

## **GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE REFORM: THE EMERGING DEBATE ON THE NEED FOR A WORLD ENVIRONMENT ORGANIZATION**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Environmental problems such as climate change, oceans pollution, fisheries depletion, and loss of biological diversity have come to demonstrate most openly our current global interconnectedness. Governments continue to set up international mechanisms for tackling global-scale environmental problems which has led to a complex international bureaucracy, significant burdens on national administrative capability in both the developed and the developing world, and, most importantly, inability on the part of existing international or national bodies to successfully deal with the problems at hand. In this context, the question of the most suitable governance architecture for the scale and scope of contemporary global environmental problems has become an important focus of both policy and academic debates. Scholars and politicians alike have argued that if we do not address governance failures, our stewardship of the environment will persist to be ineffective and inequitable, with little possibility of finding a pathway toward sustainability. Consequently, national governments, civil society groups, and experts on global environment policy have called for the reform of the global environmental governance structure. This paper reviews the most prominent policy options for environmental governance reform that have received attention in the literature and identifies key points of contention and convergence. To achieve its aim, the paper is divided as follows: introduction, core issues of debate on the need for a World Environment Organization, models of global environmental governance reform, argument against a World Environment Organization and the concluding remark.*

**KEYWORDS:** Global Environment, Governance Reform, Emerging Debate, World Environment Organization

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Despite the proliferation of treaties and institutions, policies and programmes charged with stewardship of the global environment, the health of the global environment continues to deteriorate. As encouraging as the growing involvement of many different United Nations bodies in environmental matters is, what we have at present is duplication, fragmentation and inefficiency (Mohammed, 2001; Korinna, 2002; Speth, 2004) in the governance of the global environment. International environmental problems such as climate change, biological

diversity, drastically depleted fisheries, catastrophic droughts, devastated forests, disappearing freshwater resources, polluted waterways, and the dispersion of persistent hazardous chemicals remain largely unresolved and threatens delicate ecosystems and, indeed, the inhabitants of the earth (Sebastian and Thomas, 2004:360; UNEP, 2002; William and Victoria, 2003).

A comprehensive and systematic global environmental policy does not yet exist (Biermann, 1998). A proliferation of weak international environmental treaties and national laws has failed to address the problem of global environmental decline. The various bodies that address environmental issues in some cases have conflicting mandates and lack sufficient authority and funding to prioritize the environment. Additionally, in contrast for instance, to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and International Labour Organization (ILO) structure, the system of International Environmental Governance (IEG) has weak enforcement and compliance mechanisms (Sebastian and Thomas, 2004). In this context, the question of the most appropriate governance architecture for the scale and scope of contemporary global environmental problems has become an important focus of both policy and academic debates. Scholars and politicians alike have argued that if we do not address governance failures, our stewardship of the environment will continue to be ineffective and inequitable, with little chance of finding a path toward sustainability (Clapp and Peter, 2005; Young, 2002; Berruga and Peter, 2006). As a result, national governments, civil society groups, and experts on global environment policy have called for the reform and strengthening of the global environmental governance system (Maria, 2005:11-12; Desai, 2004; Esty and Maria, 2002; Kanie and Peter, 2004; Speth, 2003; Vogler and Mark, 1996).

One response for international environmental governance reform is to create a World Environment Organization (WEO) that would be a designated and empowered advocate for the environment that could serve to ensure effective policy and decision-making and provide an adequate response to environmental management (William and Victoria, 2003). Proposals to create an international agency on environmental protection have been debated for over forty years (Biermann and Steffen, 2005) beginning with US foreign policy strategist George F. Kennan, who argued for an International Environmental Agency encompassing “a small group of advanced nations” to bore the responsibility for solving international environmental problems (Kennan, 1970:411-412). Several authors supported this idea at that time and as one outcome of this debate, the United Nations established in 1972 the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), following a decision adopted at the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. The creation of United Nations Environment Programme was a more modest reform than the strong international environmental organization that some observers had called for at that time. Nonetheless, this reform altered the context of the organizational debate in international environmental politics and effectively halted it (Frank, 2012:4-5).

The debate about a larger, more powerful agency for global environmental policy was revived in 1989 with The Declaration of The Hague, initiated by the governments of The Netherlands, France and Norway, which called for an authoritative international body on the atmosphere that would include a provision for effective majority rule. This declaration helped to trigger more proposals for a world environment organization that could replace United Nations Environment Programme. At the June 23, 1997 Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on environment and development, Brazil, Germany, Singapore, and South Africa submitted a joint proposal for a “global umbrella organization for environmental issues, with the United Nations Environment Programme as a major pillar” (Frank, 2012). In the words of Germany’s chancellor at the time:

Global environmental protection and sustainable development need a clearly- audible voice at the United Nations. Therefore, in the short term ... it is important that cooperation among the various environmental organizations be significantly improved. In the medium-term this should lead to the creation of a global umbrella organization for environmental issues, with the United Nations Environment Programme as a major pillar (Maria, 2007; Helmut, 1997; Biermann and Steffen, 2004:11).

Similar calls came subsequently from several leading politicians (Jospin, 2002; Gorbachev, 2001; Speth, 2005; Panitchpakdi, 2001), academics, governments, expert commissions as well as several international civil servants, and others (Charnovitz, 2002; Charnovitz, 2003; Charnovitz, 2005; Zedillo Commission, 2001). For example, in 1999 Renato Ruggiero, the Executive Director of the World Trade Organization (WTO), caused a stir by calling for a World Environment Organization as a counterbalance to the World Trade Organization an unlikely initiative coming from a top-level bureaucrat in view of the usual inclination of bureaucracies to widen their own competences when in doubt. No doubt the debate on the need to integrate environmental standards into the World Trade Organization regime played a role here (Frank and Udo, 2000; Ruggiero, 1998). In 1998 the French President Jacques Chirac joined the proponents of a world environment organization by advocating a "World Authority...as an impartial and indisputable global centre for the evaluation of our environment" (Frank and Udo, 2000; Jacques, 1998), and on 6 June 2000, the French environment minister, Dominique Voynet, announced that she would now use the French presidency of the European Union, started on 1 July 2000, to launch the idea of establishing an organisation mondiale de l'environnement (Biermann, 2000).

