



Commission for Labor Cooperation
Comisión para la Cooperación Laboral
Commission de Coopération dans le domaine du travail
Secretariat Secretariado Secrétariat

ANNUAL REPORT 2003

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Foreword

2003 marked the 10th year of the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation. The NAALC, one of the supplementary accords to North American Free Trade Agreement, was the first international agreement on labor to be linked to an international trade agreement.

The tenth anniversary of the NAALC is an opportune moment to cast a brief backward glance at the contributions that the institutions established under the Agreement—the Ministerial Council, the Secretariat and the National Administrative Offices (NAOs)—have made to the fulfillment of the objectives set out in the NAALC. These objectives can be grouped under three broad areas of activity: cooperative activities, research and publications, and public communications.

COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES

Cooperative activities, organized primarily by the NAOs, contribute primarily to the following two objectives of the Agreement:

- Encouraging cooperation to promote innovation and rising levels of productivity and quality
- Pursuing cooperative labor-related activities on the basis of mutual benefit

In the ten years since the NAALC came into force, over 60 cooperative activities have been organized among the three countries. These activities have taken a variety of forms, ranging from small seminars and workshops, government-to-government meetings on technical issues, the establishment of working groups, and large, trilateral conferences. In the last several years, for example, the three countries have organized a major conference on violence in the workplace, a workshop on the right of workers to organize and engage in collective bargaining in Canada and the United States, a forum on the rights of migrant and immigrant workers, technical visits of Mexican officials to the United States to support workforce development initiatives, and a seminar on the linkage between job skills and education.

Upcoming cooperative activities include an ergonomics workshop on North American automotive sector for government experts, a major conference on human trafficking, a roundtable on workplace violence, a conference on corporate social responsibility, and training courses for technical assistance staff and inspectors.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Research and publication, largely undertaken by the Secretariat of the Commission, contribute primarily to another of NAALC's objectives:

- Encouraging publication and exchange of information, data development and coordination, and joint studies to enhance mutually beneficial understanding of the laws and institutions governing labor in each Party's territory

The types of research publications produced by the Secretariat include extensive background studies of major topics, more focused in-depth reports and special studies, the publication of the proceedings of seminars and conferences, and shorter “briefing notes.” In addition, the Commission’s web site offers a wide range of information to those interested in the NAALC.

The Secretariat’s research program focuses primarily on three areas of labor issues—employment and labor law, labor markets, and employment relations—with recent publications ranging from major background studies of North American labor markets and labor relations law, in-depth studies on the rights of nonstandard workers and of migrant agricultural workers, and briefing notes on trends in union density, work stoppages, and labor productivity in manufacturing.

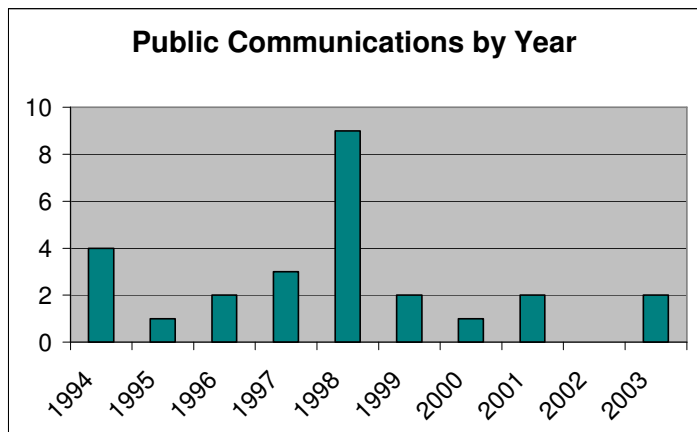
Researchers at the Secretariat are currently preparing a number of new publications that will continue to provide experts and the public with systematic, comparative analyses of labor issues in North America. Upcoming studies and reports include a volume on employment discrimination and equal pay laws, the third edition of the respected North American Labor Markets report, and a study of codes of conduct in the three countries. Forthcoming briefing notes will deal with trends in labor force educational attainment rates, employment levels, workplace accidents and illnesses, developments in discrimination law, and workplace aspects of HIV/AIDS. In addition, the Secretariat will be hosting a series of research seminars, beginning with seminars on incomes and productivity and on discrimination laws in 2004, and a seminar on workplace diversity in early 2005.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Under the NAALC, individuals, unions, employers, nongovernmental organizations and other private parties may file public communications seeking NAO reviews of labor law matters touching on one or more of the Agreement’s 11 Labor Principles arising in the territory of another country. This process contributes to the fulfillment of three NAALC objectives:

