
SYLVIA LOWRANCE (DAY CHAIR) — OPENING COMMENTS

Thank you, Mr. Ulate for your warm welcome and hospitality. On behalf of the three INECE co-chairs, Gerard Wolters from the Netherlands, Charles Sebukeera from Uganda, and myself, I extend our heartfelt thanks to you for agreeing to host this conference in Costa Rica. Costa Rica is widely recognized as a country that acknowledges and embraces the benefits and importance of environmental protection, and all my colleagues here from around the world and I salute your leadership. As you may know, on Wednesday we will have the opportunity to see first hand some of the environmental success stories here in your beautiful country. We look forward to it.

My name is Sylvia Lowrance, and, in addition to being one of the three co-chairs of INECE, I am the Acting Assistant Administrator for Enforcement and Compliance Assurance in the US Environmental Protection Agency. In addition to our domestic work to protect the environment and human health, the US EPA works worldwide to help build the capacity of environmental programs and to build relationships that help protect and improve our global environment. We have been, and commit to continue to be, a strong supporter of international partnerships.

Networking among enforcement officials is critically important in today's world. Industries are global and fluid in their movements; Trade in environmentally-regulated products is an integral part of this new global economy; and, Transboundary pollution and natural resource pressures are known to create public health problems and constrain economic growth.

We in the United States have benefited tremendously from networking. For example, the U.S. and Mexico have a long history of transboundary cooperation. So when we learned that a Mexican company with a U.S. parent was illegally sending

hazardous waste into the U.S., the U.S. and Mexico worked swiftly on an investigation which resulted in a penalty being paid by the company and the company instituting a training program — overseen by PROFEPA — for other companies on transboundary waste shipment requirements of the two countries.

Similarly, we have benefited by our networking with Canada, particularly, in the area of illegal CFC refrigerant trafficking. In one of our many cases, we secured criminal pleas in connection with illegal importation of 75 tons of CFC refrigerants. Without close partnership with Mexico and Canada, these and many other cases would simply not have been possible.

As you can see, INECE and its success is important to us all - as public servants and as private citizens. Let me now turn to INECE and how it can help us meet this need. First, its history. While the name and organization was not formalized until 1997, the International Network of Environmental Compliance and Enforcement, known as INECE, truly began at our first conference in the Netherlands in 1990. In the twelve years that followed, the organization has grown to well over 84 countries and at least 15 NGO's you find represented here today. Through the hard work and commitment of many of you we now have an organization that goes beyond borders and which has increased the awareness worldwide of the importance and necessity of environmental compliance and enforcement as a component of any country's framework for environmental protection.

Ten years ago in Rio de Janeiro, the world's leaders wrote "Agenda 21", setting ambitious goals for a sustainable future. That framework was influenced by INECE partners and Chapter 8 of Agenda 21 specifically directs that States develop their compliance and enforcement capacity. This awareness of the role of environmental enforcement and compliance is

especially evident now, as the international community prepares for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg this fall. Environmental compliance and enforcement is an integral part of discussions on good governance and the role of civil society in sustainable development. As our countries prepare for Rio + 10 this August, INECE is in a unique position to help build the capacity for good governance. For example, INECE has been asked by UNEP to co-sponsor a Global Judges Symposium on Environmental Law and Sustainable Development in South Africa as a side event to the WSSD, and we have been asked to become involved in the ENVIROLAW 2000 conference also related to the WSSD.

Much has happened in INECE since the fifth conference in Monterey California four years ago: We publish a high quality newsletter, and have published an index of all the papers and proceedings from each of the previous conferences into one reference guide. After this conference, the Executive Planning Committee will take new papers from this conference, the best of the papers from previous conferences, and a few special papers, and publish a book to serve as an additional tool for environmental compliance and enforcement.

INECE also has continued to work with partner organizations on many events, both regionally and globally, to help build international capacity to conduct enforcement and compliance activities. These events include distance learning courses through the World Bank Institutes, inspector training workshops in Asia and other parts of the world, judicial and prosecutor awareness symposia with the United Nations Environment Programme, and a wide range of activities from the different regional networks. I can only mention a few Regional activities such as the IMPEL conference in 2000 for members of the European Commission, and NICECEN's recent conference in Azerbaijan for the newly independent states from the former Soviet Union.

In addition, INECE has established a dynamic and continually improving internet site to help facilitate global communication among the partners. This web site includes several topical forums for real-time discussion among practitioners in different parts of the world to foster increased sharing of knowledge and issues, and contains links to partner organizations. Improvements to the website will be presented this week during the conference for your comments and suggestions. This website will become a crucial part of our network. In fact, you can view and comment on the draft conference statement by the co-chairs on behalf of INECE on the website and the website will be used for our conference follow-up.

As we look to the future, we are working to expand the role of Regional Networks and to make INECE a more proactive partnership that becomes a continual supplier of information and capacity building assistance. As stated in the recently adopted terms of reference, we need to work to effectively interlock in-country, regional, and global networks with four goals: 1) create a visible and seamless net to deter and detect environmental violations; 2) support cooperation to protect shared resources and address common environmental problems caused by violations of environmental law; 3) provide easy access to contacts, experts and capacity building resources; and 4) periodically assess country, regional and global progress and capacity building needs.

One of the outcomes of this conference will be a conference statement that goes beyond a summary of the proceedings and demonstrates INECE's commitment to the role of enforcement and compliance in sustainable development. This statement will be a message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development about environmental compliance in the twenty-first century.

We also will work this week on an important building block of a long-term strategic plan for INECE. You have for review a list of projects that have been sug-

gested. We need to hear from you what the most important needs are for global and regional networks. Your work will be used to plan our work for the next three years and beyond.

Let me note that we all owe a debt of gratitude to Durwood Zaelke, Ken Markowitz, Carolina Mauri, and all the staff at the INECE secretariat for working long hours to ensure a successful conference.

For this conference and our network to succeed, we must all participate fully and contribute ideas. This is not meant to be a series of lectures. Instead, the conference will focus on the workshops each day that are designed to guide the EPC as we go forward. We have planned ample opportunities for you to get to know each other, and certainly hope that everyone has a pleasant experience and leaves invigorated with newfound energy as you return home to do the extraordinarily important work you do to ensure a safe, clean, sustainable future for our world and the generations to follow.

Now let me pass the podium to Michele de Nevers, who will be moderating the first panel discussing the Role of Institutions and Networks in Environmental Enforcement.