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Editor's Welcome

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Editor's Welcome

Even those who followed the North American Free Trade Agreement (hereinafter "NAFTA") proceedings at a distance, knew the importance which environmental issues played in the trade negotiations leading up to the passage of the NAFTA and its side agreements. A heroic first in international trade agreement negotiation, the NAFTA included provisions in the trade agreement on environmental laws, their implementation and enforcement, and on sustainable development. We are, therefore, very pleased to provide to you two issues which explore in detail the environmental aspects of the NAFTA, its side agreements, and its impact in member countries and Latin America. As with prior issues, the two Environmental Issues will be interdisciplinary in nature covering the legal, business, economic, political and social policy dimensions of the environmental aspects of the NAFTA, its implementation, expansion and overall impact on doing business throughout the Americas. These interdisciplinary areas once again address both practical and policy aspects of the NAFTA, its implementation, and its associated issues.

The first of our Environmental Issues focuses on the environmental provisions of the NAFTA and the Supplemental Agreement on the Environment, and includes an analysis of the filings to date before the North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation. We are most fortunate to begin this issue with introductions and perspectives from high level officers of the environmental agencies of all three NAFTA member countries: Gabriel Cabrillo-Diaz, Technical Secretary to the Attorney General of Environmental Protection and Moises Medleg, Private Secretary to the Attorney General of Environmental Protection of Mexico; Sheila Copps, Minister of the Environment, Environment Canada; and William A. Nitze, Assistant Administrator for International Activities of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Our environmental articles as well come from environmental experts selected to provide the practical viewpoint of practicing attorneys from all three member countries. Canadian lawyers, Timothy M. Egan and James W. Harbell provide an interesting perspective on the international environmental management standard ISO 14,000, vis a vis the North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation. Mexican lawyer Luis R. Vera Morales enlightens us on the facts behind the most recent filing before the North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation arising from post-construction of the pier in Cozumel, Quintana-Roo, Mexico. My contribution provides a U.S. perspective on the environmental successes of the Miami Summit of the Americas and environmental issues likely to be addressed in the extension of the NAFTA to Chile. Finally, we are excited about the global perspective provided on sustainable development from Mary P. Williams Silveira, a Senior Officer with the Division for Sustainable Development, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations.

Due to the number of comprehensive and insightful analyses received, we decided to expand our discussion of environmental issues to a second issue. This second issue will focus on the second NAFTA side agreement, a bilateral agreement between the U.S. and Mexico involving the 2,000 mile border between the two nations. This agreement established the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission and the North American Development Bank, both of which will be explored in detail in introductions provided by the heads of these agencies, and in articles by experts on border environmental issues. We look forward to sharing these views with you as well.

In producing this professional journal, we were fortunate to have a highly competent Board of Professional Editors, guided by a distinguished Board of Editorial Advisors selected by the ABA Section, Southern Methodist University, and the Centre for Commercial Law Studies (Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London). On these two Environmental Issues in particular, our editors were assisted by the Student Editorial Board, drawn from highly qualified law students attending Southern Methodist University School of Law.

We hope you will take advantage of the practical information provided by this and our companion Environmental Issue to follow, in developing close relations with institutions discussed within, and with those who have authored the articles in, these two issues. We hope you have enjoyed this issue as much as we have enjoyed preparing it for your enlightenment and guidance.

Thank you for reading our journal. We are most appreciative of your continued readership.

Jill A. Kotvis
Editor, Environmental Symposium Issues