- Promoting the 11 NAALC Labor Principles
- Promoting compliance with, and effective enforcement by each Party, of its labor law
- Fostering transparency in the administration of labor law

Since the NAALC came into force 10 years ago, 26 public communications have been filed (not counting dual filings), 8 pertaining to the United States, 16 to Mexico, and 2 to Canada. The majority of the public communications have raised the issue of freedom of association and the right to organize unions, and a significant number have also focused on occupational health and safety issues. A smaller number of public communications have raised concerns about employment standards, employment discrimination, migrant workers’ rights, the right to collective bargaining, the right to strike and the employment of children and youth.



Of the 26 public communications filed, one was withdrawn before the NAO in question had an opportunity to review the matter and in five cases the NAO declined to accept the matter for review. Of the 20 cases accepted for NAO review, 3 were withdrawn or settled before the NAO review was completed, 3 were resolved without the need for ministerial consultations, 12 led to ministerial consultations, and 2 are currently under review. The Agreement also provides that matters raised in public communications may lead to the establishment of evaluation committees of experts and, if necessary, arbitral panels. To date, none of the countries has requested that an issue be taken up at these subsequent stages.

Over the years, ministerial consultations have resulted in a wide range of follow-up actions and activities, including public seminars and outreach sessions, government-to-government meetings to exchange information and promote mutual understanding, commitments by the governments, and the preparation of studies and reports of various kinds. Recent examples include a public seminar in Mexico on labor boards; outreach sessions in the United States and Mexico on women's employment rights; meetings between the three governments to discuss unions and the right to organize; government commitments to promote the registration of collective agreements and the use of secret ballots in union representation elections in Mexico, and to produce educational materials for workers in Spanish in the U.S.; and a forthcoming report on the legal protection of the rights of working women in all three countries.

Two recent innovations in follow-up activities to ministerial consultations are worth noting. One is the production of a comprehensive guide to migrant workers' rights that will be available in a variety of formats to workers, employers, NGOs and government officials in the three countries. This guide seeks to provide information that will be useful to migrant workers in any of the three countries.

The second recent innovation is the establishment of a trilateral Working Group of Experts on Workplace Health and Safety in 2003. The Working group has created four on-going sub-groups charged with the following issues: the handling of hazardous substances; safety and health management systems and voluntary protection programs; training and technical assistance; and the creation and management of a tri-national web page on occupational health and safety.

The tenth anniversary of NAALC is not just a good moment to look backwards, but also to look forward to the future. For that reason, the Commission is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the operations of the NAALC, including consultations with the public in all three countries. In 2004, the Ministerial Council will consider the result of this review and determine what changes may be required to continue to fulfill the first and most important objective of the NAALC: the improvement of working conditions and living standards in each Party's territory.

Anthony Giles
Acting Executive Director

I. Council of Ministers

A. Ministerial Council Meeting

November 13, Washington, D.C.

Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Labor of the United States, hosted the Seventh Ministerial Council Meeting in Washington, D.C. The meeting was attended by Carlos Ma. Abascal Carranza, Secretary of Labor and Social Welfare of Mexico and Claudette Bradshaw, Minister of Labour of Canada, who were joined by Alfonso Oñate, Executive Director of the Secretariat. The meeting was preceded on the evening of November 12 by a reception hosted by the United States Chamber of Commerce.

The Council received a report from the Executive Director summarizing the recent activities of the Secretariat and outlining the actions taken in cooperation with the NAOs in response to the Council's conclusions to the first four-year review of the NAALC. The report also made mention of the preparation of two Secretariat publications related to ministerial action plans resulting from public communications, and contained an outline of the Secretariat's 2004 work plan, as well as a summary of the operating budget for 2004. The Executive Director's report was approved, along with the Secretariat's work plan and budget for 2004.

The Council was then provided with a progress report on the review of the NAALC after eight years of its having come into effect that outlined the remaining steps to be taken to complete it. It also heard a report on cooperative activities undertaken in 2003 as well as those proposed for 2004. The report listed the various types of activities, including seminars, workshops, training courses, government-to-government meetings, exchanges of information and conferences. The proposed four-year review process and cooperative activities program for 2004 were approved.

