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# Intergovernmental organizations and the environment: Looking towards the future

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This conclusion revisits the questions posed in the introduction to this section, drawing on the insights provided by the previous three chapters. What have these studies taught us about how existing intergovernmental environmental organizations should be evaluated? Do they suggest that environmental protection is best furthered through the strengthening of existing institutions, by the expansion or revamping of environmental organizations, or by the creation of one or more additional organizations? When the possibility of creating a new organization or expanding an existing one is considered, it is tempting to think in terms of an active combination of a catalytic, agenda-setting role with actual programme development and management. The impression that emerges from the material presented in this volume, however, suggests that neither agenda-setting nor programme development is lacking in existing organizations. On the other hand, there are important areas that do not appear to be covered by any existing organization. In particular, the challenges posed by increasing economic integration may create the need for a new intergovernmental environmental organization.

## The organizational environment

This section briefly discusses the activities of other intergovernmental organizations that work to coordinate environmental protection on a

global scale. By noting the work of organizations whose mandates bring them into the same realm as those discussed by the preceding three authors, understanding may be enhanced of which areas of environmental protection are well covered by existing organizational structures and which are in danger of being neglected.

The long-standing mandate of the FAO,[1] founded in 1945, includes the promotion of environmental protection. Currently, the organization places particular emphasis on sustainability in both agriculture and the exploitation of forest and marine resources. The FAO has facilitated the adoption of several important conventions relating to environmental protection, including the FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides (1985), the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (1995), and the Global Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources (1996).

Another organization with a significant role in coordinating international efforts at environmental protection is the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), founded in 1946. Although UNICEF's mandate does not explicitly include environmental issues, various items in its mandate necessitate by extension that it takes the environment into account. The basic goal of the organization is to ensure the protection of children's rights and the promotion of their welfare. In the period leading up to the year 2000, the organization is focusing largely upon infant and child mortality rates, access to drinking water, sanitation, primary education, and women's literacy.[2] UNICEF works for environmental protection both at the international and at the local level and was an active participant in UNCED, where it lobbied to include measures protecting children in Agenda 21. Since 1992, UNICEF has participated in a number of other international conferences, where it has emphasized the need to address environmental problems that affect children's health and safety. At the local level, programmes specifically focused on the preservation of the natural environment have become increasingly prominent among UNICEF's projects. UNICEF promotes, among other things, the adoption of clean-energy technologies such as solar stoves at the household level; the development of sustainable agriculture initiatives that improve household food security; and the protection of forest resources at the village level. These programmes serve multiple purposes, at once increasing food and income security for rural families, improving children's nutrition, and promoting the protection of the resources upon which children's welfare ultimately depends. UNICEF's urban projects have also focused increasingly during this decade upon the ways in which pollution affects children's health.

The UNDP is another organization whose original mandate does not specifically mention environmental protection but which has had to adopt

the cause of environmental protection in order properly to fulfil its mandate. Just as the promotion of children's welfare requires attention to the health of the ecosystems upon which children depend, similarly an organization concerned with development must give its attention to developing nations' abilities to husband scarce environmental resources. In addition to incorporating environmental projects into its individual country programmes, the UNDP is a major participant in a number of international environmental protection projects. In the aftermath of UNCED, the UNDP established the ''Capacity 21'' programme to help individual countries develop the capacity to implement Agenda 21 domestically. Along with UNEP and the World Bank, the UNDP is responsible for managing the GEF, which provides funding for sustainable development and environmental impact abatement initiatives in developing countries. The UNDP is also responsible for implementing funds through the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol to help developing countries phase out and develop alternatives to ozone-depleting substances. In addition, the UNDP operates a ''Sustainable Development Networking Programme,'' which facilitates the exchange of information on individual countries' approaches to sustainable development. Finally, the UNDP has developed a system of ''environmental management guidelines'' and a ''companion training programme,'' which help to standardize approaches to environmental protection within a wide variety of individual programmes.

The World Health Organization (WHO) operates two major environmental programmes: Promotion of Environmental Health (PEH) and Promotion of Chemical Safety (PCS). The PEH programme includes subprogrammes on urban environmental health, rural environmental health, and global and integrated environmental health. The PCS programme has four components: chemical risk assessment, chemical risk communication, chemical risk reduction, and strengthening of national capabilities in and capacities for management of chemicals. The PCS programme also collaborates with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNEP in executing the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS).

