This is a post-print version of:

Andresen, Steinar
'The Effectiveness of UN Environmental Institutions'
International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics
Vol 7, No 4, 2007, pp. 317-336.

The original publication is available at www.springerlink.com

The Effectiveness of UN Environmental Institutions

Steinar Andresen

Fridtjof Nansen Institute (FNI), P.O. Box 326, N-1326 Lysaker, Norway
Phone: +47 67111900 Fax: +47 67111910 E-mail: Steinar.Andresen@fni.no

Abstract: This is a study of the effectiveness of key UN institutions focussing on environment and sustainable development: the global conferences on development and the environment, the CSD and UNEP, primarily its co-ordinating functions. According to the indicators used to measure effectiveness here, it is concluded that the overall effectiveness of these institutions is quite low. This particularly applies to the CSD. UNEP has been quite effective in creating new institutions but has been less effective in co-ordinating them. As to the global conferences, their significance has been reduced over time.

Keywords: Global conferences, CSD, UNEP, effectiveness, environment, development

Abbreviations: CBD – Convention on Biological Diversity; CITES – Convention on Trade in Endangered Species; CMS – Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals; COP – Conference of the Parties; CSD – Commission for Sustainable Development; ; EMG – Environmental Management Group; Food and Agricultural Organisation; G-77 – Group of 77 and China; GEF – Global Environmental Facility; GMEF – Global Ministerial Environment Forum; IPF – Intergovernmental Panel on Forests; IUCN – The World Conservation Union; LRTAP – Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution; MEA – Multilateral Environmental Agreements; NGO - Non governmental organisation; UNCED – United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; UNCHE – UN Conference on the Human Environment; UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme; UNFCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; UNON – UN Office in Nairobi; WCSD – World Commission on Sustainable Development; WEO – World Environmental Organisation; WHC – the World Heritage Convention; WTO – World Trade Organisation; WSSD – World Summit on Sustainable Development

1. Introduction

This special issue summarises some of the main findings from a multi-year research project at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute (FNI) – financed by the Norwegian Research Council – on: "The role of the UN in global environmental governance: potential for increased effectiveness?" Our main focus is on the environment, but the significance of the linkage to development through the concept of sustainable development will also be addressed.

The first part of the project dealt primarily with assessing the effectiveness of key UN institutions: the global UN conferences on development and the environment, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), primarily its co-ordinating functions, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and the performance of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) in China. These are all 'soft' institutions in the sense that they can make no binding legal decisions.[1] However, they are all products of the UN system and therefore illustrative of both its strengths and its weaknesses. This may seem a narrow focus, but UNEP is the anchor institution for the global environment (Ivanova, 2005), CSD is the only institution focusing exclusively on sustainable development, and the global conferences have represented a massive effort on the part of the UN to address environmental and development issues.

This first section provides an assessment of the effectiveness of these institutions. In order to simplify a complex process, they are evaluated as autonomous actors. It may be argued that this is not a meaningful approach, as the institutions are embedded in the issue framework in which they operate, and "the opportunity frontier they face is constrained by the alignment of power, interests and ideas of such networks" .[2] However, we treat the contextual framework in which these institutions operate primarily as part of the explanatory framework dealt with in the final section. In order to flesh out some of the complexities and intricacies involved in the evolving nature of global environmental governance, we have included a section on the creation of UNEP. This presents new information on the role of key actors in this process and sheds light on the challenges of designing a new institution.

In the second part of the project, the main emphasis has been on the role of key actors within these institutions, especially the USA, the EU, China and Norway.[3] Various analyses of these institutions have been made, but we are not aware of any that systematically examine and analyse the role of these actors within these institutions – thus the aim of this special issue is to fill that gap. We will also discuss their interests and positions on UN reform, in order to outline what can realistically be expected in this regard. The actors have been chosen primarily for pragmatic reasons. However, we expect each of them to play quite different roles. The USA is powerful but is often perceived to be a laggard, while the EU clearly has leadership ambitions. Norway, as a small UN-friendly state, is seen as a typical pusher for stronger UN institutions. We will analyse and explain the policies of these actors and seek to assess the influence they exert. China is emerging as a superpower but still has many of the characteristics typical of a developing country. We will therefore expect it to be primarily preoccupied with what kind of assistance these institutions can provide. For that reason we have included the GEF in the section on China. In sections 3 to 6 the role of these actors will be presented. In section 7 we assess their influence on the working of these institutions, and on that basis discuss the scope for institutional design and the realism in the call for UN reform.

---

[1] The GEF is different, in having considerable funding resources available for implementation in various issue-areas. However, the GEF will not be dealt with here.

[2] From the comments of one reviewer.

[3] The G-77 was originally included, but unfortunately we did not get the article.

To what extent may those who craft institutions design them in such a way as to render them more effective? Some analysts emphasise the significance of power, underlining the fairly modest independent effect of international institutions (e.g. Miles et al., 2002). In a similar vein, some have maintained that it is impossible to change the root causes of the problem by clever design, as long as major actors keep dragging their feet (Najam, 2003). Others are more optimistic as to the significance of institutional design. They do not necessarily downplay political realities, but have a deeper belief that strong institutions – for example, a world environment organisation – may make a positive difference in terms of effectiveness (Biermann & Bauer, 2005; Esty & Ivanova, 2002). As to our position on this debate, we have some sympathy for both perspectives. On the one hand, we consider it important to emphasise the significance of power and the dominant position of powerful actors in explaining the effectiveness of international institutions . For example, when the United States does not want to 'play ball' in the climate regime, the chances of an effective international climate policy are greatly reduced. Correspondingly, the fact that the United States (as well as main parts of industry) stood forth as leaders in strengthening the ozone regime explains a significant part of the high effectiveness of this regime. On the other hand, we find it defensive to disregard the opportunities offered by clever design. In dialogue with policy-makers and practitioners, scholars can suggest changes that may make a positive difference for the problem-solving ability of the institution in question (Young, 2007). With this caveat, let us then turn to an assessment of these three institutions.

2. UN Institutions: How Effective?

Effectiveness is frequently defined in relation to international regimes in terms of output, outcome and impact. 'Output' refers to rules, programmes and regulations emanating from the regime, while 'outcome' refers to behavioural change in the desired direction, by key target groups, as a result of the regime. Finally, 'impact' refers to the environmental improvements in the relevant issue-area following from the regime in question (Miles et al., 2002). It has been argued that these indicators from the field of regime analysis can be transferred to the analysis of UN international institutions (Biermann & Bauer, 2004). As a point of departure this may appear sensible. Although the institutions in focus here are quite different in kind, they also have important similarities, as they are all 'soft' and normative institutions. That makes it more problematic to apply the outcome indicator and even more so the impact indicator, compared to traditional 'classical' hard-law regimes (Levy et al., 1995). We do not argue that it is impossible to trace the causal effect of these institutions in relation to outcome, but this has been beyond the scope of our ambitions here. Therefore we stop at the output indicator. In other words, we deal more with potential effectiveness rather than actual effectiveness. We also measure effectiveness in terms of goal achievement when the goals are sufficiently specific to allow this (Bernauer, 1995). This is not to say that we disregard the other indicators completely, not least because of the recent increase in focus on implementation. UN institutions cannot be 'blamed' for lack of implementation at the national level. Still, if ambitious joint goals are not followed up in practice, it will serve to discredit them, giving support to those who dismiss these institutions as mere 'talk-shows' without practical significance.