The Council also addressed the status of public communications under the NAALC. Special attention was given to the three public communications that were pending: Mexican NAO 2001-01, which raised workers' compensation issues and the protection of migrant workers in the state of New York; Mexican NAO 2003-01, concerned with the rights of migrant workers under the H-2A program in the state of North Carolina; and the most recent one, filed with the U.S. NAO on September 30 and with the Canadian NAO on October 3, which alleges the violation of workers' rights at a garment factory in Puebla.

Finally, all three ministers expressed sincere appreciation to Alfonso Oñate for his service as Executive Director of the Secretariat. It was noted that during his tenure he successfully managed the transition from Dallas to Washington, D.C., developed a comprehensive research program, and brought in a number of experts to assist the Secretariat in the planning of its activities. They ministers presented Mr. Oñate with a certificate of appreciation.

B. Meeting of Council Designees and Executive Director

February 4, 2003

The meeting was chaired by Claudia Franco of Mexico and was held in the form of a conference call. The Council Designees discussed some adjustments to be made to the multi-year work plan approved in May 2002 in regard to the expected completion dates of

ongoing projects. They approved the research section of the work plan and invited the NAOs and the Secretariat to finalize the adjustments by incorporating as many suggestions and proposals as possible to the different research projects.

The Council Designees also addressed budgetary issues, in particular, the use to be made of accumulated surplus funds due mainly to understaffing. Several proposals were made and left for further discussion. The operating budget for 2003 was approved.

The second Four-Year Review of the NAALC was discussed. The Council Designees agreed that after each country's internal consultation process had been completed a final report would be published.

Finally, the Council Designees dealt with the scheduling of the next Ministerial Council Meeting. Different times and places were proposed, in an effort to reconcile the agendas of the three ministers. The heads of the NAOs were invited to exchange information on this subject in the coming weeks.

II. Cooperative Consultations and Evaluations

A. Public Communications

Mexican NAO 2003-1

On February 11, 2003, two farm workers' advocate groups, Farmworker Justice Fund and Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos, submitted a public communication to the Mexican NAO alleging unfair treatment of migrant workers in North Carolina. The public communication contends that the U.S. H-2A non-immigrant visa program is discriminatory, and that the United States and North Carolina governments do not effectively enforce applicable labor laws. The public communication further alleges that North Carolina employers exploit workers by not paying overtime, blacklisting, and denying migrants access to workers' compensation benefits. The public communication states that the workers' situation does not comply with the NAALC, which requires Canada, the United States and Mexico to cover migrant workers under its labor laws to the same extent as other workers, and to enforce their own labor laws. It also calls for the development of a comprehensive plan to stop the infringement of worker's rights and to implement information and enforcement measures to protect the rights of Mexican workers under the H-2A program in North Carolina.

On September 5, 2003, the Mexican NAO accepted the public communication for review, and on September 15 requested cooperative consultations with the US NAO.

U.S. NAO 2003-1

On September 30, 2003, the U.S. NAO received a public communication claiming that the Mexican government had failed to uphold its obligations under both national and international labor laws. The petitioners allege that in the case of workers at Matamoros Garment S.A de C.V. in Izúcar de Matamoros, Puebla, Mexico, who were trying to organize an union, the Mexican government failed to meet its obligations to protect the rights of workers relating to freedom of association, and to the right to organize and bargain collectively. In addition, it was claimed that the government also failed to effectively enforce minimum employment standards and occupational health and safety laws. It was further alleged that the Mexican government failed to ensure impartial and

independent labor tribunals. Citing other public communications under the NAALC, the petitioners argued that this case is part of a wider pattern of persistent failure on the part of the Mexican government to enforce its labor and employment laws. The communication was submitted by the United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) and the Centro de Apoyo al Trabajador.

Canadian NAO 2003-1

On October 3, 2003, the Canadian NAO received a public communication claiming that the Mexican government had failed to uphold its obligations under both national and international labor laws. The petitioners allege that in the case of workers at Matamoros Garment S.A de C.V. in Izúcar de Matamoros, Puebla, Mexico, who were trying to organize a union, the Mexican government failed to meet its obligations to protect the rights of workers relating to freedom of association, and to the right to organize and bargain collectively. In addition, it was claimed that the government also failed to effectively enforce minimum employment standards and occupational health and safety laws. It was further alleged that the Mexican government failed to ensure impartial and independent labor tribunals. Citing other public communications under the NAALC, the petitioners argued that this case is part of a wider pattern of persistent failure on the part of the Mexican government to enforce its labor and employment laws. The communication was submitted by the United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) and the Centro de Apoyo al Trabajador.

