

Ottawa, 19 June 2002

COUNCIL RESOLUTION 02-05

Action Plan to Enhance Comparability Among Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs) in North America

THE COUNCIL:

REAFFIRMING the goals and principles outlined in Council Resolutions 97-04 and 00-07;

NOTING the progress achieved on the objectives set forth in Council Resolution 97-04 on enhancing comparability of PRTRs, including the annual publication of the *Taking Stock* report; and the successful development of the “*Taking Stock Online*” web site, which provides users with flexible access to the matched North American data sets;

ENCOURAGED by the progress achieved since the adoption of Council Resolution 97-04 in increasing the comparability among the PRTR systems in North America, in particular, the important step taken by Mexico with its passage of enabling legislation for a mandatory and publicly accessible PRTR, and the developments in the Canadian and United States PRTRs that have led to a 50 percent increase in the amount of data that are now comparable on a cross-border basis;

REAFFIRMING the importance of continued cooperation among the national PRTRs as a means of promoting enhanced comparability and improvements, and the role of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) in facilitating this process;

NOTING WITH INTEREST recent activities of the CEC to promote and explore uses of PRTR data, including the outcomes of the workshop of 23 March 2002, among academics in North America on the diverse uses of PRTR data in academic and policy-relevant research; the work of the Ad Hoc PRTR group to promote PRTR development, access and use;

FURTHER NOTING WITH INTEREST the recommendations of the PRTR Coordinating Group to strengthen linkages with the Sound Management of Chemicals project (SMOC) on chemicals of common concern, including mercury, dioxins, furans and hexachlorobenzene, as a means of promoting and tracking reductions; and the value of PRTR data for improving our understanding of the movement of specific chemicals in hazardous waste that are shipped off-site from facilities and, in some cases, across borders;

CONSIDERING the increasing focus on PRTRs worldwide, and the increasing interest of other countries and regions in the experiences gained in North America with compiling and tracking PRTR data on a regional basis;

NOTING the involvement of the CEC and the Parties in relevant international fora including the Inter-Organisation Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals PRTR Coordinating Group and the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety;

HEREBY:

ADOPTS the *Action Plan to Enhance the Comparability of North American PRTRs* and commits to pursuing, individually and collectively, the progressive implementation of the strategies outlined therein, according to each nation's capacities and the state of development of the PRTR system in each country;

AGREES to focus, as a matter of priority, on:

- adopting the use of the North American Industrial Classification System codes in the national PRTR reporting systems of Mexico and the United States;
- pursuing comparability in the manner in which PRTR data on persistent bioaccumulative toxic substances—mercury, dioxins and furans, and lead, in particular—are reported under the three national PRTR programs, while taking into account technical, economical, and regulatory capacities of each country;
- exploring the adoption, where appropriate and in light of national priority substances, of activity-based reporting thresholds under the Mexican *Registro de Emisiones y Transferencia de Contaminantes* (RETC) as an important step towards enhancing trilateral comparability of the national PRTRs; and
- supporting Mexico in its efforts to achieve a mandatory PRTR reporting system (including but not limited to the following areas: a) data collection and processing; b) data quality; c) use of the PRTR data to facilitate environmental improvements) and provide public access to data from the RETC on a chemical-specific and facility-specific basis;

DIRECTS the CEC Secretariat to expeditiously undertake or facilitate, as appropriate, the specific actions described in the Action Plan; and

DIRECTS the CEC Secretariat and CALLS UPON the three Parties, through their national PRTR programs, to explore ways of fostering reductions by industries across North America in the release and transfer of substances of common concern, possibly including a trilateral challenge program that would build on the experiences of the successful United States 33/50 program, the Canadian Accelerated Reduction/Elimination of Toxics, and other similar programs.

APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL:

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