

The Law and the regulations establish SEDESOL's concurrent jurisdiction with the states and municipalities in specific environmental protection matters of local interest. As in Canada and the U.S., Mexican state laws and municipal ordinances enacted pursuant to the Law must be at least as stringent as the applicable federal regulations or standards. If so desired by the state or local government, they may be more stringent.

Mexico has a goal of increasing the decentralization of its environmental system. In the future, Mexican states will assume greater responsibility for environmental protection. To date, 29 of 31 Mexican states have adopted their own environmental laws.

### C. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

A near half-century of industrialization, concurrent population growth and massive urban expansion have produced, in some regions of Mexico, an environment very much in need of greater protection. The present government readily acknowledges and recognizes the need to improve on the past record of environmental protection and conservation. In the words of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, "A better quality of life for the Mexican population depends on the protection of our environment. This is just as important as the actions taken by the government and the private sector regarding trade, the foreign debt and modern technology in factories."<sup>53</sup> The Salinas administration believes that once Mexico's citizens begin to experience the benefits of improved environmental quality, rising levels of expectation will drive the process forward.<sup>54</sup>

Like Canada's Green Plan, Mexico's National Development Plan recognizes that environmental protection is a requirement for economic growth. Based on this principle, the Department of Urban Development and Ecology prepared the National Program for Environmental Protection, 1990-1994, which is aimed at making the general development process compatible with re-establishing the quality of the environment and conserving and respecting natural resources. It is a comprehensive, government-wide program to integrate economic development and environmental protection and conservation.

The goal of the Program is to use environmental management as a tool for modernizing national development, advocating harmony between socio-economic growth and conservation over the long term. A strategy that mirrors the National Development Plan has been devised to achieve the Program's objectives.

The Program ensures that development activities are subject to environmental criteria and establishes objectives concerning:

- the conservation and preservation of natural resources, flora and fauna;
- clean air and water;
- the control, treatment and reduction of garbage and solid waste;
- ecological management;
- environmental impact and risk assessment;
- the legislative framework;
- the use of education to heighten environmental awareness;

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53. Mexico, Secretaria de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecologia, Mexico: Towards a Better Environment, p. 3.

54. Embassy of Mexico, Mexico Environmental Issues: Fact Sheets, June 1992, p. 2.