



North American Competitiveness Council
Consejo de Competitividad de América del Norte
Conseil nord-américain de la compétitivité

**OTTAWA, CANADA
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***TRILATERAL BUSINESS COUNCIL CHARTS COURSE
FOR ENHANCED NORTH AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS***

A trilateral Council of business leaders representing the private sectors of Canada, Mexico, and the United States today put forward more than 50 concrete recommendations designed to strengthen North American competitiveness in global markets while improving public safety and security.

The recommendations, contained in the report titled *Enhancing Competitiveness in Canada, Mexico, and the United States*, were presented this morning in Ottawa to nine senior Cabinet ministers and secretaries:

- From the United States, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, and Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez
- From Canada, Minister of Foreign Affairs Peter MacKay, Minister of Public Safety Stockwell Day, and Minister of Industry Maxime Bernier
- From Mexico, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Patricia Espinosa Cantellano, Secretary of Economy Eduardo Sojo Garza-Aldape, and Secretary of the Interior Francisco Ramírez Acuña

The report is the product of nine months of consultations and deliberations by members of the North American Competitiveness Council (NACC). The NACC's recommendations focus on three priority areas:

- Border-crossing facilitation (23 recommendations)
- Standards and regulatory cooperation (18 recommendations)
- Energy supply and distribution (10 recommendations)

“The NACC simply sees huge potential for greater cooperation—in managing borders, regulation, energy, and many other issues affecting the quality of life of the citizens of Canada, Mexico, and the United States, from responses to emergencies and pandemics to the environment and education,” the report emphasizes.

Background

The leaders of Canada, Mexico, and the United States launched the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) in 2005 to ensure that all three countries are safer and better places to live and do business. At their summit in Cancún, Mexico, in 2006, the leaders agreed that greater input from the private sector (the driving force behind innovation and growth) would help the three governments enhance North American competitiveness through the SPP.

The NACC is composed of 10 business leaders from each of the three countries, who represent their respective private sectors. Today’s report reflects the input of hundreds of companies, sectoral associations, and local chambers of commerce throughout the three countries.

Highlights of the February 23rd NACC Report

Border-crossing facilitation:

The section on border-crossing facilitation makes recommendations for action in the following areas: emergency management and post-incident resumption of commerce; expansion and improvements to border infrastructure; the movement of goods; and the movement of people. These recommendations are focused on actions that could be taken to make concrete improvements to the efficiency of commercial exchanges within North America.

Standards and regulatory cooperation:

In the area of standards and regulatory cooperation, the report supports the intention of governments to work toward a framework for trilateral regulatory cooperation in 2007, an essential tool for ensuring the compatibility of new regulations while reducing unnecessary differences in existing rules and standards. The report also emphasizes the need for regulators and businesses alike to engage actively in the development of global technical standards. It makes recommendations for specific actions in the short term in three sectors—food and agriculture, financial services, and transportation—as well as for enhanced cooperation in the protection of intellectual property rights.

Energy Supply and Distribution:

To enhance the security of energy supply, the report recommends measures to improve cross-border distribution systems, as well as further efforts to increase the supply of skilled labour in the energy field and joint development of clean and efficient energy technologies. The report also includes recommendations that could help Mexico accelerate the development of its energy resources, recognizing the exclusive role of Mexico's public and private sectors to lead initiatives that would increase Mexican competitiveness in this strategic sector.

Timeframes for Action:

In each of the above three areas, the NACC puts forward what it suggests are realistic timeframes for accomplishing results, dividing recommendations into those that can be accomplished immediately, those that can be accomplished before the end of 2008, and those that will require somewhat longer time to address, with a goal of completion by 2010.

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