This renewed political attention to global environmental governance reform among some governments spurred a vibrant debate and further academic input to the discourse that culminated at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg which helped to reinvigorate the debate. In an impassioned speech, then French President Jacques Chirac declared that the "house is burning" and that a World Environment Organization is imperative for attending to the urgent ecological pressures on a global scale (Maria, 2007; Biermann and Steffen, 2004). The idea of a World Environment Organization is rooted in dissatisfaction with the current arrangements of international environmental governance and, more importantly, with the lack of effective environmental protection it has achieved so far (Sebastian, 2004).

## **CORE ISSUES OF DEBATE ON THE NEED FOR A WORLD ENVIRONMENT ORGANIZATION**

What are the main arguments put forward in support of a world environment organization? Essentially, advocates of this new entity point to three major shortcomings of the present state of global environmental governance: deficiencies in the coordination of distinct policy arenas, deficiencies in the process of capacity-building in developing countries, and deficiencies in the implementation and further development of international environmental standards (Frank and Udo, 1998; Simonis, 2002; Haas and Levy, 1993).

### **Better Coordination of Global Environmental Governance**

First, many observers claim that there is a coordination deficit in the international governance architecture that results in substantial costs and suboptimal policy outcomes. When United

Nations Environment Programme was set up in 1972, it was a comparatively independent player with a clearly defined work area. Since then, however, the increase in international environmental regimes has led to a considerable fragmentation of the system (Biermann, 2000; Frank and Udo, 2000). According to the background paper for the 2010 consultative group, “There are now more than 500 international treaties and other agreements related to the environment, of which...302 date from the period between 1972 and the early 2000s” (UNEP, 2001; Chris, 2012:5). Norms and standards in each issue area of environmental policy are set up by distinct legislative bodies-the conferences of the parties to the environmental treaties without much respect for repercussions and linkages with other policy fields. This situation is made worse by the organizational fragmentation of the various convention secretariats that have evolved into distinct medium-sized bureaucracies with strong centrifugal tendencies. For good reasons, there are no functionally different secretariats for the many conventions on labour standards, which are administered instead by a single specialized organization, that is, the International Labour Organization (ILO) (Biermann, 2000; Frank and Udo, 2000).

Streamlining environmental secretariats and negotiations into one body would especially increase the voice of the South in global environmental negotiations. The current system of organizational fragmentation and inadequate coordination causes special problems for developing countries. Individual environmental agreements are negotiated in a variety of places, ranging-for example in ozone policy-from Vienna to Montreal, Helsinki, London, Nairobi, Copenhagen, Bangkok, Nairobi, Vienna, San José, Montreal, Cairo, Beijing and Ouagadougou. This nomadic nature of a ‘travelling diplomatic circus’ also characterizes most sub-committees of environmental conventions. Developing countries lack the resources to attend all these meetings with a sufficient number of well-qualified diplomats and experts (Frank, 2004:16; Rajan, 1997). The creation of a World Environment Organization could help developing countries to build up specialized ‘environmental embassies’ at the seat of the new organization, which would reduce their costs and increase their negotiation skills and respective influence (Frank, 2004).

More so, most specialized international organizations and bodies with some relation to environmental protection, such as the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) or the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), have initiated environmental programs of their own over the years. Yet there is not much coordination among these organizations and their policies. If compared to national politics, the current international situation might come close to abolishing national environment ministries and transferring their programs and policies to the ministries of agriculture, industry, energy, economics, or trade-a policy proposal that would not find many supporters in most countries (Biermann, 2000).

For global environmental policy, no central anchoring point exists that could compare to the World Health Organization (WHO), International Labour Organization (ILO), or World Trade Organization (WTO) in their respective fields, but there is an overlap in the functional areas of almost all bodies involved. An international centre with a clear strategy to ensure global environmental sustainable development thus seems to be the need of the hour. Just as within nation states, where environmental policy was institutionally strengthened through the introduction of independent environmental ministries, global environmental policies could be made stronger through an independent World Environment Organization that helps to contain the special interests of individual programs and organizations and to limit double work, overlap, and inconsistencies (Biermann, 2000; Maria, 2012:6; Kaul, 2001; Frank, Centerforunreform.org > GEG\_Biermann).

## **Promoting Capacity-building and Improved Financial and Technology Transfers in Developing Countries**

Secondly, supporters of a World Environment Organization argue that such a body could assist in the build up of environmental capacities in developing countries. Capacity-building has become the key phrase of development cooperation, and strengthening the capacity of developing countries to deal with global and domestic environmental problems has certainly become one of the most essential functions of global environmental regimes (Biermann, 2000; Grindle, 1997; Haas, Keohane and Levy, 1993; Keohane and Levy, 1996; Connolly and Keohane, 1996; Frank, 1998; Ott, 1998).

Yet the current organizational setting for financial transfers to developing countries suffers from an ad hocism and fragmentation that does not fully meet the requirements of transparency, efficiency, and participation of the parties involved. At present, most industrialized countries strive for a strengthening of the World Bank and its affiliate, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to which they will likely wish to assign most of the future financial transfers (e.g., the phase out of persistent organic pollutants). Many developing countries, on the other hand, view this development with concern, given their perspective of the World Bank as a Western-dominated institution ruled by decision making procedures based on contributions (Biermann, 2000).

A way out would be to move the tasks of overseeing capacity-building and financial and technological assistance for global environmental policies to an independent body that is specially designed to account for the distinct character of developed-developing world relations in global environmental policy. Such a body could link the normative and technical aspects of financial and technological assistance and could be strong enough to overcome the fragmentation of the current system. Such a body could be a World Environment Organization. The organization could be empowered to coordinate various financial mechanisms and to administer the funds of sectoral regimes in trust, including the Clean Development Mechanism and the emissions trading system under the Kyoto Protocol (Biermann, 2000).

These responsibilities do not need to imply the setup of large new bureaucracies. Instead, a World Environment Organization could still make use of the extensive expertise of the World Bank or the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), including their national representations in developing countries. However, by designating a world environment organization as the central authoritative body for the various financial mechanisms and funds, the rights of developing countries over implementation could be strengthened without necessarily giving away advantages of the technical expertise and knowledge of existing organizations (Biermann, 2000).

