

Minister of Labour



Ministre du Travail

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0J2

DEC 18 2003

Mr. Garrett Brown
Coordinator
Maquilador Health and Safety Support Network
P.O. Box 124
Berkeley, California
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Brown:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the Tri-National Working Group on Occupational Health and Safety and the follow-up to Public Communication U.S. 2000-1.

Canada has participated actively in the Working Group since being invited to do so by Mexico and the United States. We believe that it serves as a valuable forum for in-depth cooperation between the three North American Agreement on Labour Cooperation (NAALC) countries in a field of great importance to North American workers and employers. The Working Group has already undertaken a number of initiatives that should yield tangible results, including focused training sessions for health and safety inspectors and workshops, including business and labour representatives, to disseminate best practices.

Canada supports the involvement of worker and employer representatives in the activity of the Working Group. I have long believed that dialogue between workers, employers and government is key to success in the occupational safety and health field. I am interested in your suggestion for a fifth subgroup, although I believe that any such group should also include employer representatives and should be focused on the current mandates of the Working Group.

I have instructed Labour Program officials to discuss the possibility of a fifth subgroup with their U.S. and Mexican counterparts, with a view to enabling deeper worker and employer participation within the current mandate of the Working Group. I have also indicated to my counterparts in the United States and Mexico that I am open to this idea as one possible way of deepening worker and employer involvement.

.../2

Canada

As you may know, the three NAALC partner countries are currently undertaking a four-year review of the Agreement. This would provide an appropriate forum in which to address matters related to NAALC public communications processes. Each country will undertake its own consultations process as part of the four-year review. If you would like further information on Canada's consultation process, or on the activities of the Working Group, please feel free to contact Mr. Kevin Banks, Secretary of Canada's National Administrative Office, at (819) 997-4621 or by e-mail at kevin.banks@hrdc.drhc.gc.ca

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Claudette Bradshaw".

Claudette Bradshaw

c.c. Elaine Chao, Secretary of Labour, United States of America
Carlos Maria Abascal Caranza, Secretary of Labour, Mexico