Many other intergovernmental organizations address global environmental problems as well. While it is not possible to discuss the activities of each in detail here, brief note can be taken of some of them. The World Food Programme, created to coordinate the provision of food aid and help solve food-related crises, takes an interest in environmental protection issues to the extent that they affect individual countries' and communities' food security. Other organizations whose mandates lead them frequently to take an interest in global environmental problems include the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the ILO, and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The work of certain other organizations is entirely concerned with a specialized aspect of global environmental protection. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO), for example, coordinates research and information-sharing relating to the global climate, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) works to control the proliferation of substances associated with atomic energy production. In a different arena, the GEF, founded in 1991, exists to distribute resources from the developed to the developing world for the advancement and dispersal of environmentally sound technologies. Established by the UNDP, UNEP, and the World Bank, the GEF currently provides funding under four windows: global climate change, ozone depletion, biological diversity, and international waters. It also supports the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Finally, a number of other intergovernmental bodies have an influence on global environmental protection efforts although their mandates do not lead them directly to participate in environmental agenda-setting. Thus, for example, both the IMF and the WTO are responsible for making decisions that may have significant environmental repercussions. Moreover, the European Union and the OECD both devote substantial attention to the development of environmental protection plans.

It is clear from this short review that many intergovernmental organizations in addition to UNEP, the CSD, and the World Bank take an interest in global environmental protection. Although a certain amount of duplication could increase efficiency and foster best practices, some areas are covered so thoroughly that additional attention from an organization such as UNEP or the CSD is likely to be redundant and might even be counterproductive. For example, the FAO has served an important role as the facilitator of international environmental agreements. As the organizations discussed here continue to develop their own roles in international environmental protection, they should take account of this ability in the FAO to catalyse environmental action, and should attempt to enhance and encourage the further development of that ability. Similarly, functions such as those that the UNDP has served – especially the promotion of information-sharing and the standardization of methodologies for solving environmental problems – are essential. As long as the UNDP is able to carry out these functions adequately, it may be unnecessary for an organization such as UNEP to attempt to duplicate that role. Rather, UNEP, the CSD, and the World Bank should attempt to fulfil whatever role the UNDP fails to fulfil in this regard. For example, it is possible that the services provided by the UNDP for developing coun-

tries are not duplicated by any organization concerned with the role of developed countries. It may also be that no existing international organization is ideally suited to the dissemination of best environmental technology or the encouragement of technological leapfrogging. These, then, are gaps to which UNEP, the CSD, and the World Bank should attend, whether by taking charge of relevant activities themselves or by creating new forums where these activities can occur.

## Gaps in the coverage of global environmental problems

How do the World Bank, UNEP, and the CSD interact with other organizations to cover the map of global environmental problems? Are there inefficient overlaps – areas where organizations duplicate one another's efforts? Are there synergies, in which multiple organizations are tackling the same problems in different and complementary ways? Finally, are there gaps that all these organizations fail to cover? Some progress towards answering these questions can be made by reviewing their mandates and activities.

### *The CSD*

As was seen in Chasek's chapter, the mandate of the CSD is to review progress in the implementation of agreements that resulted from the Rio Conference; to elaborate policy guidance; and to promote dialogue among a long list of relevant actors, ranging from governments to farmers. On reviewing the list of areas the CSD plans to cover in its current five-year plan, one might conclude that no gaps remain. The CSD plans to cover four major physical categories of environmental problems (fresh water, oceans, land, and atmosphere) in four years, and has also apportioned among those years all the major conceptual themes that may be relevant to the solution of these problems. Technology, capacity, education, science, awareness, consumption, production, economics, decision-making, participation, and cooperation are all to be considered. To search for omissions in this list would be counterproductive. However, the very fact that so many topics are slated to be ''covered'' in four years clearly indicates that none of the topics is likely to be addressed in concrete terms. The CSD is unlikely to be found coordinating international watershed protection forums in 1999, because it will already have moved on from fresh water management to oceans and seas; nor is it likely to have catalysed a new treaty on ocean dumping by 2000, because it will be hurrying on to its consideration of land resources.

