

# 2023 North American Leaders' Summit: Issues for the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress

January 31, 2023

Mexico hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> North American Leaders' Summit (NALS) in Mexico City on January 9-10, 2023. President Joe Biden met with Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for discussions on trilateral issues of mutual importance. In a [Declaration of North America \(DNA\)](#), the leaders stated their determination “to fortify our region’s security, prosperity, sustainability and inclusiveness through commitments” across six areas regarding inclusivity, the environment, competitiveness, migration, health, and regional security. The [White House Fact Sheet of key deliverables for the 2023 NALS](#) highlighted the importance of strengthening North American partnerships, advancing shared priorities, and promoting a common vision on economic competitiveness and security. Building upon previous accomplishments, the leaders presented new initiatives and announcements. The summit did not address ongoing [USMCA](#) trade disputes involving energy, dairy, and motor vehicle rules of origin; nor did its final deliverables directly address immediate concerns of some policymakers regarding record levels of migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border or escalating fentanyl overdose deaths.

Many in Congress have expressed an interest in efforts to strengthen North American ties and create a more coordinated foreign and economic policy toward countries in the Western Hemisphere. The 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, in its oversight capacity, may take interest in the deliverables that emerged from NALS in major areas of cooperation, including economic competitiveness; supply chains; clean energy and climate crisis; migration; illegal trafficking of arms, drugs, and persons; health security threats; and inclusivity and racial justice.

## Economic Competitiveness

Economic competitiveness has been a key goal of the NALS since the first summit in 2005. The 2023 NALS placed a major focus on strengthening supply chains, which also has been of interest to many in Congress as the United States seeks to compete with, and reduce dependence on, [China](#), especially in the [semiconductor](#) industry. Key deliverables include

- announcing the first-ever trilateral semiconductor forum with senior industry representatives and trilateral cabinet level participation,

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- coordinating semiconductor supply chain mapping efforts to develop an understanding of unmet needs and investment opportunities,
- expanding North American critical minerals resource mapping to collect details on resources and reserves,
- partnering with the private sector to increase higher education and student exchange opportunities under a new North America Student Mobility Project based on the [100K Strong Initiative](#), and
- convening industry and academia experts in semiconductors and other key industries to develop the necessary skills and workforce over the next five years.

## Clean Energy Economies and Climate Change

The 117<sup>th</sup> Congress adopted P.L. 117-169, commonly referred to as the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, to accelerate the transition to clean energy and reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Among other incentives, the legislation [modified tax credits for electric vehicles](#) and provided new tax credits for clean commercial vehicles. The North American leaders declared that their countries must take rapid and coordinated measures to continue advancing clean energy development and responding to climate change. Commitments include

- reducing methane emissions from solid waste and wastewater by at least 15% by 2030 and deepening collaboration on methane mitigation,
- developing a waste reduction action plan by the end of 2025 to cut food loss and waste,
- sharing information on best practices to electrify and decarbonize public buses,
- building a plan for operating standards and the installation of electric vehicle chargers along international borders,
- committing to trilateral cooperation in conservation and advancing Indigenous-led conservation, and
- developing a North American clean hydrogen market.

## Migration

Migration issues continue to be a high priority for U.S. policy and Congress; confronting [record levels of regional migration](#) figured prominently among the topics discussed at the NALS and in U.S.-Mexico bilateral discussions. The three countries reaffirmed their [commitment to work together](#) to achieve safe, orderly, and humane migration in the region, but they did not address immediate concerns about migration. Commitments include

- finalizing and implementing a trilateral action plan to improve coordination and address root causes of migration,
  - announcing a virtual platform to increase information sharing on seasonal workers programs and labor rights,
  - helping migrants access legal pathways to the United States with private sector support,
  - increasing information sharing and best practices on the U.S.-Mexico binational Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program,
  - sharing best practices in asylum processing systems, and
  - promoting balanced public narratives on migrants and refugees to counter discrimination.
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## Strategies to Combat Illegal Trafficking

The three countries committed to coordinate actions and strategies to combat arms and drug trafficking, as well as trafficking in persons. Some Members of Congress have questioned the efficacy of U.S.-Mexican [security cooperation](#) since [Mexico has replaced China as the primary source of fentanyl](#) in the United States; fentanyl accounted for some [66% of the nearly 108,000 U.S. drug overdoses in 2021](#). NALS final commitments do not directly address the escalating fentanyl crisis. Deliverables include

- resuming the North American Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Persons dialogue to improve cooperation,
- continuing collaboration within the [North American Drug Dialogue](#),
- developing a unified North American position to the collection of [Passenger Name Records](#),
- advancing North American nuclear security and safety collaboration, and
- increasing engagement on cyber security best practices.

## Health Security

After the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 pandemic and its effects on health systems in North America, numerous policymakers called for greater coordination in the response to health emergencies. NALS commitments include

- sharing information and developing public policies to protect the three countries against current and future health crises, and
- revising the [North American Plan for Animal and Pandemic Influenza](#) to strengthen North America's ability to respond to health security threats.

## Inclusivity and Racial Justice

The Biden Administration's efforts to promote diversity and inclusion and combat racism might place issues before Congress in its oversight capacity. The NALS deliverables include trilateral commitments to

- establish a trilateral expert exchange of information for best practices and advancing equity and racial justice in North American public policies,
  - collaborate through regional and multilateral organizations to advance equity and justice,
  - combat violence against Indigenous women and girls and against LGBTQI+ individuals, and
  - add Mexico to the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse.
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