B. Ministerial Consultations

On June 4, 1998, the Canadian NAO accepted for review a public communication alleging a failure by Mexican authorities to ensure freedom of association and the right to organize, and to effectively enforce laws protecting worker safety and health. The communication also alleged partiality on the part of the Mexican authorities during legal proceedings, and that the absence of certain procedural measures such as secret-ballot voting during union representation challenges constituted a failure to provide for the high labor standards called for in Article 2 of the NAALC. The allegations relate to working conditions and a union representation challenge at the ITAPSA plant in Los Reyes La Paz, State of Mexico, Mexico, which is owned by Echlin Inc., a subsidiary of Dana Corp., and to legal proceedings in connection with that challenge.

The public communication was filed by the Canadian Office of the United Steelworkers of America, in concert with 11 other unions and 31 concerned organizations from the three NAFTA countries.

Canada requested ministerial consultations on March 31, 1999, and on October 4, 1999, Mexico agreed to hold them. Secretary Abascal and Minister Bradshaw met on four occasions in 2001 and 2002 to exchange views on the matters raised by the communication. The ministerial consultations were formally concluded in January 2003. In this context, Canada will participate in the Working Group of Government Experts on Occupational Safety and Health established by Mexico and the U.S.

C. Activity during 2003 related to previous public communications

Mexican NAO 2001-1

On October 24, 2001, the Mexican NAO received a public communication alleging that the United States had failed to fulfill its commitment to effectively enforce workers'

compensation and occupational safety and health laws in the state of New York. The Mexican NAO accepted the public communication for review on November 15, 2001. In December of that year, Mexico asked the U.S. NAO for cooperative consultations in accordance with Article 21 of the NAALC, in order to exchange information on the enforcement of U.S. laws related to the prevention of occupational injuries and illnesses, compensation in cases of occupational injuries and illnesses, and protection of migrant workers.

The communication was submitted by individual workers and several worker rights groups: Chinese Staff and Workers' Association (CSWA), National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (NMASS), Workers' Awaaz and Asociación Tepeyac.

In its report of review issued on November 8, 2002, the Mexican NAO declined to comment on the alleged violations of compensation rights in the individual cases of occupational injuries or illnesses described by the petitioners, since pending decisions cannot be reviewed under the NAALC. The Mexican NAO also declined to comment on the communication's allegation that reforms to the compensation system were harmful to workers, on the grounds that this allegation did not relate to the implementation and enforcement of labor laws. With regard to the other issues, the report of review urged the U.S. Department of Labor to take appropriate action to allay the concerns of the petitioners and the public, and to determine whether action will be taken to make the relevant procedures more efficient and to ensure that local employees and authorities know and enforce the relevant labor laws. The Mexican NAO also stressed the need for broader publication of the labor rights of migrant workers living in the United States and the resources available to these workers by means of the mechanisms of cooperation between STPS and DOL set out in the ministerial Joint Declaration of April 2002.

In December 2002 the Mexican NAO requested consultations with the U.S. NAO on the implementation of these recommendations in order to determine whether to recommend that ministerial consultations be held. The U.S. NAO responded to the request for consultations on February 27, 2003. The Mexican NAO asked the U.S. NAO for additional information in December 2003.

III. Secretariat Activities

A. Research Projects

In 2003, the Secretariat continued to conduct research in three main areas of interest—labor markets, employment law and employment relations—as well as research that cuts across these areas.

The most notable development during the year was the launch of a new series of “Briefing Notes,” short, topical discussions of current developments in labor in North America. The briefing note series is meant to provide experts and the general public in North America with relevant information on a more timely basis. Three notes were published in 2003: “Recent Trends in Union Density in North America”, “Work Stoppages in North America”; and “Trends in Labor Productivity in Manufacturing in North America.” The notes are available on the Commission’s web site.

The remainder of this section summarizes the status of the Secretariat's principal ongoing and new research projects.

LABOR ECONOMICS

North American Labor Markets, Second Edition

In 2003, the second edition of the Secretariat's background study on labor markets, entitled *North American Labor Markets: Main Changes Since NAFTA* was released. This study, which covers the period 1980 to 1999, opens with an examination of trends in economic growth and trade in the member countries of NAFTA. The following chapter explores trends in the labor force and employment, including demographic, educational, and occupational changes. The next chapter analyzes unemployment, job security, and nonstandard work in North America, the latter including temporary or contingent work, self-employment, and part-time work. The final chapter provides a detailed analysis of earnings, labor productivity, labor costs, and income distribution in North America.