Several years ago the term capacity-building became a new catchword of development cooperation. Seen in empirical terms, the building of capacity, particularly in developing countries, is apt to be one of the essential functions of environmental regimes as well. Financial and technical cooperation on environmental problems nevertheless differs from traditional development cooperation: in particular the transfers effected by the Multilateral Ozone Fund or the Global Environment Facility (GEF) serve not only to build environmental capacities in the South, they also provide compensation for the full 'agreed' incremental costs incurred by developing countries in connection with global environmental policy - in accordance with the principle of the 1992 Rio conference on "common but differentiated responsibilities and

capabilities" of the parties. In this context, Hans Peter Schipulle, division head of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, noted:

Unlike classical development aid ..., these transfers, effected by environmental conventions, are obligations that are binding under international law.... If these obligations are not met by the industrialized countries, the developing countries can advance this as grounds for not meeting their own obligations, which in turn would harm the interests of the international community, i.e. including the industrialized countries. These stipulations become national law when the Convention is ratified and thus constitutes a new legal frame of reference for the cooperation with developing countries"(Frank and Udo, 2000:11-12).

### **Implementation and Development of International Environmental Law**

Thirdly, supporters of a World Environment Organization argue that this organization would be in a much better position to support regime-building processes, especially by initiating and preparing new treaties. Again, International Labour Organization could serve as a model. The International Labour Organization has developed a comprehensive body of conventions that come close to a global labour code. In comparison, global environmental policy is far more disparate and cumbersome in its norm-setting processes. It is also riddled with various disputes among the United Nations specialized organizations regarding their competencies, with United Nations Environment Programme in its current setting unable to adequately protect environmental interests (Biermann, 2000; Frank, Centerforunreform.org > GEG\_Biermann). In addition to norm-setting, some argue that a World Environment Organization would also improve the overall implementation of international environmental standards. This responsibility does not necessarily require an organization with "sharp teeth," as some environmentalists recommend. Instead, the implementation of standards could already be facilitated, for example, by a common comprehensive reporting system on the state of the environment and on the state of implementation in different countries as well as by stronger efforts in raising public awareness (Biermann, 2000).

The organization should, for instance, have the right to collect, evaluate, and publish in a suitable form, information on the state of the environment and on the state of environmental policy in the United Nations member states, especially with regard to the international commitments assumed by individual states. Like most other specialized agencies of the United Nations, a World Environment Organization should therefore foster problem consciousness and seek to improve the state of the world's knowledge, including information on the earth system and existing environmental and development problems as well as information on the state of implementation of international and national policy with a view to controlling global change (Frank and Udo, 2000).

Clearly, the wheel does not need to be reinvented. Several environmental regimes already require their parties to report on specific policies. Specialized organizations, such as the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), or World Health Organization (WHO), collect and disseminate valuable knowledge and promote further research; and the Commission on Sustainable Development makes important contributions by developing indicators for sustainable development. However, there remains a prevailing lack of comprehensive coordination, bundling, processing, and further channelling of this knowledge in a policy-oriented manner. The myriad contributions made by various international actors are clearly in need of a central anchoring point. This task could be much

better carried out by an institutionally independent and better-funded World Environment Organization that could then be entrusted, among others, with coordinating the reporting mechanisms of the various regimes (Biermann, 2000) and having more possibilities to support regime-building processes, particularly by initiating and preparing international treaties (Frank and Udo, 2000).

## **MODELS OF GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE REFORM**

Improving global environmental governance has been an issue of dynamic debate in academic and policy-making circles ever since environmental issues entered the international agenda in the 1970s. Since then, both environmental threats and international responses to them have increased in their number and complexity. The key challenge of global environmental governance has, however, remained the same: how to design an institutional framework (system) that would best protect the global environment.

### **The Compliance Model**

The Compliance Model advocates creation of a body that could provide binding decisions to hold states and private actors accountable for non-compliance with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and resulting environmental damage (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006:17). At the core of this proposal lies the recognition of the need for enforcement powers in the international system relating to the environment. Currently no environmental organization possesses such authority and no dispute settlement mechanism for environmental matters exists (Maria, 2007).

Several potential bodies with such enforcement powers have been proposed. First, a World Environment Court (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006; Pauwelyn, 2005) with non-discretionary competence and broad legal access is envisioned as a permanent institution along the lines of the European Court of Human Rights, to ensure compliance with Multilateral Environmental Agreements and upholding the new right to a healthy environment. Until a World Environment Court is put in place, some of its supporters which include legal experts and environmental protection agencies propose a Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) which would be responsible for solving disputes linked to the environment. This court would be a body which would be able to investigate all aspects of a case however overlapping or international they may be, ... which could go and question those really responsible behind their company fronts ... , would denounce governmental complacency ... which finally would be able to judge and also condemn those really responsible to restore the areas that are damaged and bring them back to a condition which is as close as possible to what they were initially (Philippe and Benoît, 2004; See the Cousteau team, 2001).

Second, upgrading the Trusteeship Council (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006; Redgwell, 2005) to have authority over global commons and also represent interests of potential beneficiaries of the trust, especially future generations. Third, reinterpreting the mandate of the United Nations Security Council to include environmental security, having accommodated non-traditional threats such as, humanitarian emergencies and gross violations of human rights (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006; Elliot, 2005). Members of the United Nations Security Council declared in 1992 that “peace and international security are not simply the result of the absence of wars and armed conflict. Other, non- military threats to peace and international security are based on instability that exists in various economic, social, humanitarian and

ecological domains”. Certain legal elements indicate that the mandate of the Security Council could be re-interpreted to include non- traditional aspects of threats to peace and security. Through this declaration, the members of the Security Council were indicating that non-compliance with Multilateral Environmental Agreements could be subject to Article 39 of the United Nations Charter and thereby give rise to sanctions against the countries concerned (Philippe and Benoît, 2004).

Ideally, it is believed that the compliance model would solve the free rider problem, ensure care for the global commons, match judicial enforcement available elsewhere (especially in the World Trade Organization), enhance predictability and intergenerational concern of environmental law and directly impact compliance with Multilateral Environmental Agreements. In practice, states are reluctant to expose themselves to the compliance body’s oversight and value judgments. There is a history of avoiding third party adjudication in international environmental law; inability to punish global commons’ violators by exclusion or fines; and low support for the exercise of “enforcement” provisions. Finally, the probability of all states voluntarily accepting the compliance model is extremely low (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006).

### **The New Agency Model**

The New Agency Model also referred to by some authors as the Centralization Model advocates for the creation of a new organization outside United Nations Environment Programme with concentrated environmental responsibilities and the ability to steer United Nations agencies in relation to environmental issues (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006). Proponents of this model call for a more fundamental reform to address the substantive and functional overlap between the many international institutions in global environmental governance. These advocates of a more centralized governance architecture call for the creation of a new organization outside United Nations Environment Programme with concentrated environmental responsibilities and the ability to steer United Nations agencies in relation to environmental issues through the integration of several existing environmental and development programs and agencies into one all-encompassing World Environment Organization (WEO) (Charnovitz, 2002), a World Sustainable Development Organization (WSDO) (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006; Glenn and Gordon, 1999) or World Organization for Environment and Development (Frank and Udo, 1998).

