

The CEC consists of three principal components: the Council, the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) and the Secretariat. The Council, which is the governing body of the CEC and is composed of cabinet-level representatives from each of the three countries, most recently met in Mérida, Mexico, in June 1998. The Council reaffirmed its commitment to the CEC and called for a focus on environmental sustainability in open markets, and stewardship of the North American environment as outlined in its *Shared Agenda for Action*. This work program focuses on promoting trade in environmentally friendly goods and services and exploring the linkages between environment, economy and trade.

The Joint Public Advisory Committee is composed of 15 members, five from each of the three countries; it advises the Council on any matter within the scope of the Agreement. The Secretariat provides administrative, technical and operational support to the Council and is charged with the implementation of the annual work program under the direction of the Council. The Secretariat also plays a role in the consideration of complaints from non-governmental organizations or persons asserting a party's failure to enforce its environmental laws. So far, the Secretariat has received 20 submissions that qualified for further consideration by the Secretariat under the Submissions on Enforcement Matters process. These included eight submitted against Canada, four against the United States and eight against Mexico. All of these are at different stages of consideration by the Secretariat, ranging from assessing whether they merit requesting a response from a party to the actual preparation of a factual record in relation thereof. To date, a factual record for a Mexican submission has been developed and published and one for a Canadian submission is in preparation. A full list of these submissions and their status is available on the CEC website (www.cec.org). The Secretariat also prepares reports on any environmental matters within the scope of the annual program.

Regarding the NAAEC, the Canadian Intergovernmental Agreement provides a mechanism for provincial participation and has been signed by Alberta, Quebec and Manitoba. This agreement facilitates the provinces' participation in developing and managing Canada's involvement in the NAAEC.

