statement would be distributed to the Parties by 20 June.

In relation to the Official Dinner, the Chair confirmed that Minister Mulcair, Quebec Minister for Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, would be hosting the dinner and that two sets of remarks were being contemplated (by Minister Mulcair and Minister Dion) in order to avoid a long list of speakers. The Mexican representative asked to be seated near Secretary Cardenas in order to facilitate interpretation.

The Alternate Representatives agreed that an exchange of gifts should take place between the Council members and the Canadian representative confirmed she would ensure to allocate time for this exchange.

Item 3 Strategic Plan 2005–2010

Given the limited time available for this call, the United States representative indicated that the Alternate Representatives might not be able to make progress on outstanding issues related to the draft Strategic Plan. In regard to the Strategic Plan, the Mexican representative recognized the difficulty of moving away from the existing structure but underlined the need for the Strategic Plan to reflect how Parties were moving forward in a new direction. The Alternate Representatives agreed that the General Standing Committee should be tasked with resolving any outstanding issues before 17 June.

Item 4 Next session of the Alternate Representatives

The Alternate Representatives agreed that no meeting would take place on the margins of the Council Session. The United States representative indicated he would be forwarding a management proposal to be reviewed by his counterparts prior to the Council session.