Finally a brief note on methodology. We have relied heavily on open-ended *interviews* in relation to all institutions studied. For example, interviews have been conducted with staff at the UNEP headquarter in Nairobi and the UNEP Geneva office, as well as in relevant MEA Secretariats. Thus, we were able to discuss the issues on the basis of various roles, interests and perceptions. We also asked several decision-makers as well as analysts to evaluate and

explain the performance of the different institutions. In addition we have consulted the secondary literature to a considerable extent.

2.1 THE GLOBAL CONFERENCES: DIMINISHING EFFECTIVENESS

The three global conferences studied here are the UN Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) in Stockholm in 1972, the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio in 1992 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002. Although there are 30 years between the first and the latest one, in terms of formal outputs and approach to problem solving the *similarities* are striking. All three had a preparatory phase, a main focus on soft political declarations; they resulted in a Conference Declaration and some type of Plan of Action. In terms of quantitative output, however, there are significant differences. The 1992 Rio Summit stands out as the most productive, with three policy declarations, two legally binding conventions and one new institution, the CSD.[4] Stockholm created two declarations and a new institution, UNEP; and the Johannesburg Summit only produced two declarations.

As to the question of the effects of these institutions, this will be discussed in terms of four 'soft' process oriented indicators: *agenda-setting, participation, comprehensiveness* and *institution-building*. If the Conferences have been able to shape and elevate the environment and development on the international political agenda, their potential effectiveness increases. Participation is conceived of in terms of numbers, level and scope. The assumption is that the greater the number of participants; the broader participation is; and the more high-level participation there is, the greater will potential effectiveness be. Similarly, comprehensiveness, in terms of using and integrating knowledge to better understand linkages between issue-areas, is assumed to increase potential effectiveness. Finally, to the extent that these Conferences contribute to domestic and international institution-building, their potential significance also increases. These are analytical categories intended to help structure the analysis, and there are links and overlaps between and among them.[5] No systematic comparison will be undertaken, due to differences in the political context, particularly between the Stockholm Conference and the two later ones. The aim is simply to discuss their achievements along these dimensions – as indications of their potential effectiveness. Some qualifications should be made regarding institution-building following in the wake of these gatherings, especially at the international level. No doubt there was a great need for this in the 1970s. More recently, however, the need for new institutions has diminished due to the dense institutional network existing in this area. Also, over time a clearer understanding has been reached that many institutions have proven ineffective, and that they often overlap. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the institutions that have been established, but we will take into account that the need for institution-building has been reduced over time. We will also briefly address the relation between these soft indicators and implementation on the ground.

2.1.1 The Stockholm Conference – A Watershed?

The Stockholm Conference scores high on agenda-setting. Various international environmental treaties had been signed well before then, but it was due to the Stockholm

[4] In addition it is probably fair to say that the GEF was created as an indirect result of the Rio Summit.
[5] See also Gulbrandsen, 2003; Wettestad, 1999.

Conference that the environment became elevated onto the international political agenda (see Linnér & Sellin, 2005). Knowledge-building in the preparatory phase was crucial, as 86 states submitted national reports to map pressing environmental concerns, thereby vastly expanding the understanding of global environmental problems. This effective agenda-setting spurred institution-building, nationally and internationally. Many countries proceeded to take immediate action as a result of the Stockholm process and institutionalised the environment as a new element of their national priorities by establishing ministries of the environment. The Stockholm Conference can also be said to have triggered international institutionalisation, as there was hardly an international environmental agreement established regionally or globally within the next two decades that did not have some kind of link to that Conference.[6] It also contributed to strengthen existing international institutions.[7] The key outcome of the Stockholm Conference was the establishment of UNEP as a manifestation of the role of the UN in this area.

As to participation, 113 states took part – a high number considering the novelty of the issue. However, only two heads of states participated. Important groundwork was done on the links between the environment and development to secure participation of the South (Linnér & Sellin, 2005; Ivanova, this special issue). For the first time internationally, 'green' NGOs were involved in the process. Overall, however, this was a state-driven process, focusing mainly on the environment. Opinion varies on the role played by the South (Najam, 2005; Ivanova, this issue), but it nevertheless seems fair to label the Stockholm Summit a watershed event.

2.1.2 The Rio Summit: The Peak is Reached?

In terms of agenda-setting the Rio Summit was also very successful. In a survey among more than 250 experts from more than 70 countries conducted by Najam et al. (2002), 88% said that it had contributed to raising awareness about sustainable development. Media coverage as well as overall political attention was also very extensive. The general message of sustainable development underlined that this Summit contributed to shaping the agenda in a more comprehensive direction. The developing countries also became much more integrated in the process, as 'the environment' was now substituted with the broader concept of sustainable development, which was more in line with Southern thinking. (Najam, 2005). Moreover, Rio scored very high in terms of participation, as to numbers, level and scope. There were 117 heads of states participating – at the time, the highest number of state leaders ever to gather. Considering that the environment is normally regarded as a 'low politics', this was in itself quite astonishing. Close to 10,000 delegates were assembled, and there were almost 20,000 NGOs represented (Grubb et al., 1993, p. 12). At Rio, NGOs were also much more integrated in the decision-making process than they had been in Stockholm.

As to institution-building, most participants clearly saw a need for specific institution on the new buzzword of the day – and thus the CSD was created. Whether this was a wise decision is a point we shall return to later (see Andresen, 2001). In terms of ensuing institution-building, it has been thoroughly documented that Rio spurred considerable growth in this area. The period that saw the greatest growth in regional and global environmental agreements were the years immediately after the World Commission on Sustainable Development (WCSD) in 1987 and the 1992 Rio Conference (Mee, 2005). There was also a

---

[6] For a detailed account of the significance of the Stockholm Conference, see Linnér & Sellin, 2005; and Ivanova in this issue.

[7] It was due to the Stockholm Conference that the International Whaling Commission in 1974 got its Secretary, after some 25 years of existence (Andresen, 1999).

surge in the establishment of environmental ministries in developing countries following the Rio Summit (Linnèr & Sellin, 2005).

In short, Rio has a high score on all our dimensions. However, some additional points should be noted. The Rio Summit may not have been quite as imaginative or as productive as it appears at first glance. First, the concept of sustainable development was not the true child of Rio, as it had been introduced by the WCSD five years earlier. Second, the two conventions signed in Rio were not the result of the Summit as such. There had been separate negotiation processes, and the only indirect effect of Rio in this regard to speed up the pace of negotiations, since the Rio Summit was the designated place for signature. Rio was only the birthplace, not the creator, of these conventions. Among the soft law documents, Agenda 21 is considered by far the most important output (Najam et al., 2002). It is the most comprehensive and ambitious international development and environment document ever produced. As a direct effect, more than 2000 Local Agenda 21's were adopted and national strategies for sustainable development created (Töpfer, 2002). This may look impressive – but the developing countries also had (unrealistic?) expectations as to huge transfers of economic resources to realise Agenda 21, and those never materialised.

