



ADVICE TO COUNCIL NO: 03-02

Re: Second North American Symposium on Assessing the Environmental Effects of Trade

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 (composed of the environment ministers of the three NAFTA countries) on any matter within the scope of this agreement [...] and on the implementation and further elaboration of this agreement, and may perform such other functions as the Council may direct";

HAVING participated in the second North American Symposium on Assessing the Environmental Effects of Trade organized by the CEC, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), held on 25–26 March 2003, in Mexico City;

CONGRATULATING the CEC Secretariat for the high quality of work being conducted and plans for future initiatives;

JPAC RECOMMENDS THAT COUNCIL:

- Encourage governments to develop a baseline set of economic and environmental conditions at the outset of NAFTA in order to permit an assessment of environmental and economic impacts over the past 10 years. JPAC recommends that the annual inflation rate be taken in consideration in the preparation of the budget.
- Instruct the Secretariat to identify market mechanisms that support the development of new technologies and facilitate the transfer of technology for the efficient and environmentally sound use of energy and natural resources.
- Build on the momentum from the CEC's work on trade and the environment, that Council work with their trade counterparts through NAAEC Article 10(6) to build an environmentally friendly trade regime in the Free Trade of the Americas Agreement negotiations and promote its benefits.

Understanding the need expressed by experts and the public participating in the symposium to begin integrating existing information into policy development, JPAC further recommends that:

- Council instruct the Secretariat to develop assessments of the positive and negative impacts of subsidy systems on the environment and the natural capital of North America.

Another important result of the symposium was a better understanding of the how trade agreements and trade decisions can impact indigenous peoples, their collective rights and their lands and how ill-suited trade fora are for examining and dealing with these issues. JPAC commends the Secretariat for organizing a special session during the symposium on trade and indigenous peoples and further recommends that:

- The CEC continue efforts to better understand and integrate indigenous issues in its work on trade and the environment and continue to seek the views of indigenous peoples themselves on how best to do this.

Finally, it is also important to note that discussions during the symposium again underscored the importance of concluding an agreement on transboundary environmental impact assessment to ensure that the broad range of societal interests are part of trade and development decision-making. If the common societal goals identified in the NAAEC are assumed, then mechanisms are required to promote those goals.

JPAC will continue to follow closely the evolution of this important area of work in the 2004 CEC Program Plan.

APPROVED BY JPAC
27 March 2003