A similar proposal concerned the establishment of a Global Environmental Organization which - on the model of the World Trade Organization as the most important institution regulating world trade- having integrated diverse multilateral trade agreements (Charnovitz, 2002), with broad rule-making authority to address market failures and facilitate negotiation of international standards to be implemented by all countries. - would serve as a forum for formulating and implementing global environmental policy; Global Environment Organization (GEO) would not only include the existing issue-specific international environmental agreements, it would also become the central institution concerned with financial and technology transfer aimed at supporting sustainable development in the developing world (Simonis, 1998).

Other designs use the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as a role model (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006; Streck, 2001) for governance; advocate strengthening the role of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in discussing and overseeing system-wide coordination;

propose an organization for environmental bargaining (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006; Whalley and Zissimos, 2001) to trade environmental goods for money; or aim to reinforce G8 with leader-level G20 to serve as a platform for building the new agency.

According to some scholars, Such a complete organization could comprise United Nations Environment Programme, the hundreds of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the pollution control programs of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Tropical Timber Organization, the fishery and forestry programs from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the International Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the UN Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development (UNICSD), and many others (Charnovitz, 2002).

Proponents of this model are of the view that Creation of a new agency is an opportunity to put together the best features of existing agencies and guide global environmental policy-making. Such an agency could address the problems of fragmentation and weakness of environmental governance within the United Nations system. However, putting all environmental agreements under one umbrella would be a major challenge, because the current system is strongly decentralized and individual environmental entities strongly resist takeovers. Benefits of the new agency remain uncertain: it can potentially promote cooperation and increase states' environmental concern, but it risks being another big bureaucracy with modest civil society influence and no additional financial and technology transfer to developing countries (Najam, 2003).

Germany has been the country seen as the main international proponent of a new United Nations specialized agency since Chancellor Kohl, in the mid-1990s, spoke out quite unexpectedly in favour of an "Environmental Security Council", a proposal that was followed in 1997 by the call for a "global umbrella organization for environmental issues, with the United Nations Environment Programme as its major pillar" and further pursued by Germany's Red-Green government. In a statement made on January 25, 1999, the environmental policy spokeswoman of the SPD Bundestag faction said:

We need ... to focus the tangled and disjointed international organizations and programs. UNEP [UN Environment Programme], CSD [Commission on Sustainable Development], and UNDP [UN Development Programme] should be merged to form an organization for sustainable development. Close links to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and UNCTAD [UN Conference on Trade and Development] should be aimed for as a means of preventing environmental dumping and achieving an environmentally sound, sustainable development in line with AGENDA 21 (Simonis, 2002).

The German Advisory Council on Global Change in 1996 likewise recommended an "organization for sustainable development," but without, at this juncture, spelling out any specifics (German Advisory Council on Global Change, 1995). In December 2000, the German Scientific Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU) submitted its annual report entitled *World in Transition – new structures for global environment policy* in which it recommended that the federal government should use the World Summit on Sustainable Development to launch structural reforms for the organisation of environmental policy in the United Nations

system. The report, proposed the creation of an “earth alliance” based on three pillars: assessment, organisation and funding. The suggestion was made to strengthen United Nations Environment Programme in preparation for its transformation into a future World Environment Organization that would sit at the heart of this alliance. Having recommended the creation of an international environmental organisation as early as 1997, the German government, through the German Scientific Advisory Council on Global Change report, has since provided solid scientific evidence in support of its proposals and published a reference document on this question (Philippe and Benoît, 2004:29; German Advisory Council on Global Change, 1996).

### **Upgrading United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Model**

This model takes United Nations Environment Programme as a departure point for improving environmental governance and suggests upgrading it to a specialized agency to strengthen its status. This model is similar to the previous but distinct in that it seeks the strengthening of United Nations Environment Programme rather than its replacement by a different super-organization. United Nations Environment Programme itself has been both an active participant and a focus of the reform debate (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006:19; UNEP, 2001). It has faced significant challenges since its creation (limiting legal mandate, lack of funds, location). The most broadly discussed proposal is upgrading United Nations Environment Programme to a fully fledged specialized agency (Biermann, 2005; *Delivering as One: Report*, 2006), so that it can adopt treaties, have its own budget and potentially use innovative financial mechanisms. United Nations Environment Programme would strengthen its role as an “anchor” institution (Maria, 2005) for global environment by drawing on its ability to serve as information and capacity clearing-house and set broad policy guidelines for action within the Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF).

Proponents of this approach have referred to the World Health Organization or the International Labour Organization as suitable models. Other agencies operating in the environmental field would neither be integrated into the new agency nor disbanded (Frank, 2012). It would leave substantively untouched the current institutional structure of international environmental governance. The established boundaries of the issue-areas governed by international regimes and their existing decision-making procedures would remain unchanged (Sebastian and Thomas, 2004). The new agency in this model is expected to improve the facilitation of norm-building and norm-implementation processes. This strength would in particular derive from an enhanced mandate and better capabilities of the agency to build capacities in developing countries. This differs from United Nations Environment Programme present “catalytic” mandate that prevents the program from engaging in project implementation. Furthermore, additional legal and political powers could come with the status of a United Nations special agency. For example, its governing body could approve by qualified majority vote certain regulations that could be binding, under certain conditions, on all members (comparable to the International Maritime Organization), or could adopt drafts of legally binding treaties negotiated by sub-committees under its auspices (comparable to the International Labour Organization). Such powers would exceed those entrusted to United Nations Environment Programme, which cannot adopt legal instruments (Frank, 2012).

Similarly, it has been suggested that United Nations Environment Programme could be upgraded into a decentralized United Nations Environment Organization (UNEO) (Tarasofsky, 2005a; Tarasofsky, 2005b). United Nations Environment Organization would have its own legal identity, and would comprise general assembly, executive structure and secretariat. It would incorporate United Nations Environment Programme and Global Ministerial

Environment Forum; take up United Nations Environment Programme's mandate with respect to its normative function; and serve as the authority for environment within the United Nations system. The main justification behind the proposal for a United Nations Environment Organization is the assumption that United Nations Environment Programme's authority and mandate are inadequate for effective performance in addressing global environmental challenges. The core supposition is that the new status would accord United Nations Environment Programme's greater visibility, status, independence, authority, and finances and strengthen it "so that it can fulfil its mandate as the principal agency for international environmental governance".

