

CEC Ministerial Statement – 2015

Twenty-second Regular Session of the CEC Council

Boston, MA, United States, 15 July 2015—We, the governing Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), met in Boston, one of North America’s model green cities, to celebrate the long-standing environmental cooperation among our three countries: Canada, Mexico and the United States.

This meeting was particularly timely, as Council members endorsed a blueprint that will guide our work under the CEC for the next five years. In order to make the CEC more relevant, we are bringing new perspectives from our local and indigenous communities and learning from their knowledge to make better environmental management decisions.

Our 22nd annual Regular Session focused on the theme of *Climate Adaptation and Resilience* and gave us the opportunity to interact with the CEC’s Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) and civil society to share success stories on the innovative strategies, tools and initiatives that can help our communities better address the effects of climate change.

CEC Strategic Plan 2015–2020

In Boston, we endorsed the CEC’s Strategic Plan for 2015–2020, which builds on our efforts from the past five years. Collaboration amongst the North American partners is of paramount importance. The plan presents our shared priorities in working through the CEC to complement key domestic and international initiatives taken by each of our governments on addressing environmental challenges.

The strategic priorities for the next five years are: climate change mitigation and adaptation, green growth, and sustainable communities and ecosystems. Our strategic priorities and guiding cross-cutting themes build on more than 20 years of trilateral cooperation. Through the CEC, we are better able to address pressing environmental challenges that require a coordinated regional and international response.

Looking toward the future, we discussed the possibility of using the CEC as a vehicle for regional cooperation to address the nexus between the climate change and other important issues such as water quantity and quality, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and oceans.

CEC Operational Plan 2015–2016

Today, we also reaffirmed the CEC’s Operational Plan for 2015–2016, which is focused on producing tangible outcomes and measurable results to deliver on our strategic vision. The plan describes the CEC activities proposed for the next two years, including 16 new projects that bring together our experts on work such as exploring the benefits of blue

carbon in the environment, supporting chemicals management, developing a North American approach to marine protected area management, and reducing maritime shipping emissions, as well as improving the conservation status of migratory birds that breed in the Arctic, and strengthening monarch butterfly and pollinator conservation.

NAPECA

We launched the third cycle of a two-year grant program that supports environmental action at the community level. We allocated C\$1.325 million of the CEC budget to support the North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA). This will ensure that the NAPECA continues to fund innovative community-based projects that engage indigenous communities, nongovernmental organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to address local environmental challenges. We welcome NAPECA project proposals that focus on sustainable communities or urban initiatives that have measurable objectives and benefits to local communities.

Joint Public Advisory Committee

We acknowledge and greatly appreciate the contributions to North American environmental stewardship made by the members of JPAC, and their renewed efforts to reach out to civil society on issues that matter to them. JPAC's role is vital in keeping the CEC as a global model for trilateral cooperation.

In conjunction with the Council meeting, JPAC held a session on the theme of how green infrastructure and land-use planning are important tools for communities in adapting to a changing climate and managing excess stormwater. JPAC heard from members of the public through an open forum and workshop. The public provided valuable input for the Council to consider in finding trilateral solutions for environmental issues that face us today.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) provides a critical and integral contribution to environmental decision-making. This is why we are pleased to announce the creation of a Roster of Experts on TEK from Canada, Mexico and the United States. The 15 distinguished members of the roster—five from each country—will advise the Council through JPAC on opportunities to apply TEK to the CEC's operations and policy recommendations. This is the first traditional ecological knowledge panel to be named to a trilateral organization such as the CEC.

We established the Roster to demonstrate our commitment made at last year's annual session held in Yellowknife, Canada, to work effectively with local and indigenous communities across our continent.

Executive Director

We extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to CEC Executive Director Irasema Coronado for her leadership and longstanding dedication to the CEC, which goes back in various roles to the very beginning of this unique organization.

Conclusion

We look forward to meeting next year in Mexico and working closely with JPAC, the TEK Roster of Experts, and all of the stakeholders and members of civil society who ensure that the CEC stays relevant in its third decade as a model of trilateral cooperation on the North American environment.

APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL:

Leona Aglukkaq
Government of Canada

Rodolfo Lacy Tamayo
Government of the United Mexican States

Gina McCarthy
Government of the United States of America