

MID-TERM REVIEW OF MEXICO - CONCLUSIONS OF THE WPEP (10 JANUARY 2008)

Further to the 2003 OECD Environmental Performance Review (EPR) of Mexico, the Mexican delegation, led by Mr. Fernando TUDELA (Vice Minister for Planning and Environment – SEMARNAT), gave a presentation and valued the opportunity of holding a mid-term review of Mexico by the WPEP. It was followed by statements from the reviewing countries (Korea, Japan, Spain, Sweden), questions and comments by all WPEP delegations, and answers by the Mexican delegation. The Conclusions by the WPEP are as follows.

Good progress has been made by Mexico in addressing the OECD Recommendation adopted previously by the WPEP for a range of topics. Measures have been strengthened to address air pollution from mobile sources (e.g. road fuel quality, vehicle emission standards, vehicle inspection) and foster urban public transport (e.g. dedicated bus lanes). A large increase in funding has been made to develop water infrastructure (Mexico has already fulfilled its Millennium Development Goals) and manage protected areas. Protected areas increased to 11.5% of the territory (from 8.6% in 2000). “Ecological land use planning” is spreading outside protected areas and payments for ecological services are increasingly provided to forest owners. In 2007, more than 250 million trees have been planted under a new forest support programme (ProArbol). The right of public access to information was embodied in law. International co-operation positively developed bilaterally (e.g. Border 2012 with the US) and in the context of NAFTA. Mexico has been proactive in the international fora on climate change and a national strategy on climate change was presented in 2007, though without emission reduction targets.

However, Mexico should further rely on the use of economic instruments (e.g. user charges for water and waste water services, emission charges for air pollutants, product charges on hazardous waste streams, access fees for protected areas, carbon trading including for energy facilities). Strengthening enforcement and compliance (e.g. poaching, illegal logging, waste water discharges) is needed, including (but not only) through increasing the number of inspectors. Wastewater treatment (both municipal and industrial) lags behind what is usually found in other OECD countries. Waste management at municipal level has to be fostered. Much progress is also needed concerning the integration of environmental concerns in agriculture, energy, transport and other sectoral policies, both through institutional and market-based integration. A review and revision of fiscal instruments from an environmental perspective is needed. Environmentally harmful subsidies are still in place (e.g. electricity tariffs for groundwater pumping, tax exemptions to marine diesel fuel). Efforts should be pursued towards establishing an integrated agri-environment strategy. The Climate Change Strategy should be supplemented with targets for the different emission sources identified in the Strategy and with the involvement of the different government agencies, in the context of a special climate change project.