Upgrading United Nations Environment Programme to a United Nations Environment Organization requires less financial and diplomatic investment than adding a completely new organization. While United Nations Environment Programme has a record of institutional success and learning, its potential to perform when given better legal status, more funds and more staff is promising. On the downside, focusing reform debate only on United Nations Environment Programme distracts us from the broader institutional challenges, and it is not yet clear just how much of a difference specialized agency status will actually give (Najam, 2003).

### **Organizational Streamlining Model**

Organizational Streamlining Model also referred to by some authors as Clustering Model addresses the need for improved coordination and synergies among various entities within the system of global environmental governance (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006). Clustering defines the grouping of several multilateral environmental agreements so as to make them more efficient and effective (Maria, 2007; von Moltke, 2001a:3). Theoretically, the rationale for clustering is based on the notion that 'the environment' is too complex to be dealt with by one institution. The environmental agenda reflects multiple issues-from hazardous waste to oceans pollution to climate change to biodiversity-that exhibit distinctively different problem structures. In practice, the rationale for clustering rests on the assumption that it would be easier to bring together the functions of several convention secretariats than establish a full-fledged international environmental organization with similar powers (Maria, 2007).

Improving coordination is work in progress and an ongoing challenge within the United Nations system. Integrating environmental institutions into clusters (or clustering) (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006:20; von Moltke, 2005; Najam, 2005a; Oberthur, 2005) has been discussed as a way to achieve goals of environmental conventions, while also pursuing efficiency gains and improving coherence of environmental governance. Clusters can be issue/theme-based, function-based, functional/organizational, geographically-based or administratively-based (co-location and "merger" of secretariats). Another way to achieve synergies involves addressing duplication and overlaps by clarifying mandates of different entities, addressing their conflicting agendas and building upon their inter-linkages (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006; Andresen, 2001; United Nations University, 1999).

While the large number of Multilateral Environmental Agreements is seen by some analysts as "rooted in the fact that structural differences exist between many environmental problems, thus requiring separate institutional responses" (Maria, 2007; von Moltke, 2001a), the need for integration of related or overlapping international environmental regimes is undeniable. The current informal consultations on international environmental governance within the United Nations General Assembly have identified clustering of Multilateral Environmental Agreements as a major component of reform. The different proposals that exist identify six

major thematic clusters subject areas: 1) conservation, 2) global atmosphere, 3) land conventions 4) hazardous substances (Chris, 2012:8-9), 5) marine and oceans pollution (Maria, 2007; Berruga and Peter, 2006) and 6) extractable resources.

### Sample of Proposals for Thematic Clustering

Theme	Relevant MEAs
<b>Conservation</b>	World heritage convention; Convention on biological diversity; Convention on migratory species; Convention on international trade in species of wild fauna and flora threatened with extinction (CITES); African-Eurasian Migratory Water Bird Agreement (AEWA); Agreement on the conservation of bats in Europe (EUROBATS); Agreement on the conservation of seals in the Wadden sea; Agreement on the conservation of small cetaceans in the North and Baltic Seas (ASCOBANS); International coral reefs initiative (ICRI); Lusaka agreement on concerted operations for coercion targeting the illegal trade of wild fauna and flora; Convention on wetlands of international importance, especially as waterfowl habitat (RAMSAR)
<b>Atmosphere</b>	United Nations framework convention on climate change; Vienna convention on the ozone layer; Montreal protocol on the ozone layer
<b>Land conventions</b>	United Nations convention to combat desertification
<b>Hazardous substances</b>	Bamako convention; Basel convention; Convention on civil responsibilities for damage caused during the road, rail and internal waterways transport of dangerous goods (CRTD); PIC convention; Convention on the cross-border effects of industrial accidents; Waigani convention; Stockholm convention on persistent organic pollutants (POPS); Guidelines for the dissemination and use of pesticides of the UN food and agriculture organisation (FAO)
<b>Marine and oceans pollution</b>	Conventions of the international maritime organisation (IMO); UNEP conventions on regional seas; Convention for the protection of the marine environment in the North- East Atlantic (OSPAR); Helsinki convention
<b>Extractable resources</b>	The different agreements on forestry; Public/private initiatives, such as the forest stewardship council or the marine stewardship council; Agreements on fisheries which have a link with environmental impacts linked to agricultural activities.

Source: (Philippe and Benoît, 2004).

Another six major clusters that have been identified are: biodiversity, oceans and seas, chemical and dangerous waste, nuclear energy, climate and atmospheric change and conventions linked to oceans and land. However, his proposal does not detail which Multilateral Environmental Agreements are linked to these problems. It suggests, also, that each cluster should be located in a country that already has a UN centre (Philippe and Benoît, 2004; Dodds, 2001). In another

document, United Nations Environment Programme proposes clustering under four headings: sustainable development, biodiversity, chemical and hazardous waste and regional seas (Philippe and Benoît, 2004; UNEP, 2001).

Functional clustering is based on the idea that existing Multilateral Environmental Agreements use institutions or depend on functions whose bottom-line objectives are similar, although adapted to each Multilateral Environmental Agreement. Four functions which can be clustered have been identified to include: 1) scientific assessment; 2) participation and transparency. The grouping of participation and transparency procedures of Multilateral Environmental Agreements could be based on model of the Århus convention; 3) implementation reports. The principle of clustering implementation support involves, for each country, publishing only one implementation report which would cover all the Multilateral Environmental Agreements; 4) conflict settlement (Philippe and Benoît, 2004; von Moltke, 2001b).

Regional clustering, On the basis of the principle that “most environmental problems are not global in scale, with the exception of climate change, ozone depletion and persistent organic pollutants (POPs), some authors suggest that regional management of environmental issues would be more appropriate. It is indeed important to distinguish between global environmental problems (i.e. those which have impacts in different places around the globe) and those which affect more than one country (e.g. watershed management). Examples of regional clustering like this exist in Europe with the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Regional clustering seeks to broaden the European example to apply it to different regions of the world (Philippe and Benoît, 2004; Kimball, 1999).