North American Labor Markets, Third Edition

During 2003, work on the third edition of the North American labor markets report got underway. The report has been completely redesigned with an eye to accelerating the publication process and dealing with topics of current interest. The first part of the report, which is being produced by Secretariat researchers, will provide a concise overview of labor market trends in the three countries, focusing in particular on recent trends in the labor force, employment, hours of work, earnings, income distribution, labor costs, and productivity. The report's second part will be comprised of three chapters, each focusing on a particular theme: employment in the information age; the pattern of women's employment in North America; and labor force mobility in North America. The chapter on labor force mobility is being authored by an outside expert and the other two chapters are being researched and written by Secretariat researchers.

In-Depth Studies

In addition to working on the major background report on North American labor markets, Secretariat researchers also developed several proposals for specific, in-depth studies of particular topics in the area of labor economics. Among the subjects explored were trends in child labor in North America, the implications of demographic trends for human capital development, and employment in the services sector.

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW

Labor and Employment Law Guide Series

One of the key long-term research projects of the Secretariat is a series of comparative guides to labor and employment laws in the three countries. The series is structured around the 11 Labor Principles of the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation and describes how each member country addresses the six Obligations of the NAALC with respect to each of the Labor Principles. These guides are intended to serve both the specialized interests of labor law practitioners and the general interests of non-practitioners concerned with the social dimensions of deepening integration in the NAFTA region.

The first volume, covering laws that relate to the principles of freedom of association and the right to organize, the right to bargain collectively, and the right to strike, was published in 2000. During 2003, preparation of the second volume, which treats laws in the three countries related to the principles of eliminating employment discrimination and ensuring equal pay for men and women, was significantly advanced. It is expected that this second volume will be submitted to the Council of Ministers in 2004.

Preliminary background research on the third volume, which will cover the principles relating to occupational health and safety and workers' compensation, was also undertaken in 2003. As part of this process, a focus group was convened in 2003 to explore the research questions relating to cross-border injuries and workers' compensation.

Guide to Migrant Workers' Rights

In 2003, the Secretariat put the finishing touches on a tri-national guide to the rights of migrant workers. This guide was requested by the Council of Ministers in its Agreement on Ministerial Consultations regarding Mexican NAO Submissions 9801, 9802 and 9803.

The guide is written in accessible language and is comprised of a series of separate units that can be disseminated to migrant workers and their employers in the three countries in a variety of formats. The guide covers the basic rights that migrant workers enjoy and provides contact information for those requiring further information or wishing to seek government assistance in enforcing rights.

The guide will be published in 2004.

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

Employment Relations in North America

During 2003, Secretariat researchers worked on a new background report on employment relations. The first part of the report, which is being written by Secretariat researchers, will provide a general overview of trends and practices in employment relations in North America, including a description of the actors and their environment, staffing and work organization, working conditions, labor-management relations, and selected cross-border issues. The second part of the report will be comprised of three chapters, each focusing on a particular theme: Violence in the Workplace in North America (which will include information from the NAALC Tri-National Violence as a Workplace Risk Conference held in Montreal, Canada in 2001); High Performance Work Systems in North America; and Efficiency, Cooperation, and Occupational Health and Safety. Two of these chapters are being authored by outside experts.

In-Depth Studies

In addition to the major background report on employment relations, Secretariat researchers also began work on two specific, in-depth studies of particular topics in the area of employment relations. The first is a study of the implementation of corporate codes of conduct in North America. The objectives of this study include compiling data on the prevalence and characteristics of codes of conduct in North America and identifying the

factors that promote or hinder the application of such codes. The second study, a historical overview of employment relations in North America, aims to highlight the historically specific feature of each NAFTA country's system of employment relations in order to foster a better understanding of the contemporary practices and the transformations they are undergoing. Substantial progress on both of these projects was made in 2003.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY PROJECTS

Gender Discrimination Report

In 2003, the Secretariat revised and resubmitted to the Council its public report reflecting the issues dealt with in a conference and outreach sessions held by the three countries on the issue of gender discrimination. These activities stemmed from a Ministerial Consultation Implementation Agreement signed by the three labor ministers in October 1998 to carry out consultations on labor law matters dealing with women in the workplace. The Implementation Agreement was the result of a public communication filed with the U.S. NAO in 1997 by Human Rights Watch, the International Labor Rights Fund (ILRF), and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (ANAD) of Mexico alleging pregnancy-based gender discrimination in Mexico's export processing (*maquiladora*) industry.