Two conditions must hold in order for a mandate as broad as that of

the CSD to produce valuable results. First, the CSD's dialogue sessions must be planned in such a way that they serve a clear purpose. There must be a clear understanding about whether their goal is to lay the groundwork for more concrete negotiations to be undertaken in the future; to ''brainstorm,'' producing ideas upon which other organizations will act; or simply to ensure face-to-face contact among environmental policy-makers from around the world. While all these purposes are valid, each implies a different approach and should be expected to pose different challenges. Assuming that this condition is met, the CSD seems well positioned to fulfil the role of providing for a global ''discussion'' of the major areas of environmental protection challenges. However, the second condition for effectiveness is that some other organization or set of organizations should be committed to pursuing and putting into practice the ideas generated in the CSD's sessions. It is not clear that the international institutional capacity exists for this condition to be fulfilled.

### *UNEP*

UNEP, as Downie and Levy explain, appears to have a number of institutional advantages over the CSD, increasing the likelihood of its accomplishing substantial tasks. It has existed since 1972, and thus has had the opportunity to develop some institutional momentum. It has also had an active long-term leadership; during his 16 years as leader of the organization, Mostafa Tolba took what Robert Haas has referred to as a classic, neofunctionalist, ''entrepreneurial'' role in a variety of international negotiations (Haas 1995, 654). UNEP's mandate is also somewhat more limited than that of the CSD. While the CSD is charged with promoting communication among all actors concerned with environment and development, UNEP is expected to coordinate and catalyse environmental protection activities among UN agencies. While it has not done everything conceivable, UNEP has accomplished some significant tasks over the course of its existence.

### *The World Bank*

Comparing mandates one may find, for example, that the CSD has taken care of forests and UNEP has taken care of desertification while no organization has adequately covered ocean pollution. But, as Nakayama's chapter points out, one must also watch for gaps – not in particular, concrete areas of environmental protection, but rather in methods of analysing environmental protection. Nakayama suggests that the World Bank as first and foremost a national economic development organization focuses its methodologies of environmental assessment too much on in-

dividual projects and not enough on the larger environmental profile of a country or region. Here there may be room for better coordination with UNEP or the CSD.

Unlike the CSD and UNEP, the World Bank was not established with the specific purpose of promoting environmental protection and environmentally sound development. Rather, in the World Bank's case environmental concerns are an addendum to, or a check on, a central agenda that was originally elaborated without explicit regard for environmental concerns. The World Bank has adopted the practice of attaching environmental conditions to its loans, and requiring projects in developing countries to meet environmental standards that would apply in developed countries. This policy is intended to promote ''upward harmonization'' of environmental standards internationally. Nakayama points out, however, that a developing country may meet World Bank standards simply by diverting its polluting practices to other projects – for example, using ''clean'' coal in a Bank-funded power plant but simply shunting its ''dirty'' coal to other plants rather than ceasing to use it.

While the CSD and UNEP focus on broad themes of environmental protection, the World Bank focuses on specific projects that are of economic significance. When it analyses the potential environmental effects of a project and seeks ways to mitigate them, it focuses on the details of that project. Gaps can emerge between sweeping evaluations of international environmental performance, on the one hand, and detailed analysis of individual projects, on the other. Could coordination between the World Bank and UNEP, for example, produce more coherent evaluations of the macro-level environmental effects of World Bank projects in a given region?

### *Mandates and capacities*

One useful approach to evaluating international environmental organizations may be to consider whether each organization's mandate is appropriate to the structure and constituency of the organization, and vice versa. Chasek comments, for example, that CSD meetings are mainly attended by environment ministers, and suggests that attendance should be made broader. Another possible recommendation might be that the CSD's mandate be reformulated in terms of its actual constituency. Presumably a single organization cannot build partnerships among all groups simultaneously. But if an organization such as the CSD could turn its dialogue function into improved coordination among environmental ministers or their envoys, it might enjoy some genuine successes.

One overarching lesson is that the mandate should fit the organization, and vice versa. An organization such as the CSD, with ample global at-

tention and an able, but not expert, staff, is basically designed to run annual conferences. It is best suited to the articulation, mobilization, and high-level coordination of effort – not for carrying out complex programmes of action. Others, such as UNEP, have more staff and a more autonomous organization for determining expert consensus, training, and sectoral decision-making. The World Bank, with masses of financial expertise and financial resources for implementation, has the rare potential actually to put into effect the courses of action that have been agreed upon.

