



Commission de coopération environnementale

Comisión para la Cooperación Ambiental

Commission for Environmental Cooperation

Final Communiqué

CEC Council Session in Dallas, 12–13 June 2000

We, the environment ministers of Canada, Mexico and the United States, members of the Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, have met for our annual regular session on 12 and 13 June 2000 in Dallas to review and direct the program activities of the Commission and receive input and advice from the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC), and also from members of our national advisory bodies and the public. Discussions centered on: 1) Children's Health and the Environment; 2) the Sound Management of Chemicals (SMOC); 3) the Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR); 4) Citizen Submissions on Enforcement Matters, including release of the BC Hydro factual record; 5) Law and Policy; 6) Trade and Environment; 7) Conservation of Biodiversity; and 8) the North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation (NAFEC).

1. Children's Health and the Environment

- 1.1 One of the main priorities of our societies, and the most compelling inducement to environmental progress, is to provide conditions in which our children may grow up healthy and able to realize their full potential. We recognize that the health and well-being of North America's children depends upon clean environments.
- 1.2 We are grateful for the contributions and advice of the many distinguished participants in the CEC's recent symposium on *Children's Health and the Environment in North America*.
- 1.3 We take particular account of these fundamental messages emerging from the symposium: children may be more vulnerable to environmental hazards than adults because they eat and drink more for their size, they play and act differently from adults, and their bodies are still developing. Trilateral cooperation and coordinated action can further enhance national efforts to improve the health of North American children.
- 1.4 We endorse the ideals affirmed in the 1997 Declaration of the Environmental Leaders of the Eight on Children's Environmental Health, as well as Chapter 25 of Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. We note the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 1.5 We commit to working together as partners to develop a cooperative agenda to protect children from environmental threats with the overall objective of reducing human-made pressures on children's health.
- 1.6 We decide to focus, as a starting point, on specific health outcomes such as asthma and other respiratory diseases, and the effects of lead including lead poisoning, and the effects of exposure to other toxic substances.

2. Sound Management of Chemicals

- 2.1 The CEC's Sound Management of Chemicals (SMOC) program is an effective tool for reducing the presence of toxic chemicals in the North American environment, and presents important opportunities in the implementation of an agenda for children's health and the environment.

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- 2.2 Already, North America is well-advanced, through the SMOC initiative, in reducing the presence of a number of toxic chemicals across the region and has demonstrated North America's desire to rid itself of persistent organic pollutants (POPs). The three countries have developed North American Regional Action Plans (NARAPs) for chlordane, PCBs, and DDT. North America is now free of chlordane production and use. Mexico is very close to achieving its goal of phasing out DDT, virtually eliminating its release in North America. Two other NARAPs, one on dioxins and furans and hexachlorobenzene and the other on environmental monitoring and assessment, are under development.
- 2.3 We approve the proposed NARAP on mercury. Mercury is a bio-accumulative toxin that causes birth defects and developmental impairment in children. Fish consumption is considered to be the primary route of exposure.
- 2.4 Lindane is a persistent organic pollutant that is registered for use as a pesticide and insecticide in all three of the North American countries. It bio-accumulates in wildlife and humans and a wide variety of toxicological effects have been recorded, such as reproductive and endocrine impairments, and it can be neurotoxic, immunotoxic, mutagenic, genotoxic and carcinogenic. We look forward to receiving comments on the proposal of the Substance Selection Task Force for the development of a lindane NARAP, which is currently under public consultation.

3. Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR)

- 3.1 The CEC's annual PRTR report, *Taking Stock*, provides a regional overview of on-site releases of industrial pollutants directly into the air, land and water, as well as off-site transfers for treatment or disposal. Since their inception in the United States and Canada, PRTRs have become a valuable 'right to know' tool for the public, providing a useful indicator of society's progress in addressing pollution.
- 3.2 Recognizing the growing interest in PRTRs worldwide and North America's role as a leader in the field, we reaffirm our commitment to continue our individual and collective efforts to promote PRTRs and their development as well as public access domestically, regionally and internationally, and to promoting enhanced comparability among the national PRTR systems.
- 3.3 We recognize that there is a set of basic elements central to the effectiveness of PRTR systems, which includes reporting on individual substances that is also facility-specific, multi-media (i.e., releases to air, water, land and underground injection, and transfers for further management), mandatory, periodic (e.g., annually), and which allows for public disclosure of reported data on a facility- and chemical-specific basis. We also recognize that the basic elements of national PRTRs also include: standardized database structures to facilitate electronic reporting, collection, analysis and dissemination; limiting data confidentiality and indicating what is held confidential; a comprehensive scope; and a mechanism for public feedback for continual improvement of the system.

4. Citizen Submissions on Enforcement Matters

- 4.1 We agreed by consensus to release to the public the BC Hydro factual record (relating to citizen submission SEM-97-001). We reaffirm our commitment to the citizen submission process and to a transparent process for engaging the public on issues related to the implementation of this mechanism.
- 4.2 We agree that issues concerning the implementation and further elaboration of Articles 14 and 15 of the Agreement may be referred to the JPAC so that it may conduct a public review with a view to providing advice to the Council as to how these issues might be addressed. These issues can also be brought to the attention of the Council by any Party, the Secretariat, members of the public through the JPAC or the JPAC itself.
- 4.3 Any decision taken by the Council following advice received by the JPAC will be explained in writing by the Parties and such explanations will be made public.