The report provides a brief account of the legal framework and enforcement concerning gender discrimination, including those pertaining to pregnancy screening, as well as policy statements on this issue. In addition, the report includes a compilation of presentations made during all of the activities held as part of the Implementation Agreement.

Plan to Enhance Data Comparability

In their conclusions to the four-year review of the NAALC, the Council of Ministers requested the Secretariat to prepare a plan to improve the comparability of data on enforcement, labor standards, and labor market indicators. In the autumn of 2002, the Secretariat set up a cross-disciplinary team to prepare the plan. During 2003, a Secretariat research team worked on selecting a number of key indicators to serve as the focus of the plan. It is expected that the plan will be completed and submitted to the Council of Ministers in 2004.

IV. Cooperative Activities

Technical Workshop on Safety and Health Management Systems and Voluntary Protection Programs

March 10-12, Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, and El Paso, Texas

This was the first formal meeting of the Subgroup on Training and Technical Assistance of the Trilateral Occupational Safety and Health Working Group. The delegations, comprised of government, business and union representatives from the three countries, discussed best practices and lessons learned from building cooperation and partnership with companies, and their experiences in implementing voluntary programs and occupational safety and health management systems. The subgroup agreed on key elements for an effective occupational safety and health management system, including: management commitment and responsibility, training, employee involvement and

responsibility, worksite analysis and approaches, hazard/risk prevention and control. It also established criteria for recognizing best practices in workplace safety and health programs, including application and evaluation processes, criteria to participate and a recognition strategy. The subgroup participated in site visits of companies in Mexico and Texas.

Trilateral Seminar on Labor Boards in North America
March 20, Monterrey, Nuevo León

This seminar was held pursuant to the ministerial agreement between the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States that resolved public communications U.S. NAO 9702, 9703 and 9901. The seminar provided an opportunity for officials and experts from labor boards in the three countries to discuss labor law and practice governing labor boards, their members and officials, structure and responsibilities; the rules and procedures to assure their impartiality; their role in the process of gaining the right to a collective bargaining contract; the types of unions and their relevant rights. The panelists and audience included members of NGOs, business, union, government, academia, and international labor rights activists.

North American Occupational Safety and Health Week
May 4-10, various cities

Canada, Mexico and the United States participated in the joint North American Occupational Safety and Health Week. This is a continent-wide community-based initiative designed to increase awareness of occupational safety and health in reducing injuries and illnesses. The theme for this year was "Prepare Young Workers for the Future", targeting young workers, employers, employees, and the general public to increase the understanding of the need to train and educate new and young workers, as an investment in an organization's reputation and future.

In Canada, various activities were organized in each province, including flag-raising ceremonies with dignitaries, symposiums on health and safety issues; safety demonstrations; displays in public locations buildings; exhibits and training sessions; presentations to high school students and articles and advertising in the media.

Technical Seminar on Safety and Health in the Manufacturing Industry
June 16-17, Mexico City

This two-day government-to-government technical workshop was held as part of the activities of the Subgroup on Training and Technical Assistance of the Trilateral Occupational Safety and Health Working Group. The seminar provided an overview of the manufacturing sectors in Canada, Mexico and the United States, and a forum through which to discuss hazards, standards, commonalities and compliance assistance - specifically in the automotive manufacturing sector. Officials carried out a worksite visit to the Ford plant in Cuautitlán - which coincided with the 100th anniversary of Ford. Next steps were discussed, including a potential trilateral workshop on issues of ergonomics.

Workshop on the Standard Occupational Classification of the United States
June 23-26, Mexico City

A technical team from DOL conducted this workshop with the objective of discussing technical issues and options for developing and implementing a standard occupational classification system in Mexico. The workshop was led by experts from the Employment and Training Administration, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Bureau of International Labor Affairs, and a contractor. Approximately 20 officials from Mexico attended the workshop representing STPS and the National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Informatics (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Geografía e Informática). The activity is part of the DOL technical cooperation program aimed at assisting Mexico in several areas of workforce development.

