



**Advice to Council No: 18-01**

**JPAC Expert Forum on the Future of Environmental Cooperation in North America**

The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) of North America:

**IN ACCORDANCE** with Article 16(4) of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC), which states that JPAC “may provide advice to Council on any matter within the scope of this agreement (...) and on the implementation and further elaboration of this agreement, and may perform such functions as the Council may direct;”

**HAVING** conducted an expert forum to discuss future areas of trilateral environmental cooperation and enhancement of private sector engagement in future CEC initiatives, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, United States, on 26 June 2018;

**RECALLING** that Canada, Mexico and the United States, as United Nations member states, have endorsed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes the following Global Goals and related Targets:

- Sustainable Development Goal 7: *Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all* and Target 7.A: *By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology;*
- Sustainable Development Goal 8, *Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*, and Target 8.2: *Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors;*
- Sustainable Development Goal 9, *Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation*, includes Target 9.4: *By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities;*
- Sustainable Development Goal 12, *Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns*, and Target 12.6: *Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle;*

**REAFFIRMING** the status of the NAAEC as a stand-alone agreement that constitutes a separate legal instrument from the NAFTA and, in addition to containing NAFTA-related goals (Article 1(d), NAAEC), also assumes a much broader overarching objective to "foster the protection and improvement of the environment in the territories of the Parties for the well-being of present and future generation [...]" (Article 1(a), NAAEC);

**EMPHASIZING** that the CEC's role in North American environmental cooperation will become increasingly important under emergent borderless environmental challenges facing North American communities and should thus continue into the future independently from the outcome of current NAFTA negotiations;

**SUBMITS** the following recommendations for Council's consideration:

**Recommendation #1: Focus the CEC's role in North American environmental cooperation toward promoting and enhancing implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in all three countries by:**

- Using the convening role of the CEC to advance the exchange of knowledge on business models for sustainable innovation, promote and link sustainable business management practices (such as technological and organizational innovations) across the three countries, and foster the competitiveness of North American sustainability innovations at the global level.
- Facilitating and enhancing trilateral cooperation on measuring key performance metrics related to sustainable development, examining pathways for accelerating decarbonization in critical sectors such as energy, transport and construction, and enabling the establishment of sustainable trade corridors implicating the three countries.

**Recommendation #2: Utilize existing national and subnational networks to increase the local and regional impact of the CEC. Give particular emphasis on disseminating projects and tools developed under the CEC that foster greater understanding of how to address known and emerging environmental risks affecting North America by means of innovative governmental, business and community practices and sustainable development initiatives. Such practices and initiatives might include:**

- Active collaboration with national industry and commerce associations, research institutes, universities and their associations, and federal-state/provincial and municipal consortiums involved in sustainable development discussions.
- Share environmental best practices with special emphasis on waste management and efficiency indicators in specific industries and sectors across North America.
- Enhance the visibility of CEC's initiatives by connecting them more effectively with different federal agencies/departments involved in sustainable development (Energy, Transportation, Commerce, Finance, etc.).

**Recommendation #3: Strengthen the CEC's focus on spearheading North America's transition to a low-carbon economy, by taking actions which include, without limitation:**

- Provide support to the private sector in the three countries toward the adoption of circular economy (lifecycle-based) operational models and supply chain systems in order to

reduce waste, optimize the use of raw and secondary materials and provide opportunities for sustainable employment.

- Enhance the meaningful engagement of indigenous peoples with the CEC in the areas of sustainable business innovation and environmental cooperation—for example, through the promotion of indigenous innovation and new venture creation in renewable energy and other areas of land and resource management.
- Analyze and monitor financial and investment trends and practices across North America with the aim of promoting and exchanging knowledge on expanding investment for sustainable development.
- Explore potential partnerships with international organizations that have existing business engagement strategies, for the mutual sharing of best practices (e.g., IUCN).

JPAC is confident that the recommendations contained herein are relevant to the CEC Council's strategic priorities and is unanimous in supporting this Advice to Council.

**Approved by the JPAC members  
24 July 2018**