5. Law and Policy

- 5.1 We endorse the guidance document “Improving Environmental Performance and Compliance: 10 Elements of Effective Environmental Management Systems,” thereby demonstrating that our three countries are working cooperatively to help organizations improve their ability to achieve and maintain compliance, and improve their environmental performance and move “beyond compliance.” This document represents the first time the Parties have jointly stated how voluntary EMSs designed for internal management purposes can also serve the broader public policy goals of compliance assurance and improved environmental performance in regulated and non-regulated areas.
- 5.2 We believe this guidance document complements existing EMS models. EMSs do not replace the regulatory system, nor does the adoption of an EMS, alone, constitute compliance.

6. Trade and Environment

- 6.1 We continue to place importance on our environment and trade work, and are committed to building on the progress achieved. We note that CEC discussions are already under way about the use of precaution as an important element of domestic environment and health policies, and its context-specific nature. We encourage continued exchanges among respective trade and environment officials on the use of precaution in the Parties’ environmental policies. We also encourage continued discussions of the contribution that environmental labeling, certification and mutual recognition might play in supporting environmental, economic and social objectives.
- 6.2 We look forward to the North American Symposium on Understanding the Linkages between Trade and Environment, to be held 11–12 October 2000, in Washington, DC. We welcome the update on preparations provided by the symposium chair, former Quebec premier Pierre Marc Johnson, and we are grateful for Dr. Johnson’s leadership on this important work.
- 6.3 We congratulate the participants in the successful workshop in Oaxaca where opportunities were explored to employ eco-labeling of shade grown coffee as a means of harnessing consumer power to the task of protecting important forests, biodiversity, and a way of life in Mexico. We welcome the expression of interest by workshop participants, in particular the suppliers of shade-grown, fairly-traded and organic coffees, in working together towards a North American market niche for sustainable coffee. We will consider further work to advance private sector efforts to expand markets for sustainable coffee, recognizing the value of the opportunity to gain experience in the field of voluntary eco-labeling and certification. We welcome as an important step forward the joint meeting of the CEC Article 10(6) Environmental and Trade Officials Group and the NAFTA Working Group on Standards-Related Measures to be held on 23 June 2000, in Ottawa. We find useful the CEC’s online database on labeling and certification, covering coffee, office products, tourism and green electricity schemes.

7. Conservation of Biodiversity

- 7.1 Canada, Mexico and the United States are not only increasingly linked through economic, social and cultural exchanges, but also share many ecosystems and migratory species. Existing strategies for biodiversity conservation in the region are not coping with the impacts caused by ever-increasing levels of development. Nor are they likely to address adequately the relatively new problems of climate change and increased numbers of invasive species. Both problems threaten ecosystem health, biodiversity and their benefits to society.

- 7.2 Therefore, the Parties agreed in 1999 to initiate trilateral cooperation aimed at conserving species of common concern. In close cooperation with the Canada/Mexico/US Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management, and reflecting both the need and opportunity for working on a regional scale, the Parties will focus initially on 17 species of common concern. These species are:

Species of Common Conservation Concern (SCCC)	
Mammals	Birds
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Black-tailed prairie dog• Sonoran pronghorn• Lesser long-nosed bat• Mexican long-nosed bat• Mexican black bear• Gray wolf	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ferruginous Hawk• Peregrine Falcon• Loggerhead Shrike• Piping Plover• Mountain Plover• Northern Spotted Owl• Mexican Spotted Owl• Golden-cheeked Warbler• Whooping Crane• California Condor• Burrowing Owl

- 7.3 We agree to carry out concerted action for developing habitat conservation initiatives and establishing international species conservation teams, and are seeking public comment on the proposed action plans.
- 7.4 We recognize that marine and coastal resources are essential for the social and economic well-being of our three countries, providing food, raw materials for industry, new medicines to improve health, unparalleled recreational experiences and much more. These resources are experiencing greatly increased pressures as the result of rapid population growth and accompanying development. Moreover, these critical marine and coastal resources are threatened by the potential sea level rise that would accompany unchecked climate change.
- 7.5 We are committed to the protection of marine biodiversity, through the establishment of a marine protected areas network, mapping marine ecosystems, addressing the threats of invasive species, and reducing the impact of land-based activities on the marine environment.
- 7.6 We are committed to increase information exchange to support conservation and expand use of the North American Biodiversity Information Network (NABIN) as a key mechanism for sharing information, and for modeling the potential ecosystem effects of climate change and the continental range of invasive species.

8. North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation

We agreed that funding for NAFEC shall be continued at its current level. NAFEC plays a valuable role in helping to promote sustainable development at the local level and in supporting specific projects in the CEC's work plan. Council reaffirms its commitment to the Fund and will explore alternatives for additional funding.

9. Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC)

We thank the JPAC members for the important contribution they continue to make in engaging the public and a variety of stakeholders in the work of the CEC. In particular, we welcome the advice provided by the JPAC on matters relating to the citizen's submission process (Articles 14 and 15). We thank the JPAC for taking on its important new responsibility with respect to this process.

10. CEC Budget and Next Meeting of Council

We agree to continue to support the CEC at the level of US\$9 million for the year 2001. We agree to meet in Mexico for the next regular session of Council in June 2001.

The CEC was established by Canada, Mexico and the United States to build cooperation among the NAFTA partners in implementing the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC), the environmental side accord to NAFTA. The CEC addresses environmental issues of continental concern, with particular attention to the environmental challenges and opportunities presented by continent-wide free trade. The Council, the CEC's governing body, is composed of the federal environment ministers (or the equivalent) of the three countries, and meets once a year. Attending this seventh session of Council were Canadian Environment Minister David Anderson, Mexican Secretary for the Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries Julia Carabias Lillo, and US Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol M. Browner (USA). The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) is a 15-member, independent, volunteer body that provides advice and public input to Council on any matter within the scope of NAAEC.