OSHA Training Workshop
August 4-8, Mexico City

More than 50 Mexican officials in the fields of technical assistance and inspection attended this workshop. STPS carried out the translation of documents on fire prevention and control, and electricity production.

Seminar on Linking Job Skills and Education in North America
August 21-22, Mexico City

This seminar was a follow-up activity to the 1998 seminar “The Evolution of Labor Markets and the Role of Governments” held in Guadalajara, Mexico. The new event was organized by Mexico’s STPS, the Council for Standardization and Certification of Labor Competencies (CONOCER), the Technical Education Modernization and Training Project (PMETYC), the Canadian Ministry of Human Resources Development, and the U.S. Department of Labor. The seminar focused on innovative trends in education, training, and human resource certification developed by both the private and public sectors to provide qualified workers in Canada, Mexico and the United States. Approximately 80 officials representing government, business, labor, and private institutions attended the sessions, in which experts exchanged information about best practices and methodologies, and explored possible collaborative efforts among the three countries in the future.

Third Meeting of the Trinational Occupational Safety and Health Working Group
August 25, Mexico City

The working group acknowledged the accomplishments of the four subgroups—on Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems and Voluntary Protection Programs, Handling of Hazardous Substances, Inspector and Technical Assistance Staff Training, and the development of the Trinational Web Page. It also agreed on possible future cooperative activities, including: a best-practice workshop on ergonomics in the automotive sector; recognition of companies with effective safety and health management systems; consideration of a globally harmonized system for the classification and labeling of chemicals; and the training of Mexican inspectors and technical assistance staff on machine guarding and pressure vessels and boilers.

Workshop on U.S.-Mexico Cooperation Regarding the Labor Rights of Migrant Workers
August 26, Mexico City

The one-day workshop provided an opportunity for U.S. and Mexican officials to continue the dialogue concerning migrant workers in the United States and to discuss actions taken by both countries in the context of the Ministerial Consultations Joint Declaration of June

11, 2002 and the U.S.-Mexico Joint Ministerial Statement Regarding Labor Rights of Immigrant Workers of April 15, 2002. The workshop discussion led to detailed exchanges on the U.S. H1 and H2 visa programs, Mexican job bank mechanisms designed to recruit workers in response to U.S. employer needs and the establishment of regional partnerships by the U.S. Department of Labor in collaboration with Mexican Consulates in the United States and local government and organizations. Specific issues discussed and noted for further collaboration include Mexico's use of its Champanet and Chambatel electronic job banks as a tool to recruit workers for legal visa work programs in the United States, the need to educate workers on their workplace rights and responsibilities both in the United States and before they leave Mexico, information and data sharing on H visa workers and employers, analysis of current models of U.S.-Mexico collaboration for replication in other regions, and the development of additional mechanisms for the promotion of migrant workers rights.

Numerous officers from the three countries participated in the workshop, including representatives from OSHA, the Wage and Hour Division and the Bureau of International Labor Affairs in the United States; the Undersecretariat of Employment and Labor Policy (Subsecretaría de Empleo y Política Laboral), the International Affairs Unit (Unidad de Asuntos Internacionales), the Directorship General of Legal Affairs (Dirección General de Asuntos Legales) and PROFEDET at STPS in Mexico; as well as the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, the Mexican Consulate General in Houston, the Canadian NAO and the Secretariat of the Commission for Labor Cooperation.

Workshop on Chemical Hazard Awareness *August 26, Mexico City*

In this workshop, labor officials from Canada and the U.S. presented a complete overview of GHS to the Mexican ministries involved in the handling of hazardous substances. Among the participants were officers from STPS, the Secretariat of Health (Secretaría de Salud) and the Secretariat of Communications and Transportation (Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes) in Mexico. The three countries agreed to send a joint delegation to the World Congress on Safety, to be held in Orlando, Florida in 2005.

Seminar on Best Practices in the Construction Industry *August 26-28, Mexico City*

The aim of this Seminar was to improve the understanding of training methods and procedures that have proved effective in reducing the number of work-related injuries and illnesses in the three NAALC countries. Participants included representatives from government, industry and unions from the three countries. At the end of the seminar, the three countries agreed to develop more cooperative activities dealing with this crucial area.

V. Audited Financial Statement

VI. The Commission for Labor Cooperation

A. Directory

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B. Publications

Labor Markets in North America: Main Changes Since NAFTA

The Rights of Nonstandard Workers: A North American Guide