

J. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ALONG THE NORTHERN BORDER

Mexico and the U.S. share a 2,000-mile border along which they have joint responsibility for the protection of the environment. In 1983 they signed the U.S.-Mexico Agreement for the Protection and Improvement of the Environment in the Border Area. On November 27, 1990 Presidents Salinas and Bush directed their respective environmental authorities to develop a comprehensive border environmental plan. On February 25, 1992 the two governments jointly announced the completion of the Integrated Environmental Plan for the Mexican-U.S. Border Area.⁵⁹

In anticipation of the Plan, the Government of Mexico on October 24, 1991 announced a three-year US\$460-million program to protect the environment of its northern border area.⁶⁰ The 1992-94 commitment includes expenditures of \$220 million for sewage systems and waste-water plants; \$25 million for the collection, treatment and disposal of municipal solid waste; \$118 million for road construction; \$50 million for public transportation; \$43 million for the acquisition of 3,185 hectares of land; and \$4 million for contingencies.

K. INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION AND WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Mexico has signed and ratified nearly all international treaties and agreements for the protection of the world's environment and natural resources. It was the first country to ratify the Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol agreements for the protection of the ozone layer and is eliminating the use of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons on the same timetable as the industrialized nations. Most recently, Mexico played an active role in the June 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development. It signed the Conventions on Climate Change and Biological Diversity that were negotiated during that event.

Mexico ranks fourth among nations in the number of species found within its borders and has 12 of the world's 14 ecosystems. It has set aside 15 million acres of protected territory in 68 natural areas: 44 national parks, 8 biosphere reserves, 14 special biosphere reserves, one area of flora and fauna protection, and one national monument. Mexico was the first nation to create breeding sanctuaries for gray whales and operates nearly 60 marine turtle preserves as well as outlawing their capture and trade.

In 1991 President Salinas received the first Earth Prize, jointly conferred by the Nobel family and the UN, for environmental statesmanship. This honour recognized five achievements:

- creation of a four-year, US\$4.6-billion program to improve air quality in Mexico City;
- introduction of lead-free gasoline in Mexico;
- permanent closure of a major refinery in Mexico City;

59. United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Mexican Secretaria de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecologia, Integrated Environmental Plan.

60. Mexico, Secretariat of Social Development, Protecting the Environment.