Still, there is little doubt that Rio marked a high point in the ambitions of the world community. However, what happened, or rather did not happen, after Rio was that attention gradually shifted from the creation of institutions and adoption of ambitious goals, to implementation and necessary behavioural change on the ground.

2.1.3 The Johannesburg WSSD: The End of Enthusiasm?

The trend of 'growing enthusiasm and ambition' from Stockholm, via the Brundtland Commission to Rio was broken at the Johannesburg WSSD.[8] Due to the weak follow-up of Agenda 21, this Summit was to be directed primarily to improving implementation. According to one observer this ought to be a " Down to Earth Summit" (Speth, 2003, p. 26). Although implementation was focussed, there was less attention on how it should be realised. Instead, negotiations, political disagreements and media attention again focused on the adoption of ambitious goals, targets and timetables in relation to the WEHAB areas – water and sanitation, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity and ecosystem management.[9] Few of these goals were new: most of them simply reiterated the UN Millennium Development goals.[10] Thus, the agenda-setting effect of the Johannesburg Summit was modest. Ambitious goals were weakened also because there was "no specified funding, institutional mechanisms, or details about how they can be realised" (Seyfang, 2003, p. 226). More generally, lessons from international environmental agreements have taught us that the target and timetable approach is no panacea to effective problem solving (Miles et al., 2002). If realism is lacking, the usefulness of the approach is undermined.

In contrast to expectations, overall participation was a disappointment as well. Some 21,000 participants attended the Johannesburg Summit, considerably less than in Rio.[11]

---

[8] In fact this trend had been broken already at the 'Rio plus 5' in 1997, which proved to be a big disappointment (Elliott, 2005).

[9] Initially there was quite some media attention, but mostly on the lack of progress made at the Summit (Seyfang, 2003).

[10] New targets and timetables were agreed on basic sanitation, chemicals, fisheries and biological diversity.

[11] The organisers announced that more than 60,000 participants were expected to participate while, as noted, the actual number was not much more than a third of that figure. Some still maintain that this Summit was the largest meeting ever convened (see Wapner, 2003), but this is not correct.

Moreover, high-level participation was also reduced: 104 state leaders (as compared to 117 in Rio), or slightly above half the world's heads of state. The alternative NGO venues were quiet; even high-level meetings were poorly attended and the general sentiment was low, again compared to Rio.[12] On a more positive note, the tendency for greater NGO inclusion in the decision-making process continued to strengthen from Rio to WSSD, and the scope of non-state participation also increased. While the Rio Summit is seen as a milestone for green NGO participation in international environmental diplomacy, the same goes for the inclusion of *business and industry* at the Johannesburg WSSD. The "Business Case for Sustainable Development" was set up by the International Chamber of Commerce and its subsidiary the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (Rutherford, 2003). There is an increasing share of the business community that seems to take sustainable development seriously, but emphasis is on the significance of the market and a voluntary approach. In contrast, green NGOs demanded a legally binding convention on *corporate accountability*, but without success (Buenker, 2002; Seyfang, 2003).

Apart from the discussions on the nature of such responsibility, *partnerships type II* agreements between private parties, governments and other stakeholders ranked high on the agenda in Johannesburg. Some have praised this type of partnerships as very positive and "pioneered by the WSSD" (Speth, 2003, p. 28). Others, however, stress that this was by no means a new initiative of the WSSD, as the process was already well under way by that time (Gulbrandsen, 2003). Some critics fear that this may serve as an excuse to lift pressure from developed states to provide new and additional funds for development. Research has indicated that much work is needed to fully develop this idea; moreover, the benefits of using the Summit to promote them were poorly articulated (Andonova & Levy, 2003). On the other hand, it is too early to dismiss the value of this approach, it may give some new momentum to action on the ground – and that is sorely needed. Opinion varies as to the role of the business community in this process (Jacob, 2002; Rutherford, 2003). On balance, we would see increased involvement as positive: the actions of this segment are certainly part of the problem, but they are also a necessary part of the solution to these challenges.

According to many observers, the most positive aspect of the Johannesburg Summit was the more *comprehensive* approach of including the 'third pillar' of sustainable development: the social dimension, with its dominant theme of *equality* (Wapner, 2003; Najam, 2005). This further integrated the concerns of the South in the environment and development discourse. According to one observer, "WSSD may be viewed less as a failure to deliver yet another environmental "Rio" than as a maturation of complex interrelationships being forged by the pressures of globalization" (Jacob, 2002, p. 1). As noted by one reviewer of this article, "The WSSD came at a time when the dominant view on how to move forward on sustainable development was that the biggest immediate priority was to focus on the unfinished development of poverty eradication." It therefore made sense to give less priority to the environment.

However, there is no universal praise of this broader approach. One line of criticism is that the strong development focus has come at the expense of international environmental issues. "..[T]he UN and other international organizations .. should be doing a lot more to alleviate poverty. But that does not justify usurping an environmental agenda with a poverty reduction agenda. Both agendas are important and distinguishable from one another. Trying to meld them ends up short-changing both" (Charnovitz, 2005, p. 100). According to that view, this may serve to further marginalise these Conferences, as the WTO, the World Bank and

[12] This observation is based on my own participation in Johannesburg and on interviews with observers who had also been in Rio. However, others have a different and more positive evaluation of the atmosphere; see for example, Wapner (2003) and Seyfang (2003).

gatherings like the UN Conference on Financing for Development (at Monterrey in 2002) are far more important for development and poverty issues. Another line of criticism is that the broader agenda did not contribute to a more holistic approach where issue-areas were integrated. The various issue-areas were still treated separately and to the extent that linkages were forged, they could just as well be use to block progress as to move the process forward (Gulbrandsen, 2003).

Following our initial argument, it seems to make sense that no new institutions came out of the 2002 Summit. At this time it made more sense to focus on implementation, and not building new institutions. However, the question of institution building loomed large in the in the prologue to the 2002 Summit and three new institutions were created in this process. The General Assembly established a Global Ministerial Environmental Forum (GMEF) tied to UNEP. An Environmental Management Group (EMG), also linked to UNEP, was also established to enhance inter-agency co-ordination. Finally, UNEP's Governing Council in 2001 established an Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers to examine options for strengthening international environmental governance. (Elliott, 2005) In this process there was also discussion of setting up some kind of World Environmental Organisation (WEO); while WSSD would seem an appropriate focal point for creating such an institution, the issue never really surfaced in Johannesburg. Thus, some may see this Summit as a missed opportunity for further institution-building (Biermann & Bauer, 2005). An alternative perspective is that it would have made more sense to focus on strengthening existing institutions in order to facilitate implementation.

In sum, the agenda-setting effect of this Summit was modest. It is the Millennium Declaration that has become the benchmark, not the output from Johannesburg. In terms of participation the picture is somewhat mixed. NGOs played an increasingly important role and the business community entered with full force. However, overall participation as well as high-level participation was down. Opinion on the broader and more comprehensive agenda is mixed. Some have praised it for including the 'third pillar' and focusing more on poverty. Others are critical, in part because the environment virtually disappeared from the agenda; some also hold that these conferences are not the right place for addressing general development issues. Finally, it may be argued that it made sense not to create new institutions and in stead focus more on implementation. The problem with the Johannesburg Summit was that not much was added on implementation either. As to the 'missed opportunity' in terms of creating a WEO, we shall have more to say about that later. This rather sober analysis of the WSSD seems to be confirmed by the development in the aftermath of this Summit. In June 2003 the UN General Assembly voted to end the automatic five year review of UN Conferences. Instead it should be decided on a case by case basis. The rationale is that "these large events should be more strategic and less routine" (Meyerson, 2003, p. 6).