### *''Institutional overload''*

In their edited collection of studies on international environmental institutions, *Institutions for the Earth*, Haas, Keohane, and Levy (1993) suggest a second standard for evaluating organizational effectiveness. They note that international environmental protection efforts suffer from ''institutional overload.'' So many organizations and treaties exist relating to environmental protection that government officials are spread thin attempting to participate in, understand, evaluate, and find ways to comply with all of them. International environmental arrangements would benefit from what Haas, Keohane, and Levy refer to as an equivalent to a ''most-favoured nation'' status: a set agreement that two or more states can agree to adopt to govern their relations and that does not have to be worked out anew each time. They note, however, that there is no clear way to standardize the process of agreeing upon environmental protection measures in the way there is to standardize trade agreements.

## The future of international environmental organizations

Do the institutions which have been considered have the potential to solve whatever environmental problems should theoretically be soluble? Should the focus be on strengthening these institutions? Or is there a need for a different sort of international organization – a ''super-UNEP'' of the sort Downie and Levy allude to, a global environmental regime with a role analogous to the WTO's role in regulating trade?

### *Intergovernmental environmental organizations: Managing globalization*

The term ''globalization,'' frequently employed though seldom carefully defined, refers to increasing economic and social integration among countries. It implies increasing trade openness and capital mobility, as

well as the ever-increasing interconnectedness of distant parts of the world through communication technologies and travel. Globalization leads to interaction and interdependence among locations and polities once so remote that the domestic policies of one had little or no relevance for another.

The advance of economic and social integration has spawned a considerable literature on the possible implications of globalization for individual countries' autonomy in domestic policy decisions. Topics range from the choice of macroeconomic and social welfare policies to the establishment of environmental and labour standards (see, for example, Rodrik 1997 concerning possible constraints on social welfare policy). Environmental standards are one area of domestic policy that may be increasingly affected by international dynamics as globalization progresses. The liberalization of both trade and investment regimes, for example, can potentially create downward pressure on individual countries' environmental standards. As trade openness increases, firms are increasingly vulnerable to competition from outside their home country's borders. Firms that cut costs by imposing negative environmental externalities on the communities in which they are located may enjoy a competitive advantage over those that do not; and those whose home countries insist on high environmental standards may find themselves at a disadvantage. Furthermore, even if firms are not under severe competitive pressure, capital mobility as well as ease of transport and communication may increase their ability to extract concessions from the state. The easier it is for a firm to relocate from one country to another, the greater is its bargaining power in relation to the state. Thus one effect of globalization may be downward pressure on environmental standards exerted by firms that enjoy the option of relocating.

The competition that may arise among states as each seeks to attract mobile industry is sometimes referred to as creating a risk of a ''race to the bottom.'' According to the view represented by this term, each state has a strong incentive to lower its environmental standards in order that industry will be willing to locate within it, bringing employment and economic growth. Most students of these dynamics agree that the term ''race to the bottom'' is a misnomer; states are unlikely actively to lower standards by repealing existing environmental protection laws. Daniel Esty has suggested that international competition may, however, produce a ''regulatory chill'' or ''political drag'' – a stagnating or dampening effect, in which states fail to enforce their environmental protection laws or avoid adding new regulations to their books (see, for example, Esty 1994a). Thus, in Esty's view, even if states do not actively lower standards, international competitive pressures may be a significant constraint on the abilities of states to protect their environments.

Empirical studies have suggested that in fact industry competitiveness is not significantly affected by environmental standards.[3] On the other hand, these studies have focused primarily on a limited industry category: highly polluting industries based in the United States (see Pearson 1996). Little empirical work has been done, for example, to test whether these patterns hold true for natural-resource-based industries in developing countries. Furthermore, although thorough empirical studies have not shown evidence of competitiveness effects, some researchers have found evidence that governments nonetheless act as though such effects existed (Leonard 1988). Esty cites anecdotal evidence that competitiveness concerns were an obstacle to environmental regulation by individual states; among other examples, he cites the difficulty that legislators encountered in both the United States and the European Union when they attempted to increase taxes on fossil fuel use (Esty 1994a; Esty and Geradin 1998).

Despite the proliferation of organizations concerned in one way or another with coordinating international environmental protection efforts, no organization exists that is clearly capable of addressing the particular problems that may arise with globalization. Decisions that once had only domestic significance now affect and are affected by corresponding domestic policy decisions in other countries; yet countries lack a forum within which to bring these policies into balance with one another. This lack suggests that although many intergovernmental organizations already work on environmental protection, it may nonetheless be reasonable to create one more.

