



this review included recommendations for strengthening the program of international cooperation managed by the NAOs and reinforcing the ministerial consultation process by, for example, commissioning special studies.

The Canadian Intergovernmental Agreement regarding the NAALC provides a mechanism for provincial participation and has been signed by Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec and P.E.I. This agreement gives the provinces a means to participate in developing and managing Canada's involvement in the NAALC. With the combined participation of these provinces and the federal government, the NAALC now covers more than 40% of the Canadian workforce.

As of March 1999, a total of 20 submissions had been received under the NAALC since its entry into force in January 1994. Twelve of the submissions were directed at Mexico, six at the United States. Two of the submissions were directed at Canada (closure of a McDonald's franchise in St-Hubert, Quebec, while unionization efforts were underway; and collective bargaining rights for rural postal carriers at Canada Post, which the U.S. declined to accept). Two submissions have been received at the Canadian NAO: one regarding labour practices at a plant in Ciudad de Los Reyes, Mexico, and the other regarding enforcement by the U.S. of employment standards legislation in workplaces employing foreign nationals. An update on these submissions and further information is available from the Canadian Office for Inter-American Labour Cooperation at its website (<http://labour.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/doc/nafta/>).

Environment

"Environmental issues are increasingly global in scope and require creative solutions. We need to ensure that trade agreements respect the sovereign right of governments to set environmental policy, while supporting trade goals. Together, the NAFTA and the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation ensure that trade liberalization and environmental protection are mutually reinforcing."

The Honourable Christine Stewart
Minister of the Environment

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) was created in 1994 by the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) to enhance regional environmental cooperation, reduce potential trade and environmental conflicts and promote the effective enforcement of environmental law. It also facilitates cooperation and public participation in efforts to foster conservation, protection and enhancement of the North American environment. The Agreement, signed by Canada, Mexico and the United States, and implemented alongside the NAFTA, demonstrates that the objectives of sustainable development and trade liberalization can be pursued in a mutually reinforcing manner.