The core functions of Multilateral Environmental Agreements clusters will comprise streamlining activities and meetings; coordinating operations and budgeting; close tracking and active coordinating of funding; consolidating the implementation review by country or by issue; and improving transparency and participation. Clustering the numerous international environmental agreements will therefore minimize institutional overlap and fragmentation in global environmental governance while avoiding the pitfalls of securing agreement for more radical institutional reform (Maria, 2007; Oberthür, 2002; von Moltke, 2001a; El-Ashry, 2004; Von Moltke, 2001c).

This approach, however, cannot advance without leadership. Just like with the more ambitious proposals, it will require at least one of two necessary conditions - 1) individual governments ready to champion the establishment and maintenance of a cluster, and/or 2) coordinators and facilitators, be they existing institutions such as United Nations Environment Programme or newly established ones. Moreover, clustering is likely to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for more effective global environmental governance (Maria, 2007).

Institutional fragmentation also has its benefits (Knigge, Herweg and Huberman, 2005; Dodds, Chambers and Kanie, 2002): it enhances visibility of environmental protection, advances specialization and innovation, and increases commitment of states that host international environmental conventions secretariats (Najam, Christopoulou and Moomaw, 2004; Najam, 2005; Knigge, Herweg and Huberman, 2005). However, fragmentation has many disadvantages including institutional overlap, high financial and administrative costs, and increased reporting demands felt especially in developing countries. The effect of these disadvantages is reduction of state participation and decrease in implementation of environmental law. All organizational streamlining proposals need to be well designed in order

to contribute to the solution of the problem. Otherwise they may worsen the current situation (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006:20).

### **Multiple Actors Model**

Multiple Actors Model argues that the system of governance comprises multiple actors whose actions need to be mutually reinforcing and better coordinated. Without better integration of these multiple actors, organizational rearrangement cannot resolve institutional problems. There exist multiplicity of actors and interactions form a multidimensional “system” of global environmental governance (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006; Sanwal, 2004; Najam, Christopoulou and Moomaw, 2004). It includes states, international environmental organizations, related international organizations, civil society organizations, and public concern and action. Focus on organizations as a single dimension of governance distracts attention from the fact that institutional will is required to affect decision-making procedures and change institutional boundaries (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006; Oberthur and Gehring, 2005).

First reform proposal is to integrate environment into the larger context of sustainable development and to allow multiple organizations to flourish but create venues for these organizations to interact and “transact.” According to the supporters of this model, preferring environmental to sustainable development governance may result in further marginalization of environmental problems on the international agenda, alienation of developing countries, and continuing regime clashes between environment and other relevant international regimes. Supporters of this model are of the view that a General Agreement on Environment and Development should be negotiated to codify universally accepted sustainable development principles and serve as an umbrella for existing Multilateral Environmental Agreements (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006; Najam, 2002).

The second reform proposal is to create multiple channels of implementation. The quality of global environmental governance will be increasingly determined by the interaction among various entities in implementation and the ability of the system to facilitate their interaction, e.g., through global public policy networks (Najam, Christopoulou and Moomaw, 2004). This model adopts a broad definition of the problem of global environmental governance. Accordingly, the solutions proposed are broad and offer directions the system should follow, rather than specific organizational improvements. While organizational thinking leaves an illusion of control over governance, systems thinking acknowledge the messiness and uncertainty of the system. The complexity of today’s environmental threats like climate change and responses to them prove that multiple channels of implementation naturally emerge but can lack direction if one is not provided by the system. Whether the system is mature enough to reverse environmental degradation via strategic directions and normative guidance, remains to be seen (Adil, Mihaela and Nadaa, 2006; Najam, 2002).

### **ARGUMENT AGAINST A WORLD ENVIRONMENT ORGANIZATION**

Critics of a new World Environment Organization argues that advocates of a central environmental authority divert attention from more pressing problems and fail to acknowledge that centralizing institutional structures is an anachronistic paradigm (Oberthür and Thomas, 2005). They argue in favour of decentralized institutional clusters to deal with diverse sets of environmental issues rather than entrusting all problems to one central organization (Von

Moltke, 2005; Najam, 2005b). They are of the view that, although a large World Environment Organization would have some compelling logic behind it, such a massive reorganization is inconceivable. Yet even if it could be done, there are strong arguments against it. One problem is that environmental issues are often diverse from each other and the plenitude of issues might not coexist well (Charnovitz, 2002). Thus, benefits from an integration of issue-areas as advocated by the New Agency/Centralization Model are limited because international environmental governance is predominantly about the preservation of collective goods rather than club goods. Free international trade for instance, has the properties of a club good that is accessible only to the members of the club (Sebastian and Thomas, 2004; Cornes R. and Sandler, 1999).

Thus, States are effectively excluded from reaping the benefits of a liberalised world trade unless they open their own markets (Sebastian and Thomas, 2004; Hoekman B.M. and M.M. Kostecki, 1995). In contrast, environmental protection is frequently a collective good. It will be difficult to prevent a state from taking a free ride if it cannot be excluded from enjoying the collective good of environmental protection. Countries refusing to co-operate to protect the ozone layer cannot be excluded from the benefits of a stabilised ozone layer. Accordingly, states have an incentive to stay out of costly co-operation (Sebastian and Thomas, 2004; Olson, 1965) that will increase with every issue that a country opposes. Thus, a World Environment Organization modelled for instance, after the World Trade Organization being one of the proposed options of the New Agency/Centralization Model threatens to undermine its own basis and endangers gains so far realised through sector-specific co-operation in international environmental regimes (Sebastian and Thomas, 2004).

Likewise, issue-linkage through integration of issue-areas does not help pressure non-co-operating states and enforce implementation of international environmental commitments. Proponents of environmental protection cannot credibly threaten to make protection of the ozone layer conditional on United States acceptance of controls on greenhouse gases, because realising this threat would harm themselves at least as much as the opponent. The same logic applies to the enforcement of obligations. While for example, disregard of obligations within World Trade Organization may be effectively prosecuted by excluding non-complying countries from benefits in any suitable area of international trade, this threat is usually not available in environmental institutions: a country's non-compliance with obligations to conserve biological diversity cannot usefully be responded to by not complying with commitments to protect the ozone layer.

In several respects, a World Trade Organization-like World Environment Organization does not change the status quo at all. It is unlikely that it is apt to mobilise the additional financial resources needed to rein-force the capacity of developing countries to implement international obligations and develop effective environmental policies. In other words, there is no indication that industrialised countries might be more willing to provide additional financial resources to assist implementation of international environmental commitments in developing countries if issue-areas were integrated (Sebastian and Thomas, 2004; Sebastian and Thomas, 2003).

