

## VI. THE VISION AND THE STRATEGIES

# **The Next Steps to an Intermodal Transportation System for North America**

*by the Intermodal Transportation Institute*

Building upon the various ideas and suggestions advanced at the Summit, the Intermodal Transportation Institute (ITI) submits the following actions as the logical next steps:

- I. ITI will develop mechanisms to bring the public and the private sectors together in order to find appropriate solutions. Accordingly, ITI proposes to establish a NAFTA Intermodal Council composed of industry, labor, and government. This council will engage in joint assessment of problems and identify potential solutions. Although the Summit was an important first step in this regard, a process must be constructed that promotes ongoing development of awareness and identification of mutual gains from cooperation among industries, governments, and labor. The council will develop a work plan to address the major intermodal issues that have been identified and will meet on a regular basis to discuss its implementation and to review progress.

Specifically, the NAFTA Intermodal Council will be charged with the following:

- A. Accelerate efforts to achieve common standards and rules and regulations in surface transportation.
- B. Evaluate the adequacy of existing databases and information resources concerning North American intermodalism (passenger and freight) and suggest ways in which gaps might be filled.

- C. Identify concrete steps that might be taken to encourage the achievement of both passenger and freight intermodalism in North America.
- II. Concomitantly, ITI shall establish a tri-national team of academic experts to carry out research that facilitates the work of the council. Specific projects that have already been identified include:
  - A. Inventory the existing transportation research activities and capacities in each country.
  - B. Identify research and institutional strengths and weaknesses.
  - C. Develop recommendations to fill research gaps and enhance institutional capabilities.
  - D. Develop mechanisms, ranging from formal education programs to individual learning arrangements, to transfer knowledge concerning "best practices" rapidly and effectively to transportation professionals.
  - E. Develop programs to inform various publics (including K-12 students) about the role and significance of a North American intermodal system.
  - F. Carry out a baseline survey of intermodal information, research, and practices in the three NAFTA nations.
- III. Thirdly, ITI will continue to function as the secretariat and requests that the Canadian, Mexican, and US governments formally accept this proposal. By doing so, they will facilitate the task of refining and implementing these suggestions.