

REGULATORY COOPERATION IN THE AREA OF CHEMICALS

Objective: Canada, Mexico and the United States agree that one of the key elements of the Security and Prosperity Partnership is to advance trilateral regulatory cooperation to accelerate and improve the effectiveness of actions to safeguard our health and environment, as well as providing cost-effectiveness for business and governments, and maximizing trade in goods and services, while not impinging upon each country's authority to make regulatory decisions. American, Canadian, and Mexican officials have been discussing the potential for strengthened regulatory cooperation among our countries in the area of chemicals. This cooperation entails exchange of information and knowledge leading to increased capacity-building, better alignment of country work programs, and enhanced coordination of chemical assessment and management programs across North America.

Progress/results: Science-based regulatory assessment and management of chemicals can be supported through regular exchange of data, resulting from each other's domestic experience, among regulators. Recognizing the challenges and differences of our countries, we believe that enhanced sharing of information can lead to improving compatibility, recognition and equivalence to the extent appropriate of domestic measures. This is particularly relevant with respect to the management of chemicals, including those in products. This can be achieved through the development of mechanisms that enable the sharing of scientific information used for domestic regulatory processes and expansion of ongoing programs including: Canada's Chemical Management Plan; the United States High Production Volume Challenge; the development and updating of chemical inventories and exposure and use information; research and development on new approaches to testing and assessment; and the Mutual Acceptance of Notifications work program under the OECD.

Information and knowledge-sharing mechanisms represent cost effective tools to maximize appropriate coordination of chemical assessment and management programs in Canada, the United States, and Mexico that would result in a strengthened regional chemical management approach in North America.

The sharing of scientific information is also complemented by regular exchange, to the extent possible given domestic authorities, of knowledge and best practices for the assessment and management of chemicals among Canadian, American and Mexican policy-makers and regulators. While our focus today is on our region, our cooperation can also help us convey more coordinated views on practical approaches to the development and promotion of chemical assessment and management efforts consistent with ours, and the development and adoption of international standards that recognize and support our domestic and regional approaches and priorities.

The impact of our concerted efforts relies on the capacity of our countries to develop the knowledge base necessary to inform decision-making and to properly develop and implement chemical-related actions protective of health and the environment. Where capacity needs exist, for example, in the context of chemical inventories development and

maintenance, we, as a region, need to respond to these needs to effectively deliver on our regional objectives.

This cooperative approach will fully apply the results of ongoing United States assessment and management efforts related to high production volume chemicals, Canada's Chemical Management Plan, updated information on inventories, and Mexican efforts to develop a chemical inventory and implement international commitments to allow by 2012:

- the United States to assess and initiate needed action on the over 9,000 existing chemicals produced above 25,000 lbs/yr in the United States;
- Canada to complete assessment and take regulatory action on the Canadian highest priority substances as well as initiate assessment of medium priority substances;
- Mexico to develop an information system for dangerous materials; and
- the three countries to enhance appropriate coordination in areas including testing, research, information gathering, assessment, and risk management actions.

By 2020, the trilateral cooperation will strive to achieve the following:

- inventories of chemicals in commerce have been established and updated in all three countries;
- Mexico has enhanced its capacity to assess and manage chemicals; and
- the sound management of chemicals in North America as articulated by the World Summit on Sustainable Development Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and reinforced under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management,

and thereby contribute to improving our health and environment protection programs through strengthened chemical management in North America over the long term.

This foundation will send a strong signal to the rest of the world that North America is taking a practical and focussed approach to ensure the safety of chemicals and chemical products. It also complements the non-regulatory work done under the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) to address chemical issues.

Next Steps: Pursuant to our Leader's commitments made in Montebello, Canada on the 21st of August 2007, Canada and the United States will continue to work bilaterally to establish principles, priorities and processes for developing approaches, specific objectives, and timeframes, while at the same time working with Mexico to develop an approach for establishing a chemicals regime that is more consistent throughout North America with respect to chemicals identification, assessment and management.

The results of our joint efforts will be realized as this trilateral cooperation framework is implemented and as we achieve our international commitments. Work to implement this framework will begin in the fall 2007 as adjuncts to trilateral meetings on chemical management issues in Mexico and the United States.