



news release

Date

For release **March 18, 1992**

No. 55

CANADA TO PROVIDE MEXICO WITH \$1 MILLION WORTH OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, and the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Jean Charest, today announced \$1 million worth of projects to help Mexico improve its environmental monitoring and enforcement practices.

The package includes a mobile laboratory for on-site testing, training in environmental audit techniques, information exchanges on the treatment of industrial effluents, and the provision of codes of practice and safety standards for the management of hazardous substances.

"These projects flow from the Canada-Mexico Environmental Co-operation Agreement signed by Prime Minister Mulroney during his visit to Mexico in March 1990," said Mrs. McDougall. "They will strengthen our partnership with Mexico."

"We have tailored the projects to meet Mexico's needs," said Mr. Charest. "Our expertise and technology will help Mexico's Secretariat of Urban Development and Ecology to enforce the tough environmental laws which that country passed in 1988."

The Ministers said that Canada and Mexico intend to discuss additional ways in which they can increase collaboration on the environment.

- 30 -

For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office
External Affairs and International Trade
(613) 995-1874

or

Media Relations Office
Environment Canada
(819) 953-6901

BACKGROUND

CANADA-MEXICO \$1-MILLION ENVIRONMENT CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT

Canada and Mexico have already completed several projects since the signing of an Environmental Co-operation Agreement in March 1990. This collaborative working relationship has allowed Environment Canada and the Secretariat of Urban Development and Ecology (SEDUE) to carefully evaluate needs and priorities. These have been matched with available resources under the \$1-million environmental contribution agreement announced today.

This Canada-Mexico environmental initiative has two main objectives:

- . to address SEDUE's priorities and strengthen its capabilities in the enforcement of Mexico's environmental legislation; and
- . to demonstrate Canadian public and private sector expertise in environmental technology and to open the door to future collaboration between the two countries.

The \$1-million contribution agreement is divided into six segments:

- * Compliance Monitoring
- * Hazardous Substances and Waste Management
- * Air Pollution Control
- * Environmental Impact Assessment
- * Threatened Species
- * Environmental Education

Following are just a few examples of the type of Canadian programs being offered to SEDUE.

COMPLIANCE MONITORING

Acquisition of Mobile Laboratory

Canada will provide a mobile laboratory, the first of its kind for SEDUE. This specially built, furnished and equipped camper-truck can be hooked up to a boat trailer. The mobile laboratory will allow SEDUE inspectors and technical staff to carry out on-site testing for industrial and municipal effluents at lakes and rivers throughout Mexico.

This mobile laboratory will also be used to pre-treat samples before shipping them to SEDUE laboratories. Pre-treatment of samples is a critical element in the testing process. Without this treatment, the chemical balance of the sample and the contaminants it contains can change, rendering the most sophisticated analysis meaningless.

Environmental Auditing

To complement its existing program of inspections, SEDUE will start a program of environmental audits. This is a relatively new field, and SEDUE has asked Canadian specialists to provide senior training staff with an introductory program. The Canadian team will also orient SEDUE on the direction it should take in implementing this new environmental audit program.

Industrial Wastewater Treatment

Mexico has targeted the treatment of wastewater effluents as a problem that must be addressed. Because Canada is at the forefront in research and development, joint Canada-Mexico seminars and information sessions will be set up. Canadian experts will present the various technologies available for treating industrial effluents and discuss specific projects with SEDUE staff.

This information exchange should help Mexico determine which technologies are best suited to its particular industrial pollution problems.

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

Mexican "Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection" legislation passed in 1988, calls for the regulation of hazardous substances and waste. In collaboration with other Mexican federal departments, SEDUE is developing general regulations, as well as regulations for specific industrial sectors -- such as paints and varnishes.

Canadian expertise has been sought to provide codes of practice and a technical safety standard for the management of hazardous substances in general. Two related projects will provide codes of practice for hazardous waste in the paints industry and for the recycling of hazardous waste.

AIR POLLUTION CONTROL

One of the basic elements in any pollution enforcement program is to have standards or limits established that serve as guideposts for compliance monitoring. The Canada-Mexico environmental collaboration program will assist the Mexican government in establishing emission standards for two important industrial sectors -- fertilizer production and fuels and solvents storage.

External Affairs and International Trade Canada
March 1992

CHRONOLOGY

CANADA-MEXICO BILATERAL CO-OPERATION and the ENVIRONMENT

- 1988** Environment Canada and counterpart agencies in the United States and Mexico sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Migratory Birds and their North American Habitats. This agreement aims to preserve and maintain migratory bird populations and conserve their habitats. The Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada is the Canadian executing agency for this ongoing Canada-Mexico-United States project.
- March 1990** During an official visit to Mexico by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, 10 bilateral agreements are signed, including an Agreement on Environmental Co-operation.
- As a result of this Agreement, Canada and Mexico have:
- . completed a feasibility study for municipal waste rehabilitation in the Coatzacoalcos-Minatitlan industrial area, Veracruz state. In addition, a separate plan to deal with industrial waste in the same area has been completed. Both phases of this project were funded by CIDA-INC, with a total investment exceeding \$900,000 to date.
 - . addressed the protection and rehabilitation of the Lerma-Chapala watershed area in Jalisco state through the transfer of a Canadian water management software package. An Environment Canada water management technical mission provided advice on lake science (toxics and nutrients) and waste treatment.
- July 1991** Representatives from Environment Canada and External Affairs and International Trade Canada meet with their counterparts in Mexico City to exchange views on environmental co-operation.
- August 1991** An interdepartmental Environmental Review Committee is formed to liaise with Canadian negotiators of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and to prepare a report on the potential environmental effects of a NAFTA for Cabinet consideration.
- October 1991** Representatives from Mexican public and private sectors visit Ontario to participate in two major conferences and company visits. A mission program is designed to expand the bilateral knowledge base, commercial relationships and strategic partnerships.

- November 1991** The Eighth Canada-Mexico Joint Ministerial Committee meeting is held in Mexico City. Environment Canada's Deputy Minister and his Mexican counterpart review current and future co-operation under the March 1990 Agreement on Environmental Co-operation.
- December 1991** Canadian government-sponsored seminar on GIS software products draws 160 participants in Mexico City, including 11 Canadian suppliers. GIS environmental protection control software is used in mining, forestry and water resources management applications. A follow-up GIS Canadian mission is planned for August 1992.
- January 1992** The "Canada Expo '92" trade fair takes place in Monterrey, Mexico (January 27-31). Exhibits include environmental application for process control and instrumentation technologies for use in heavy and light industrial facilities.
- January 1992** The provisions of the Montreal Protocol relating to trade in products containing ozone-depleting substances comes into effect. Canada and Mexico are signatories to this Protocol.
- March 1992** The "Globe '92" biennial international trade fair and conference takes place at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre (March 16-20). Companies from across Canada exhibit their products and services.
- March 18, 1992** Secretary of State for External Affairs Barbara McDougall and Environment Canada Minister Jean Charest announce a \$1-million package of programs under the 1990 Canada-Mexico Agreement on Environmental Co-operation to help Mexico reinforce existing monitoring and enforcement of Mexico's environmental legislation.
- March 19, 1992** The Canada-Mexico bilateral meeting takes place between Environment Minister Charest and Secretary Patricio Chirinos Calero of the Secretariat of Urban Development and Ecology (SEDUE).
- May 1992** A major Canadian trade mission will exhibit products and services at the "Environmental Technology Congress and Exposition" in Monterrey (May 15-17) -- a first in Mexico.