

ON STANDARDS...***Does NAFTA set minimum environmental standards for its members?***

-- NAFTA discourages members from reducing their standards, while preserving their freedom to establish higher standards than currently apply.

-- Thus, each country's sovereignty over measures suitable to its own needs and conditions is preserved, while the environment is protected.

-- Canada also believes that the issue of the minimum standards necessary to protect the global environment is best addressed in multilateral agreements.

Could harmonization of international standards compromise Canadian public health and worker safety regulations under a NAFTA?

-- The short answer is no. Canada, Mexico and the U.S. share the same resolve to ensure that standards are not only maintained, but are improved.

-- Under the NAFTA, each country maintains the right to implement standards that are even more stringent than those recommended by international organizations.

-- Harmonization of standards certainly doesn't imply acceptance of the lowest common denominator. In the NAFTA, quite the contrary is the case. NAFTA countries specifically undertake to work together to improve standards affecting human, animal or plant life, or health or the environment.

Are the provinces going to be bound by the provisions on standards in the NAFTA?

-- The three countries have undertaken on a best endeavours basis to ensure that the provinces and States respect the basic rights and obligations of the standards provisions.

-- Since certain standards and enforcement activities fall within the domain of state and provincial governments, their participation is vital.