2.2 THE CSD: HAS IT MET EXPECTATIONS?

In Rio it was emphasised that there existed no UN sustainable development institution "in which such diverse, cross-cutting issues could be pursued. The upshot was the CSD" (Upton, 2004, p. 86). The CSD is still the one and only institution that focus explicitly on sustainable development. Its aims are three-fold (Chasek, 2000):

- to review progress on the implementation of the outcomes of the Rio Conference, mostly Agenda 21;
- to elaborate policy guidance and options for future initiatives aimed at achieving sustainable development; and

- to promote dialogue and build partnerships for sustainable development between governments, the international community, and major groups.

The CSD operates with a cycle of annual meetings at UN Headquarters in New York. Its Secretariat, the Division on Sustainable Development, is part of the complex UN system dealing with various aspects of sustainable development.[13] There are 53 rotating member states, elected by ECOSOC for a period of three years.

This analysis is based on the first ten years of the CSD's existence, but developments after the Johannesburg Conference will be briefly addressed as well. Accomplishments will be evaluated in relation to the three aims noted above. As the CSD mandate is vague and its programme of work broad, there is considerable scope for interpretation of what the CSD has achieved.

2.2.1 Monitoring and Reviewing Progress on Implementation of Agenda 21[14]

Relevant information can be obtained from various sources – the states involved, NGOs, UN bodies and other more independent sources – but only reports from governments are provided. In line with the 'soft-law' approach of this body, the CSD's mandate does not *oblige* states and others to submit information to the Commission. Due to the voluntary nature of the national reports, it is entirely up to the governments to determine the timing, format, and content. During the period 1993–1997, 80 of 114 countries reported to the CSD on more than one occasion; and 105 of 149 countries submitted reports to the CSD more than once during the period 1998–2002.[15] In purely numerical terms, this shows that reporting has increased over time. However, the format proved to be a problem, as the reporting guidelines were too vague to facilitate a comprehensive reporting process (Chasek, 2000). The Commission has attempted to streamline this by elaborating sustainable development indicators and introducing state profiles (Yamin, 1998). As many members, especially in the South, are concerned about excessive reporting requirements, the CSD has continued its streamlining process, but this approach has not functioned as intended.[16] Several problems have also been noted concerning the content of the reports. First, comparing reports is difficult: as the CSD has no 'baseline' for measuring performance, many reports are based on qualitative estimates.[17] Second, self-reporting by governments also raises the question of the reliability of the reports. Yamin (1998) points out that systematic falsification appears to be rare, but non-reporting or incomplete information is fairly common. Not surprisingly, quite a few states seem inclined to try to make their implementation performance look better than it is in practice, and some states also appear reluctant to provide information on certain issues[18].

On a more positive note, it has been noted that the reporting process has contributed to strengthening co-ordination and dialogue among government agencies, and between them and major groups (Kaasa, 2005). The reporting process has also helped many states to "establish baseline data, monitor their own progress, provide transparency and share experience and information with others" (Wagner, 2005, p. 115).

---

[13] For an elaboration of the rather complex organisational structure, see Bigg & Dodds, 1997 and Wagner, 2005.
[14] This evaluation is based partly on research done by Kaasa (2005, 2007) within this project.
[15] 1992–1997 figures from Yamin, 1998. 1998–2002 figures from Kaasa, 2005.
[16] Interviews, Skåre, 2005 and Mabhongo, 2005.
[17] Chasek, 2000, p. 384; Yamin, 1998, p. 56; Zhu & Morita-Lou, 2005 [interview].
[18] Eidheim & Hofseth, 2005 [interview]; Yamin, 1998/99, p. 56

However, over time it has been noted that national reports have played only a marginal role when the Commission meets,[19] and that indicates a serious flaw in the work of the CSD. However, monitoring progress is clearly at the very heart of the CSD, and if this plays a 'marginal role', the CSD has failed on a key dimension. It was intended as *the* institution for learning about the progress – or lack of such – in implementing Agenda 21. According to Najam et al. 2006:42: "The CSD has been unable to deliver on its original mandate (of monitoring Agenda 21 implementation)." No doubt, reporting poses methodological, analytical and political challenges, but it is certainly do-able. Here we may note, for example, the relative success of the climate regime in its reporting procedures, also including independent review teams.

2.2.2 Developing Policy Recommendations

The CSD's task on this dimension is also limited to 'recommending' and 'urging' (Chasek, 2000, p. 385). However, many have highlighted this dimension as a potentially important avenue for the CSD to set the agenda, in terms of initiating new processes to be followed up in other fora.[20] In practice, the CSD has accomplished little in terms of agenda-setting and policy recommendations on most issues it has dealt with: atmosphere, energy, agriculture and consumption and production patterns. According to some analysts, however, accomplishments have been achieved in other issue-areas (see Wagner, 2005; Kaasa, 2005).

Forests: In order to follow up the Forest Principles from Rio, the CSD agreed to establish the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF). This was seen by some as a watershed event that helped to focus the international dialogue on forests (see Chasek, 2000). In 1997, the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) replaced the IPF. Even though both fora came up with many recommendations, few results emerged, and so the dialogue needed to be carried out on a higher level.[21] CSD-8 therefore recommended that the UN should form an intergovernmental body on forests, and the UN Forum on Forests was then established. Although key issues like illegal logging has been taken up elsewhere (see Gulbrandsen & Humphreys, 2006), the CSD still deserves credit for following up this issue from Rio.

Oceans: When the issue of oceans was on the agenda at CSD-7, the delegates stressed the importance of finding ways to enhance the annual debate on ocean policy and law. This resulted in the establishment of the UN Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans to strengthen international co-ordination and aim at a more holistic approach. This process "may *[sic!]* contribute to revitalising the Assembly's oceans debate" (Hyvarinen & Brack, 2000, p. 28). Considering the large number of well-established 'hard-law' international institutions dealing with fisheries and the marine environment globally and regionally, not much can be expected to come out of this initiative that has any practical significance.

Freshwater: The CSD requested preparation of a Comprehensive Assessment of the Freshwater Resources to be submitted in 1997 (Chasek, 2000, p. 385). Freshwater was made a priority issue for the sixth session of the Commission. Since there has been no single body within the UN system responsible for this issue, the CSD has been deemed important in putting freshwater on the agenda (Kaasa, 2005). This may in a sense be true, but it has recently been noted as a severe problem of co-ordination that there are more than 20 UN bodies dealing with freshwater (United Nations, 2006).

---

[19] Chasek, 2000; Eidheim & Hofseth, 2004 [interview]
[20] Eidheim & Hofseth, 2005; Mabhongo, 2005 [interviews]
[21] Chasek, 2005 [interview]

In short, the CSD may have had some modest achievements in developing policy recommendations , but overall the discussions carried out during its sessions have resulted in few action-oriented proposals. The CSD has not been able to identify many issues on which the international community is likely to move forward. A major problem is that most issues discussed by CSD are dealt with by other institutions with much more political clout.

