



Advice to Council No: 17-04

Re: Outputs from JPAC Public Forum “Increasing Resilience through Cooperation: Empowering Coastal, Shoreline, and Riverbank Communities in North America” in Charlottetown (June 2017)

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 a public forum to discuss capacity in the three countries for increasing the resilience of coastal, shoreline, and riverbank communities within North America, in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada, on 27 June 2017;

RECOGNIZING that:

- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 11, *Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*, includes Target 11.5, envisions making a substantial decrease by 2030 in direct economic losses caused by disasters, including those that are water-related; as well as target 11.B which seeks to increase the number of cities and human settlements that develop and implement holistic disaster risk management at all levels by 2020;
- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14, *Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*, includes Target 14.1, envisions a significant reduction in marine pollution by 2025, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution; as well as target 14.2, which seeks to sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, by strengthening resilience and restoration efforts by 2020; and

NOTING that local coastal and marine industries and businesses, such as the aquaculture industry, which export their products across the continent, are directly benefiting from the North American Free Trade Agreement;

SUBMITS the following recommendations for Council's consideration:

Recommendation #1: Support North American coastal, shoreline, and riverbank communities in developing a sustainable tourism industry in harmony with other economic activities and resource protection and management.

Commercial tourism activities can help develop the economy of small coastal and shoreline communities and can also have an important impact on their fragile ecosystems, especially in the case of internationally- recognized protected areas (e.g., wetlands, coral reefs, protected marine areas). JPAC urges Council and the Secretariat to support coastal, shoreline, and riverbank communities in the environmental and social sustainability of their tourism industry, considering the importance of the resulting economic exchanges between the three countries.

Recommendation #2: Facilitate capacity building of small island communities through collaboration with national and international initiatives.

Small island communities are highly vulnerable to severe weather events and long-term climatic changes, resulting in significant economic hardships and financial burdens for businesses, governments, and local citizens. Facilitating collaboration with state, provincial, and national agencies can help these communities develop capacity to address these challenges. Local island communities and governments can also benefit from the work of the CEC by becoming connected with other North American communities faced with similar issues and with higher decision-making processes at national and international levels (e.g., UNESCO).

Recommendation #3: Facilitate sharing knowledge of best practices for sustainability in the aquaculture industry across North America.

As the aquaculture industry provides year-round employment, in comparison to the seasonal wild fisheries, best practices in sustainability from a region could help other areas in North America strengthen their aquaculture industry and thus support long-term employment and prosperity. The aquaculture industry could also benefit from traditional ecological knowledge of indigenous communities across North America. JPAC urges Council and the Secretariat to support projects that facilitate the sharing of knowledge and sustainability best practices in the aquaculture industry.

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
10 August 2017**