### *Visions of a Global Environmental Organization*

The idea of creating a Global Environmental Organization (GEO), with a broad mandate for adjudication analogous to that of the WTO, has arisen at many junctures but has never been successfully pursued (Ayling 1997). Recent work by Daniel Esty provides an overview of the benefits that might be achieved through the creation of such an organization (Esty 1994a; 1994b). Esty lists three principal rationales for establishing a GEO: to deal with transboundary environmental externalities; to achieve economies of scale in research and promote common goals through information-sharing; and, finally, to reduce the ''political drag'' through which international competitiveness concerns can inhibit the development of environmental protection policies within individual countries. In Esty's view, the current array of intergovernmental organizations is ill-equipped to solve global environmental problems. UNEP, he argues, is far from adequately prepared to coordinate international cooperation over a wide range of environmental issues. The CSD is handicapped by the optimistic breadth of its mandate:

Since Agenda 21 covers every imaginable environmental issue without differentiating priorities and often reflects contrary points of view, [the CSD's] mission is a bit like being told to follow up on the Bible (Esty 1994b, 292).

Multiple other organizations also make attempts to solve environmental problems, but often with competing or incompatible methodologies. Thus while many organizations exist, in aggregate they fail to meet the challenges of global environmental protection.

Esty argues that in order to achieve effective environmental protection, it may be helpful for states to have a way to "tie their hands." According to this view, an important function of an international environmental organization is to let governments make commitments that will help them adhere to welfare-enhancing domestic policies even when powerful members of their constituencies oppose them. When governments wish to promote trade liberalization, they may be impeded by domestic protectionist interests; but by "tying their hands" through international commitments, they may give themselves the wherewithal to withstand protectionist demands. Similarly, governments wishing to legislate for environmental protection may encounter vocal opposition from industry or interests that stand to lose from tighter controls on pollution or natural resource depletion. In these circumstances, if governments can make a credible show domestically of having international commitments they cannot contravene, their ability to legislate for environmental protection may be enhanced.

Esty proposes that a GEO should emulate selected characteristics of a variety of currently existing organizations. The WHO is a good model for effective international coordination of transboundary problems; its successful efforts to eradicate certain infectious diseases relied in part on well-targeted assistance to developing countries. A GEO should, further, be endowed with a staff of individuals highly skilled in technical areas; in this respect it could be modelled on the OECD, the FAO, or the World Bank. A GEO would also require a secure source of significant funding.

Esty's portrait of a hypothetical future GEO is optimistic; in particular, if currently existing intergovernmental environmental organizations are underfunded, it is difficult to imagine where the funding for an ambitious new intergovernmental project might be found. The authors would suggest, in fact, that any new intergovernmental organization should be designed in such a way as to be able to carry out a limited but clear set of goals with relatively little funding. While an organization may grow into its mandate over time, there is a significant advantage to beginning with a realistic mandate and, therefore, the prospect of measurable successes. Furthermore, an organization that successfully accomplishes some limited tasks with minimal funding may always grow as new sources of support

become available; but an organization designed to rely on large amounts of capital may not easily adapt itself to reduced support.

One means by which the problems of limited resources and ''institutional overload'' may be addressed simultaneously would be to pursue another idea that Esty puts forward. He suggests that if a GEO is to be created, it should be accompanied by the consolidation or elimination of several currently existing organizations concerned with environmental protection. Again, of course, this undertaking is much easier to propose than to carry out. Aside from the well-known propensity of organizations to focus on perpetuating their own existence when it is threatened, a potential source of problems is the fact that each currently existing organization has a distinct organizational history and ''personality.'' While it is difficult to dismantle an organization, it may be even more difficult to achieve the seamless union of organizations that were previously distinct. The hierarchies and habits of individual organizations do not disappear automatically; and the staff of organizations forced to merge may have difficulty working together effectively. Thus even the relatively simple prospect of merging organizations with overlapping mandates is likely to be complicated in practice and poses the small but serious risk that vital institutional abilities may be lost in the process.