2.2.3 Dialogue and Partnerships

Promoting dialogue and building partnerships between relevant actors is generally seen as the CSD's most successful accomplishment, as it has been at the forefront regarding the involvement of NGOs (Najam et al., 2006). Agenda 21 identified nine major groups of non-state actors necessary for advancing the sustainable development agenda. The multi-stakeholder dialogues, introduced at CSD-6, have been praised as the most innovative measure to involve these groups. Major group participants also report that they learned more about other group's positions "through the by-product peer-group review that the process allowed stakeholders to engage in" (Dodds et al., 2002, p. 8) This process has also been seen as a way to further the democratisation of the UN in general (Kaasa, 2007).

The intention was to generate action-oriented dialogues and identify future policies to advance the objectives of sustainable development. However, the score on this more ambitious indicator is lower, as the dialogues have not had a clear impact on the intergovernmental process (Dodds et al., 2002). Many of the diplomats do not attend the dialogues and the mechanism of linking stakeholder contributions to the decision-making process has therefore been lacking. Not only were some of the states poorly represented, it has also been noted that many of the more significant green NGOs do not attend the CSD meetings because they do not take it seriously (see Kaasa, 2007).

Another weakness is that few NGOs from the South participate. Involving civil society in the South is crucial for moving sustainable development beyond mere rhetoric. Also, the Northern NGO bias may have contributed to the environmental bias in the CSD – at the expense of development (Upton, 2004). To some extent this has been compensated by representatives from the South strongly emphasising key development issues like financial and technology transfers. However, such general issues tend to lead to general rhetoric, and that is not very conducive to productive dialogue (Kaasa, 2007). Another problem in terms of participation and comprehensiveness is that most delegations tend to be drawn mainly from the environmental segment. Ministers of the environment are often present but few other sectors are represented, making it very difficult "to be truly effective in setting the sustainable development agenda" (Chasek, 2000, p. 394).

What about the effect about the reorganisation of the CSD following in the wake of WSSD?[22] The most important change has been the introduction of two-year cycles, an implementation and review session and one negotiation session (Bigg, 2004). These two-year cycles have been fixed until 2017. As a point of departure this seemed to be a step in the right direction, with relatively more emphasis on review and less on negotiations. It has been maintained that the heavy stress on formal negotiations is a main weakness in a 'soft' institution like the CSD (Upton, 2004). The more thorough and open review process has been noted as quite successful, but this has not been translated into the policy sessions (ENB, 2007). It seems these have been characterised as 'business as usual' with repetitions and prepared statements rather than dialogue. Two recent rather comprehensive evaluations of the UN environmental

[22] We have not conducted any systematic study of this period.

governance system pay a brief – and critical – visit to the CSD.[23] "Of all the institutions that are related somehow to the environment, the CSD's future remains the most uncertain and the disenchantment with its performance is quite broadly based" (Najam et al., 2006, p. 42). According to the UN evaluation, "It has been far less effective in ensuring that the promise of integrating environment and development is fulfilled" (United Nations, 2006, p. 23).

2.3. UNEP: A GOOD CO-ORDINATOR IN THE UN SYSTEM?

UNEP is the environmental institution of the UN. Both academics and policy-makers have voiced their opinions on the role played by UNEP, with, not surprisingly, varying verdicts as to its effectiveness. Most observers seem to agree that UNEP is a weak institution with a very broad mandate,[24] but opinion varies when it comes to identifying the root causes of these problems. Some observer point to weak staff, bureaucratic approach and geographic location, while others underline UNEP's weak financing and low formal status.[25] The remedies suggested vary accordingly. Some suggest that UNEP be upgraded to become a specialised UN agency, to provide more stable funding and use UNEP as a basis for a World Environmental Organisation (Rosendal, this issue). More critical observers do not support such organisational changes and recommend that UNEP should narrow its focus and concentrate on areas where it has been shown to be good (Downie & Levy, 2000; Heggelund & Backer, this volume). This discussion touches on how much of UNEP's performance can be ascribed to UNEP as an institution in its own right, and how much can be explained by the roles and interests of its members? These questions are discussed in the next section; we also return to this in the final section.

UNEP is a programme within the UN system rather than a specialised agency. Still, here we study the organisational component of UNEP as manifested primarily by its headquarters in Nairobi and the Geneva office. The staff of UNEP consists of officials working both as 'servants' as well as co-ordinators of several environmental regimes. It may have a positive influence on these through its expertise, knowledge and not least through its exercise of authority and as facilitator for parties to the relevant agreement.[26] As noted, UNEP has a very broad mandate. Here we focus on its co-ordinating role only. However, before we zoom in on UNEPs performance in terms of co-ordinating, first some brief remarks on one of its other key functions – to set the environmental agenda and initiate new environmental institutions – as this has a direct effect on the task of co-ordination.

UNEP has a very high score on this account. Indeed, this very success has made the goal of co-ordination more challenging, due to the high number of independent MEAs that have been created (Andresen, 2001). Using examples from the three clusters in focus in the FNI project (biodiversity, chemicals, atmosphere), we see that UNEP has been important in the establishment of most major MEAs within these clusters. Typically, scientists had warned about these problems, but UNEP (with other international agencies) played a key part in translating their findings and sharpening the policy focus. UNEP often also played a key role in brokering and facilitating subsequent negotiations. One interesting exception is the climate regime, where UNEP was central in agenda-setting, but was ousted from the process when

---

[23] Najam et al., 2006; United Nations, November 2006. The latter report also discusses human rights.
[24] For an account of the detailed mandate of UNEP, see Ivanova, 2005.
[25] For varied and stimulating discussions of strong and weak points of UNEP, see for example Biermann & Bauer, 2005; Najam et al., 2006; Ivanova, 2005.
[26] For a discussion on the role of secretariats more generally as well their role in specific regimes, see Bauer, 2006; Andresen & Skjærseth, 1999.

negotiations were about to start. One explanation may be that, because UNEP had been so successful within the ozone regime, key actors did not want it to play a similar role in the climate negotiations (Agrawala, 1998). Another explanation could be that as climate was not only about the environment, but equally about trade, energy and economics, UNEP was too narrow an agency to play an important role in this process.[27] A third explanation, suggested by one reviewer, is that the General Director of UNEP, Tolba had alienated many governments during the Montreal process and they did not want to give UNEP (Tolba in particular) a say on this really important and cross-cutting issue. This had fundamental consequences for role of UNEP in this cluster. UNEP provides the Secretariat for the Montreal Protocol while the Climate Secretariat is placed in Bonn, without any formal relations to UNEP, obviously reducing its co-ordinating potential within this cluster.

It may of course be argued that UNEP has contributed to the creation of weak and malfunctioning regimes, as well as too many of them, thereby leading to unnecessary overlaps and co-ordination problems. Although this may well be the case, our aim here is not to study the effectiveness of these regimes, but simply to see whether UNEP has fulfilled the mandate of creating new environmental institutions. More recently there has been increasing awareness that the demand for new environmental institutions has been drastically reduced. Instead, the focus has shifted to making the existing system work better – and improved co-ordination is assumed to be one way to achieve this. Not all agree on the need for more co-ordination (Victor, 1999). However, here we simply take this as a point of departure, as it is a key goal for UNEP (Rosendal & Andresen, 2003).