Another problem is that the resulting organization would cut a huge swath through domestic policy, and no government would be comfortable giving any World Environment Organization executive that much responsibility. In pointing out why a broad World Environment Organization would be impossible, opponents of a World Environment Organization argued that no major government has an environmental ministry as broad as integrating all its environmental issues and functions as a fully centralized World Environment Organization

contemplates. In their view, if governments have not deemed it advisable to amalgamate environmental functions at the national level, but have maintained separate national agencies with environmental functions, why should one assume it would be advantageous at the international plane? (Charnovitz, 2002; Juma, 2000; Calestous, 2000; Daniel, 2000; von Moltke, 2001).

The fallacy of full centralization according to critics of a World Environment Organization can also be seen by recalling that even the non-environmental agencies will need environmental programs, staff, and offices. The World Bank, the World Trade Organization, International Labour Organization, World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Conference and Trade and Development, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development all have environmental components, and properly so. Thus, critics of a World Environment Organization are of the view that the mainstreaming of environment into all agencies is one of the successes of modern environmental policy, even if these environmental components are inadequate. The existence of such environmental offices is the means that organizations use to interface with related issues. The fact that there may be a dozen or more international offices addressing climate change is not symptomatic of disorganization. Rather these offices exemplify recognition that responding to global warming will require a multifaceted effort (Charnovitz, 2002; Szasz, 1992).

That a fully centralized World Environment Organization is inconceivable should not come as a surprise because no other regime is fully centralized either. The World Trade Organization may be the core of the trade regime, but many trade agencies and bodies of law lie outside of it, such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Conference and Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Trade Centre, the trade directorate of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, and various agreements on trade in food, endangered species, hazardous waste, military goods, etc. The World Health Organization may be the core of the health regime, but many health agencies and bodies of law lay outside of it, such as the United Nations Population Fund, the Joint UN Program on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation, and numerous International Labour Organization conventions (Charnovitz, 2002).

The main advocates of the World Environment Organization targets the centralization of environmental agencies and functions-the bringing of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and their associated functions under one umbrella organization. Can we really expect a World Environment Organization to lead to higher value outputs in environmental governance? Reducing the excessive fragmentation in the environmental regime would seem almost necessarily to be beneficial. Yet fragmentation also has its good side. According to recent management research, innovation proceeds most rapidly under conditions of some optimal, intermediate degree of fragmentation (Charnovitz, 2002; Diamond, 2000). Thus, the institutional fragmentation of international environmental governance indicates strength rather than a weakness of environmental co-operation. The multitude of well-functioning environmental institutions indicates that actors have, for the most part, succeeded in defining viable issue-areas in international environmental governance and that an integration of issue-areas is not required in order to ensure mutual benefits of the parties involved (Sebastian and

Thomas, 2004). Since a high capacity for innovation may be the most distinguishing feature of the environment regime and a key source of its successes, one needs to be careful about undertaking a reorganization that would reduce fragmentation, and hence innovation. One reason why some fragmentation is good for innovation is that fragmented entities compete with each other. The environment regime has surely benefited from diversity among the entities that do environmental work (Charnovitz, 2002).

A World Environment Organization following the Upgrading United Nations Environment Programme/United Nations Model would not significantly affect the governance capacity of institutions making international environmental policy. The currently separate environmental issue-areas would not be integrated, because the sector-specific decision-making processes would remain in place. The participating actors would continue to determine their preferences in relation to those issues falling inside the respective issue-areas, while ignoring other issues. Opportunities for co-operation would continue to arise exclusively as a result of these sector-specific preferences. If decision-making proceeded separately for each issue-area, although within the framework of an umbrella organisation, negotiators would not receive additional incentives to co-ordinate their sector-specific activities and to look for possible issue-linkages or for package deals cutting across the boundaries of established issue-areas.

Those negotiating climate change would continue to focus on measures to stabilise the global climate, while members of the regime on biological diversity would continue to concentrate on preserving biodiversity. Whereas an exchange of information may be facilitated, resulting tensions between both regimes regarding forestry activities (maximisation of carbon sequestration versus conservation of biological diversity) would persist. Likewise, the mechanisms for supervising and facilitating implementation such as, non-compliance procedures and other functional bodies would not significantly change, because they would remain sectorally organised. A World Environment Organization constructed after the United Nations model could be expected to realise limited efficiency gains at best, but it would not make a significant contribution to the solution of problems of international environmental governance related to decision-making, implementation and co-ordination. A certain potential for combining certain auxiliary functions of environmental regimes (e.g., reporting, review of implementation) might exist, but gains would be moderate. The bigger problems of international environmental governance could not be solved because this World Environment Organization would not significantly change the delimitation of existing issue-areas or the design of the related decision-making processes. The creation of an umbrella organisation would thus largely be a matter of symbolic politics (Sebastian and Thomas, 2004).

More so, it is argued that the grouping of several multilateral environmental agreements into thematic clusters as suggested by the Organizational Streamlining/Clustering Model is important but only part of the solution. Clustering of some of the hundreds of multilateral environmental agreements has been proposed to address the apparent coordination problems in global environmental governance. Clustering could involve the relocation of treaty secretariats, including the streamlining of administrative services, as well as the co-scheduling of conferences of the parties to related conventions (for instance through back-to-back meetings); the clustering of environmental reporting and information generation and distribution, for example in uniform reports, scientific assessments and clearinghouses; or the synchronization of the meetings of treaty bodies (Frank, Centerforunreform.org > GEG\_Biermann; Von Moltke).

Clustering can only be a first step for a larger reform effort. There are so many different levels of clusters for convention-related activities necessary that separate clusters at each of these levels would not solve the existing coordination problems, but could even exacerbate them. For example, convention-related efforts need to be clustered, at one level, according to the environmental medium that is to be protected. Examples would be those agreements that protect the atmosphere or those that protect the marine environment. Such form of clustering is required in particular regarding scientific research and assessment, since the behaviour, transportation and effects of greenhouse gases, ozone-depleting substances and persistent organic pollutants are the subject of similar and related scientific efforts and models (Frank, Centerforunreform.org > GEG\_Biermann).

