

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

On September 14, 1993, Canada, the United States of America and Mexico signed the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation. It creates an operating framework for cooperation on environmental issues and a means to ensure that each of the three countries respects and enforces its environmental laws. The Agreement expands on commitments to environmental sustainable growth made by the three countries in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Canada ratified both the Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity on December 4, 1992. International meetings have been held in preparation for their entry into force. As of August 16, 1993, 31 States had ratified the Convention on Climate Change. This Convention will enter into force 90 days after the date of deposit of the 50th instrument of ratification. As of October 12, 1993, 31 States had ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity. This Convention will enter into force on December 29, 1993, which is 90 days after the date of deposit of the 30th instrument of ratification.

Within the context of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, negotiations for the Second Sulphur Protocol are continuing. Some delegations want this Protocol to be finalized before the end of this calendar year. Although the pace of negotiations has accelerated, it is not yet known whether that is a realistic goal.

In June of 1993, the OECD Council at Ministerial Level endorsed the report of the OECD Joint Session of Trade and Environment Experts. This report concerning trade and the environment was developed after intensive negotiations. The Joint Session concentrated on the identification, description, analysis and understanding of various factors which stand at the interface between trade and environmental policies. The procedural guidelines outlined in the second part of the report are intended "to help governments improve the mutual compatibility of trade and environmental policies and policy making". They address the following issues: transparency and consultation; trade and environmental examinations; reviews and follow-up; international environmental cooperation; and dispute settlement.