Here we will not enter into a discussion of the potential and pitfalls of clustering MEAs (Oberthur, 2002). Let us simply note that several clusters have been identified, among them 'global atmosphere', 'hazardous substances' and 'biodiversity'. Most of our research has been on the latter (Andresen & Rosendal, 2007). As it is a fairly 'mature' cluster, it can illustrate the performance of UNEP through its various stages of development. UNEP has played an important co-ordinating role in this cluster. Here we present a few broad conclusions and illustrations from all clusters.

There is general agreement that the biodiversity cluster is composed of the following: The CBD, the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the World Heritage Convention (WHC), and the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).[28] The atmosphere cluster is composed of the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP) the UNFCCC and the Vienna Convention/the Montreal Protocol. Due to the regional nature of LRTAP it is not included here. Finally, the chemicals cluster is composed of the Basel Convention, the Stockholm Convention and the Rotterdam Convention.

Only a few broad conclusions will be presented. First we address briefly whether these MEAs perceive a need for co-ordination among themselves, illustrating the need for co-ordination in general. Second, we examine more specifically what the secretariats of MEAs expect from UNEP in this regard and how UNEP responds. UNEP has formal responsibility for affiliations with the CBD secretariat, CITES and the CMS, while UNESCO administers the WHC. Ramsar is fairly independent, with the IUCN as its secretariat. Various formal co-ordination activities take place within the biodiversity conservation cluster. There is a Joint Web Site involving the CBD, CITES, CMS, WHC and Ramsar; and several memoranda of understanding have been signed between the CBD and the other conventions.[29] Also, the seventh

[27] Interview, the Climate Secretariat, Bonn, October 23 2003.
[28] http://www.biodiv.org/convention/partners-websites.asp. We will not go into their specific functions here, nor have we looked systematically at CMS or WHC.
[29] For a detailed overview, see Rosendal & Andresen, 2003.

conference of the parties to the CBD in 2004 established the Biodiversity Liaison Group, including the CBD, CITES, Ramsar, CMS and WHC. Within the 'chemicals cluster', UNEP has a strong formal position, as its Geneva affiliation provides the secretariat that serves all three Conventions, but secretariat facilities for the Rotterdam Convention are split between Geneva and Rome (FAO). As noted matters are different for the 'atmosphere cluster', as UNEP has no formal role regarding the climate regime. While there is considerable co-operation within the chemicals cluster, there is very modest contact within the atmosphere cluster.[30]

UNEP has increased its co-ordination activities as a response to the call for more emphasis on co-ordination. In 1999, it established a Division for Environmental Conventions, to co-ordinate the MEAs, track inconsistencies in the decisions of the conferences of the parties (COPs), and seek to streamline national reporting. UNEP has convened co-ordination meetings for secretariats of environmental agreements since 1994. Since 1998, the UN Office in Nairobi (UNON) has offered administrative services to the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements, including personnel and accounting services. On paper this looks good, but reality is seen somewhat different by many of the actors involved.

An important structural factor affecting the scope of UNEP for co-ordination is the relationship between the agreements and their COPs. Each MEA maintains its own jurisdiction, each of the COPs constitutes the highest authority for that particular convention, and the decisions on joint efforts with other multilateral environmental agreements rest with the COPs (Carstensen, 2004). 'We are servants – not in the engine room'.[31] The statement has a wide application, as all MEA secretariats look to their conferences of the parties for guidance on what to do. But COP decisions tend to put the secretariats in crossfire with a *double-bind* message emanating from the very same member states. There are the specific demands of the member states for increasingly detailed reports; there is also the pressure for greater harmonisation of reporting systems. Similarly, frustration is often expressed from UNEP that there is call for co-ordination in their Governing Council, but this is not the message from the COPs that want to be in control of 'their' issue-area.

Given the double-bind message from the COPs and the interlinked diversity of tasks, the MEA secretariats do recognise the need for co-ordination. But do they want UNEP to provide these services? Part of the answer is that the secretariats look more towards their COPs for guidance, and not to UNEP. A second rough conclusion is that, to the extent that the secretariats recognise a need for co-ordination or any other kind of assistance from UNEP, expectations as to what UNEP can deliver are not very high. First, UNEP's relation to the MEA secretariats involves both administration and substance. The administrative tasks are performed by the UNON in Nairobi. This is where the heaviest criticism from the secretariats has occurred. The most annoying aspect of their work is excessive red tape, and respondents agree that a major problem rests with this body. In effect, many would like the Divisions and the secretariats themselves to take on more administrative tasks, rather than leaving it to UNON – and in the case of the secretariat of the Biodiversity Convention, this has been done. The substance has to do with UNEP co-ordinating the MEAs. Here the scope of UNEP's role is influenced largely by the respective COPs: the multilateral environmental agreements are generally not ready for interference on the part of UNEP. Still, the picture is not all bleak: some secretariats, especially the smaller ones, are well aware of the benefits they get from their ties to the UN system. There is added recognition stemming from the UN seal, and some secretariat staff view themselves as UN international civil servants.[32]

---

[30] Interview Climate Secretariat Bonn, October 2003 and the Geneva office 2004.
[31] Interview with Ramsar official, September 2004.
[32] Interview at CITES Secretariat, Geneva, September 2003.

Secondly, to the extent that secretariats recognise a real need for co-ordination from UNEP, at least some of them do not expect UNEP to be able to deliver: UNEP organises workshops and meetings, but little substantial results from all this. For instance, UNEP failed to consult CITES during the development of National Biodiversity Strategies. Echoing these views, the CBD would also like to see a more service-oriented UNEP.[33] The Climate Secretariat often gets invited to various UNEP events but usually declines, as "nothing but talk comes out of it".[34] On a similar note, Ramsar maintains that UNEP could ideally be very effective in co-ordinating activities on specific issue-areas – but fails to play this role. However, the smaller secretariats, such as Ramsar and Basel, are in greater need of various kinds of assistance from UNEP. Ramsar stresses the need for more streamlining and rationalisation, which will help the secretariats to have greater outreach and assist the parties: "UNEP should and could play this role in information and early warning – but is not able to."[35] This is not only due to lack of financial resources but is also a result of insufficient technical expertise and excessive emphasis on administrative matters.[36]

In sum, these are generally grave tidings for UNEP. The sentiments expressed are not just a matter of blowing off steam. A major signal was the meeting of the COPs to the Biodiversity Convention in 2004 that established the above-mentioned Biodiversity Liaison Group involving the CBD, CITES, CMS, Ramsar and WHC – but without UNEP as a member (Decision VII/26). This is clearly a sore point with UNEP, which has acted as a creator of most of these conventions. And indeed, most representatives of the secretariats – as well as UNEP – underline the key role played by UNEP in the initial stages of regime-creation. UNEP is portrayed as a 'good father' – but when the MEAs mature they want to leave the nest. According to a representative from the 'chemicals cluster': "As the UNEP interim role is passing what we want to do is work for the COPs...(UNEP) co-ordination mainly consists of making sure we don't book meetings at the same time.[37] A representative of the Climate Secretariat says bluntly that they would never have achieved what they have done in terms of growth and expertise if they had been part of the 'UNEP family'".[38]

It is not surprising that especially the larger MEA secretariats do not want 'unnecessary' interference from UNEP. They want to be on their own. This does not mean that co-ordination is not needed – it probably is. But UNEP is not perceived as performing this function very well. A main message seems to be that there is no need or room for the kind of 'top–down' co-ordination attempted by UNEP. Instead, UNEP should be more of a 'think-tank' that can provide cross-cutting information and ideas – but UNEP has not done that. We return to this in the concluding section.