At another level, however, convention-related efforts need to be clustered according to the human activity at the root of the problem, for example intensive agriculture, transportation, or industrial production. Yet such activity-based clusters would require a different cut. The climate convention, for example, would need to be clustered, for one, with the agreements affecting transportation (together with marine pollution treaties, for example); with agreements regulating industrial production (e.g., jointly with the agreements on ozone-depleting and persistent organic pollutants); with deforestation-related conventions, such as the biodiversity convention; and with soil-related conventions, like the desertification convention. Furthermore, clusters are needed to address common problems related to the environmental policy instrument chosen. One example would be a cluster of agreements that require restrictions in trade, for example trade in ozone-depleting substances, in endangered species, in persistent organic pollutants, in hazardous waste, or in genetically modified organisms. The practical implications could be joint programs for the training of custom officials or joint information-sharing mechanisms (Frank, Centerforunreform.org > GEG\_Biermann).

Another area of clustering would be capacity-building in the South. Many environmental agreements have their own provisions on capacity-building, or even their own funding mechanism for these activities (e.g., the Montreal Protocol), without necessarily much coordination. This would, again, call for a different set of clusters. Another cut would be regional clusters. To cluster environmental conventions according to all these levels could significantly increase the coordination deficits of the current system, instead of reducing them (Frank, Centerforunreform.org > GEG\_Biermann).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS <sup>[P]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

No crisis in world history has so clearly demonstrated the need for closer cooperation and mutual collaboration among States and increasing interdependence of governments and other stakeholders as the contemporary global environmental crisis. The pressures wielded by the dynamic forces of socio-economic development and technological advancement have radically transformed the global environment and the ecological balance of Earth as never before (Kannan, 2014; UNEP, 2000). The complex nature of environmental problems experienced at any given political jurisdiction frequently have their origins at locations other than where their far-reaching consequences are most seriously felt (Kannan, 2014; Caldwell, 1972). In terms of jurisdictions, the legal boundaries of sovereign States do not coincide with the limits of the ecological systems which sustain them (Kannan, 2014; Imber, 1996). The environmental harm caused by a sovereign State is a threat to all nations, irrespective of their background of socio-economic development and the nature and availability of physical and natural resources. Now

there is no exit option for the governments since the complex and highly interdependent ecological challenges binds all nations and creates a new level of dependence among nation States (Kannan, 2014; Frank and Klaus, 2004).

However, collective action in response to global environmental challenges continues to fall short of needs and expectations. The integrated and interdependent nature of the current set of environmental challenges contrasts sharply with the fragmented and uncoordinated nature of the institutions we rely upon for solutions. We need an approach that acknowledges the diversity and dynamism of the environmental challenge and recognizes the need for specialized responses. And we need an environmental organization with the resources and authority to succeed at leading and coordinating international environmental governance; a much stronger global voice and conscience for the global environment (Maria, 2005:14).

The systemic problems of international environmental governance have remained outside the political debates because of both ideological and technical difficulties. Ideologically, nation states give priority to national sovereignty over the common planetary interest and developing countries are still fearful that international environmental agreements are a front for an agenda designed to stunt their economic growth. As the G-77 and China's statement in the contemporary reform process contends, "Promotion of environmental protection alone in developing countries is not a priority as it raises obstacles to the use of limited resources for economic development". Developing countries thus insist that international environmental governance reform negotiations be firmly grounded in a sustainable development framework (Maria, 2005).

Specifically, developing countries have clearly identified principles which, according to them, should be present at any discussion of international environmental governance reform. They include:

- the context must be one of sustainable development;
- the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities must remain a central element of international co-operation in the environmental field;
- fairness: any reform must ensure the real participation of the developing countries in the governance system (in the management of funds, for example);
- the reform of governance must promote capacity-building (so as to facilitate the implementation of agreements and the development of national policies) (Philippe and Benoît, 2004).

Technically, developing countries claim that new and additional financial resources are necessary for them to be able to take on the new environmental agenda, that technology transfer is critical to their ability to leapfrog over traditional industrialization methods, and that greater capacity-institutional, technological, and human-would be indispensable to integrating environmental concerns into development priorities. Industrialized countries, on the other hand, demand accountability for any funding as well as monitoring, reporting and verification procedures for environmental actions (Maria, 2005:18).

Given the current state of environmental politics, creating any form of a new agency might appear unrealistic to some. Yet two decades ago, the establishment of an international criminal court or a world trade organization appeared unrealistic, too. It is time again to demand the

impossible (Frank, 2001). In sum, creating a World Environment Organization would pave the way for the elevation of environmental policies on the agenda of governments, international organizations and private organizations; it could assist in developing the capacities for environmental policy in African, Asian and Latin American countries; and it would improve the institutional environment for the negotiation of new conventions and action programmes as well as for the implementation and coordination of existing ones (Frank, 2004:17).

The resistance to any streamlining effort by interested actors-including the heads of the various convention secretariats, who are likely to lose influence-is a practical problem rather than a theoretical obstacle to delineating a mandate for a World Environment Organization. A World Environment Organization would not solve all problems, neither of industrialized countries nor of developing countries. But it would be an important institutional step in humankind's efforts to both equitably and effectively manage planet Earth (Frank, Centerforunreform.org > GEG\_Biermann).

I am therefore of the view that a World Environment Organization should be established with among other things, the mandate of achieving a comprehensive and systematic global environmental policy. This will help cure the main inadequacies of the current condition of global environmental governance which includes: deficiencies in the coordination of distinct policy arenas (fields), deficiencies in the process of capacity-building in developing countries, and deficiencies in the implementation and further development of international environmental standards. However, as with all international organizations, the establishment of a World Environment Organization would need to be approved and adopted at a diplomatic convention, which would determine the Organization's mandate, financial plan (budget) and other procedural matters.

Further, the proposed World Environment Organization should be: Strongly grounded in the context of sustainable development framework by ensuring that nation's industrial and technological development to improve the national economy does not compromise the social and ecological environment. Thus, the proposed World Environment Organization must seek to help nations strike a balance between their economic development and environmental sustainability and protection; the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities with developed countries taking the lead in international environmental protection in view of their immense contributions to global environmental degradation and of the technologies and financial resources they command; fairness- by ensuring the actual participation of the developing countries in the global environmental governance system for example, in the management of global environmental funds; promote capacity-building and technology transfer so as to facilitate the implementation of agreements and the development of national policies aimed at environmental protection.

These recommendations if adopted will no doubt help to secure the full cooperation, participation and involvement of all especially developing countries in the proposed World Environment Organization, improve global environmental governance and help to tackle the several pressing global environmental problems more efficiently and successfully.

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