## Summing up

Will environmental protection best be furthered through the strengthening of existing institutions, or by the creation of one or more additional organizations? The mere proliferation of organizations is not in itself useful: there are plenty of organizations already. The point noted above by Haas, Keohane, and Levy (1993) about ''institutional overload'' alerts us to a risk: the more different organizations there are that are trying to develop approaches to environmental problems, the more different kinds of regimes they may establish that states must navigate. If predictable rules and easily recognized roles and norms are among the central aspects of successful international institutions, this multiplicity of international organizations concerned with environmental problems may be counterproductive. The fashion of recent years, as the neofunctionalists would have predicted, has been for organizations to add ''environment'' to their list of concerns wherever and whenever possible. If this serves in part to confuse issues, so states do not know where to look for guidance and norms relating to environmental protection, then this fashion of concern may not produce results much better than those which international apathy would yield.

However, areas do remain to which no organization is explicitly dedi-

cated. As has been seen, one such area is the ambiguous relationship between trade and environmental agreements. In recent years, a number of trade measures taken in the name of environmental protection have been rejected by the WTO as inappropriate barriers to trade. When the functionalist principles of trade liberalization and environmental protection collide and conflict, which should take precedence, or what body should adjudicate between them? Although many different organizations make efforts to promote environmental protection, their efforts may be superseded by decisions arrived at by the WTO, an organization whose mandate was developed without reference to environmental protection. Jeffrey Dunoff has argued that the WTO's current practice of adjudicating on environmental issues that may fall outside its mandate will eventually undermine the organization's legitimacy (Dunoff 1997; 1998). Thus while some environmental organizations suffer from mandates larger than their capabilities, the WTO, like the World Bank, takes responsibility for issues that go beyond its mandate. This may suggest that the world does need a new intergovernmental organization: one endowed with the means to adjudicate environmental questions in a way member states consider legitimate.

A second insight suggested by the material reviewed here, however, runs in the opposite direction. It has been seen that existing intergovernmental organizations, even those not officially intended to solve environmental problems, have developed considerable capacities to solve environmental problems within clearly defined conceptual boundaries. Other intergovernmental organizations have developed the complementary ability to catalyse and coordinate the creation of important environmental agreements. The lesson here is that these abilities, in some cases developed over the course of decades, are a significant resource. A new organization intended to collect many functions under one roof might not equal the capabilities of these existing organizations. It is essential that existing capabilities should not be ignored or undermined in the name of centralization and standardization. Thus, while certain issues point in the direction of either creating a new environmental organization or radically changing and expanding an existing organization, they do not mean that a new organization should take over roles fulfilled by organizations that already exist. Abilities developed over decades should not be superseded in the interests of centralization.

If a new intergovernmental organization is to be created, it is essential that its founders recognize the importance of the relationship between mandate and capabilities. The easy trap into which optimists may fall is that of mandating a new organization to accomplish tasks of which it is simply not capable. To create a new organization with an unrealistically ambitious mandate could actually undermine the cause of international

environmental protection, by expanding still further the disarticulated array of environmental regimes that states confront. Even if its ultimate purpose is to match the WTO in influence and visibility, a new intergovernmental environmental organization should be endowed with a relatively limited, and realistic, mandate to, in effect, ''start easy.'' This will make it possible to evaluate the new organization's successes and failures clearly; and to push the organization towards maximum effectiveness in promoting international cooperation for environmental protection.

Finally, although the strength of intergovernmental organizations may always be somewhat mitigated by the difficulty of enforcement, it is possible that as economic integration increases, intergovernmental organizations will be an increasingly important means through which states may be able to develop policy. To the extent that globalization may reduce states' autonomy – whether by constraining their fiscal and monetary policy options or by making it harder to impose stringent environmental regulations on industry – intergovernmental organizations may be the means through which states can regain or maintain their policy-making abilities. Thus while a GEO might be seen as infringing on national sovereignty in problematic ways, it might in the end actually enhance states' sovereignty. It might allow them collectively to pursue environmental protection policies that none would be able to maintain alone.

## Notes

1. Information on intergovernmental organizations other than UNEP, the CSD, and the World Bank is drawn from Bergesen and Parmann (1997) and from the texts of presentations by organization representatives at the Rio Plus 5 Conference in New York in 1997.
2. Most of these areas of concern are closely linked to environmental issues; while the link through water quality and sanitation is obvious, women's literacy is also central to many aspects of local environmental protection.
3. For overviews of relevant studies, see Jaffe et al. (1995), Dean (1992), and Pearson (1985; 1996).

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