2.4 Overall Assessment: How Effective are UN Institutions?

According to the indicators used here, the significance of the global conferences has been reduced over time. Few would disagree that the 1972 Stockholm Conference was extremely important, not only along the soft process-oriented indicators used here, but also in contributing to subsequent action on the ground. The fact that the Rio Summit surpassed the

[33] Interview at CBD Secretariat, Montreal, March 2004.
[34] Interview Climate Secretariat, October 2003.
[35] Interview with Ramsar official, September 2004.
[36] For example, CITES was able to bring about the improved management of shared sturgeon species, which was something UNEP had tried to do for many years. Interview at CITES Secretariat, Geneva, September 2003.
[37] Interview with representative of the Stockholm Convention, Geneva September 2004.
[38] Interview, the Climate Secretariat, Bonn, October 2003.

1972 Conference on all or most of our indicators does not necessarily make it more important. True, it was an impressive and ambitious event, but Agenda 21 was not followed up. We cannot 'blame' the Summit for this, but one must question the value of such events when follow-up is so weak. Thus, it seemed wise of the 2002 WSSD to focus on implementation, but again much attention was given to the adoption of ambitious goals while less attention was paid to how these goals should be realised. Also, agenda-setting was modest, since most of the goals were re-circulated versions of the broader UN Millennium Goals. The Millennium Goals have become *the* important goals against which to measure progress, not the Johannesburg Declaration. The major accomplishment of the WSSD was the stronger inclusion of the business community and some analysts also praise the broader and more comprehensive approach.

We return to a fuller explanation of the diminishing effectiveness of the global conferences later in this issue. Suffice it here to mention that the Stockholm Conference took place almost in 'virgin territory': it was the first of its kind. It is certainly easier to have an impact under such circumstances compared to the extremely dense international institutional network characterising the present day. What makes the situation of such 'soft' conferences even more difficult is that many international institutions, both MEAs and development and trade institutions are far more important for most countries. Basically the most important niche of this type of global conferences is agenda-setting – and agenda-setting is not what the world needs, but implementation. This problem now seems widely recognised, within the UN as well as among key actors. The days of *this* type of conference are therefore probably over.

While there is little doubt that the Conferences have had some value in historical perspective, this is less clear when it comes to the CSD. Overall goal achievement is quite low particularly in terms of reporting; oversee implementation of Agenda. The score may be a bit higher in terms of developing policy recommendations, but most energy has been used on discussing issues that are also dealt with by institutions with much more 'regulatory bite'. Most observers agree that the CSD has been more successful in the involvement of major groups, particularly in its early phase. However, on the whole the CSD has spurred little action. In fact, after only a few years in operation there was talk of abolishing the CSD (Upton, 2004). It was also rumoured that the most recent UN evaluation (United Nations, 2006) would recommend that it be closed down, but the evaluation stopped short of that. A main reason appears to have been that it is still the only institution focussing solely on sustainable development. The changes in the institutional set up of the CSD following in the wake of the WSSD has been positive in terms of more systematic focus on the review process, but this has not been utilised in the more important policy sessions. Its value has therefore so far been modest.

UNEP is a small international institution with limited resources known to few outside the UN bureaucracy and the relevant research community. As more visible and better-endowed UN organisations often have not been able to perform very effectively, expectations should be modest as to what UNEP can accomplish – a fact often forgotten. In terms of establishing MEAs, UNEP has been quite effective, but more recently the need for new institutions can be questioned due to the existing dense institutional network existing in this area. In terms of co-ordination, we concluded (primarily on the basis of extensive interviews) that it was quite some way from achieving this goal. This may point to a more structural problem facing UNEP, as it has traditionally been well-equipped as a 'founding father' for new institutions but has not really been able to "keep the children in the nest when they are ready to fly", as one respondent put it. In short, while creating new institutions is usually not very controversial, mature and growing institutions simply do not want to be controlled or co-ordinated.This does not mean that co-ordination is not needed, but UNEP has not been very effective in doing it.

Next we turn to the creation of UNEP before we discuss the role of key actors within these institutions. Finally, in summing up, what influence have these actors had compared to other explanatory perspectives and what is the room for reform and increasing effectiveness of UN global environmental governance?

References

Agrawala, S. (1998). Structural and process history of the intergovernmental panel on climate change. Climatic Change, 39(4), 621-642

Andonova, L. B. & Levy, M. A. (2003). Franchising global governance: Making sense of the Johannesburg Type II partnerships.(In O. S. Stokke & Ø. B. Thommesen (Eds.), Yearbook of international cooperation on environment and development 2003/2004 (pp. 19-32). London: Earthscan.

Andresen, S. (1999). The International Whaling Regime: Order at the turn of the century? (In D. Vidas and W. Østreng (Eds.), Order for the oceans at the turn of the century (pp. 215-231). Kluwer Law International.)

Andresen, S. (2001). Global environmental governance: UN fragmentation and co-ordination. (In O. S. Stokke & Ø. B. Thommesen (Eds.) Yearbook of international co-operation on environment and development 2001/2002 (pp. 19-25). London: Earthscan, for the Fridtjof Nansen Institute.)

Andresen, S. & Rosendal, K. (forthcoming). The role of the United Nations Environmental Programme in the co-ordination of multilateral environmental agreements. (In F. Biermann, B. Siebenhuener & A. Schreyogg (Eds.), International organisations in global environmental governance (pp. 119-136). Oxford: Routledge)

Andresen, S. & Skjærseth, J. B. (1999, July). Can international environmental secretariats promote effective co-operation? (Paper presented at the United Nations University Conference on Synergies and Co-ordination between Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Tokyo)

Bauer, S. (2006). Does bureaucracy really matter? The authority of intergovernmental treaty secretariats in global environmental politics. Global Environmental Politics, 6(1), 23-49

Bernauer, T. (1995). The effect of international environmental institutions: How we might learn more. International Organisations, 49(2), 351-377

Biermann, F. & Bauer, S. (2004). Assessing the effectiveness of intergovernmental organisations in international environmental politics. Global Environmental Change, 14, 189-193

Biermann, F. & Bauer, S. (Eds.) (2005). A world environmental organisation: Solution or threat for effective international environmental governance. (Aldershot: Ashgate)

Bigg, T. (2004). The World Summit on Sustainable Development: Was it worthwhile? (In T. Bigg (Ed.), Survival for a small planet (pp. 3-23). London: Earthscan.)

Bigg, T. & Dodds, F. (1997). The UN Commission on Sustainable Development. (In F. Dodd (Ed.), The way forward beyond Agenda 21 (pp. 15-36). London: Earthscan.)

Buenker, M. A. (2002). Progress at Bali – but not enough for Johannesburg! Environmental Policy and Law, 32(3–4), 140–145

Carstensen, J. (2004). EC environmental law and multilateral environmental agreements for Europe. (UNITAR paper on the EU environmental acquis).

Charnovitz, S. (2005). Towards a world environmental organization: Reflections upon a vital debate. (In Frank Biermann & Steffen Bauer (Eds.), A world environmental organisation: Solution or threat for effective international environmental governance (pp. 87-117). Aldershot: Ashgate.)

Chasek, P. (2000). The UN Commission on Sustainable Development: The first five years. (In Pamela Chasek (Ed.), The global environment in the twenty-first century: Prospects for international cooperation (pp. 378–398). New York: United Nations University.)

Dodds, F., Chambers, B. & Kanie, N. (2002). International environmental governance: The question of reform: Key issues and proposals. (Tokyo: United Nations University)

Downie, D. L. & Levy, M. (2000). The UN Environmental Programme at a turning point: Options for change. (In Pamela Chasek (Ed.), The global environment in the twenty-first century: Prospects for international cooperation (pp. 355-378). New York: United Nations University Press.)

ENB (Earth Negotiation Bulletin) (2007). Summary of the intergovernmental preporatory meeting for the fiftenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, 5(243, March)

Elliott, L. (2005). The United Nations' record on environmental governance: An assessment. (In F. Biermann & S. Bauer, A world environmental organisation: Solution or threat for effective international environmental governance (pp. 27-57). Aldershot: Ashgate.)

Esty, D. & Ivanova, M. (2002). Revitalizing global environmental governance: A function-driven approach. (In Daniel Esty & Maria Ivanova (Eds), Global environmental governance: Options and opportunities. New Haven, CT: Yale School of Forests & Environmental Studies.)
Gulbrandsen, L. (2003). UN conference diplomacy on environment and development: From norm-creation to lack of action? Internasjonal Politikk, 61(1), 3-28 (In Norwegian)
Gulbrandsen, L. & Humphreys, D. (2006). International initiatives to address tropical timber logging and trade. FNI Report 4/2006. (Lysaker, Norway: Fridtjof Nansen Institute)
Grubb, M., Koch, M., Munson, A., Sullivan, F. & Thomson, K. (1993). The 'Earth Summit' agreements: A guide and assessment. (London: Earthscan)
Heggelund, G. & Backer, E. B. (2007). China and UN Environmental Policy: Institutional Growth, Learning and Implementation. International Environmental Agreements, this issue.
Hyvarinen, J. & Brack, D. (2000). Global environmental institutions: Analysis and options for change. (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs)
Ivanova, M. (2005). Can the anchor hold? Rethinking the United Nations Environment Programme for the 21st century. (New Haven, CT: Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies)
Ivanova, M. (2007). Designing the United Nations Environmental Programme: A story of compromise and confrontation. International Environmental Agreements, this issue.
Jacob, T. (2002). Reflections on Johannesburg: The larger context. (Memo, DuPont)
Kaasa, S. (2005). The Commission on Sustainable Development: A study of institutional design, distribution of capabilities and entrepreneurial leadership. FNI Report 5/2005. (Lysaker, Norway: Fridtjof Nansen Institute)
Kaasa, S. (2007). The UN Commission on Sustainable Development: Which mechanisms explains its accomplishments? Global Environmental Politics, 7(3), forthcoming.
Levy M., Young, O. R. & Zurn, M. (1995). The study of international regimes. European Journal of International Relations, Oxford University Press 1(3), 267-330
Linnér, B.-O. & Sellin, H. (2005). The road to Rio: early efforts on environment and development. (In A. C. Kallhauge, G. Sjøstedt & E. Corell (Eds.), Global challenges furthering the multilateral process for sustainable development (pp. 58-74). Sheffield, UK: Greenleaf Publishing Ltd.)
Mee, L. (2005). The role of UNEP and UNDP in multilateral environmental agreements. International Environmental Agreements, 5(3), 227-263
Meyerson, F. (2003). Burning the bridge to the 21st century: The end of the era of integrated conferences? Environment and Security Report, 9, 6-12
Miles, E. L., Underdal, A., Andresen, S., Wettestad, J., Skjærseth, J. B. & Carlin, E. M. (Eds.) (2002). Environmental Regime Effectiveness: Confronting Theory with Evidence. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press)
Najam, A., Poling, J., Yamagishi, N., Straub, D., Sarno, J., Ritter, S. & Kim, E. (2002). From Rio to Johannesburg: Progress and prospects. Environment, 44(7), 26-38
Najam, A. (2003). The case against a new international environmental organization. Global Governance, 9(3), 367-384
Najam, A. (2005). Developing countries and global environmental governance: From contestation to participation and engagement. International Environmental Agreements, 5(3), 303-321.
Najam, A., Papa, M. & Taiyab, N. (2006) Global environmental governance: A reform agenda. (IISD - International Institute for Sustainable Development)
Oberthur, S. (2002). Clustering of multilateral environmental agreements: Potentials and limitations. International Environmental Agreements, 2, 317-340
Rosendal, G. K. (2007). Norway in UN environmental policies: Ambitions and influence. International Environmental Agreements, this issue.
Rosendal, G. K. & Andresen, S. (2003). UNEP's role in enhancing problem-solving capacity in multilateral environmental agreements: Coordination and assistance in the biodiversity conservation cluster. FNI Report 10/2003. (Lysaker, Norway: Fridtjof Nansen Institute)
Rutherford, P. (2003). Talking the talk: Business discourse at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Environmental Politics, 12(2), 145-150
Seyfang, G. (2003). Environmental mega-conferences – from Stockholm to Johannesburg and beyond. Global Environmental Change, 13, 223-228
Speth, J. G. (2003). Perspectives on the Johannesburg Summit. Environment, 45(1), 26-29.
Töpfer, K. (2002). From Rio to Earth Summit. (Foreword in F. Dodds (Ed.), Earth Summit 2002: A new deal. London: Earthscan.)
United Nations (9 November 2006). Delivering as one report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel. (New York: United Nations)

Upton, S. (2004). The international framework for action: Is the CSD the best we can do? (In T. Bigg (Ed.), Survival for a small planet (pp. 85-101). London:Earthscan.)
Victor, D. (1999, July). The market of international environmental protection services and the perils of coordination. (Background paper presented at the United Nations University Conference, Tokyo)
Wagner, L. (2005). A commission will lead them: The UN Commission on Sustainable Development and UNCED follow-up. (In A. C. Kallhauge, G. Sjøstedt & E. Corell (Eds.), Global challenges furthering the multilateral process for sustainable development (pp. 103-123). Sheffield, UK: Greenleaf Publishing Ltd.)
Wapner, P. (2003). World Summit on Sustainable Development: Toward a post-Jo'burg environmentalism. Global Environmental Politics, 3(1), 1-9.
Wettestad, J. (1999). Designing effective international regimes: The key conditions. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar)
Yamin, F. (1998). The CSD reporting process: A quiet step forward for sustainable development. (In H. O. Bergesen, G. Parmann and Ø. B. Thommessen (Eds.), Yearbook of international co-operation on environment and development 1998/1999 (pp. 42–62). London: Earthscan Publications).
Young, O. (2007). Designing environmental governance systems – The diagnostic method. IHDP UPDATE, 1, 9-11