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# Global Governance and UN Reform

## Challenges and Opportunities for Environment and Human Security

Andreas Rechkemmer

# InterSecTions

'Interdisciplinary Security ConnecTions'  
Publication Series of UNU-EHS

No. 3/2005

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# **InterSecTions**

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## Foreword

Environmental awareness and political will to rehabilitate and to protect ecosystems have gained considerable momentum since the 1970s. This development is well documented in a series of large, intergovernmental conferences, their respective declarations and follow-ups. Programmes, conventions, their governing organs and secretariats together with the emerging pertinent national ministries and environmental agencies can be identified as the most important instruments of global governance.

This positive trend, though slow from the point of view of those most dedicated, has remained however somewhat isolated from other societal concerns. While the environmental development nexus is well documented at least since the mid 1980s, the security issues were, until recently, almost entirely absent from environmental considerations and vice versa.

In this essay, Dr. Rechkemmer outlines how global governance and UN reform endeavours hold both challenges and opportunities for improving the environment and enhancing human security. In this context, the state of the environment can be defined as a challenge or even a threat for the collective security, while the Millennium Development Goals clearly refer to environmental sustainability as a key component of human security and stability. The author urges us to emphasize the strong links between these two dimensions in the ongoing institutional reform process. He argues that a holistic consideration of the security relevant aspects of environmental problems would not only help to mainstream the environmental concerns into the international political agenda and strengthen the corresponding institutions, but also enhance human security for all.

Since the UN Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm 1972, through the Brundtland Report 1987, the UN Conference on Environment and Development, Río de Janeiro 1992, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg 2002, more than three decades have passed with debates, concepts, growing awareness and some – though by far not comprehensive – improvement of the state of the environment as confirmed by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. At this junction, attempts to promote reform and environmental awareness, a growing concern for the ever increasing impacts of climate change, land degradation, and population growth confront us with the question of whether humanity can still afford to continue deliberating at the same pace and degree of focus as in the last decades. Dr. Rechkemmer's theses are to be seen in the context of what to do and how to act if we did not have 30 more years to sort out our environmental and human security problems.



Janos J. Bogardi  
Director UNU-EHS

### About the Author

Andreas Rechkemmer holds an M.A. in Political Science and a Ph.D. in International Relations. He is a guest researcher at the Social Science Center Berlin (WZB) and teaches at the Free University of Berlin. His current research focus is on the link between Global Environmental Governance and UN Reform. He served the United Nations as a Programme Officer in the field of Sustainable Development for several years, with a regional focus on Africa, and worked with *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)* – German Institute for International and Security Affairs, the largest foreign affairs think tank in Western Europe. His professional activities also comprise consultancy and policy advice to various national ministries and International Organizations. Andreas Rechkemmer is author and editor of several books and a number of scientific articles. He is lecturing at *EUropean School of Governance (EUSG)* and provides scientific advice to media institutions.



# Global Governance and UN Reform Challenges and Opportunities for Environment and Human Security

by Andreas Rechkemmer

## 1. Introduction

This publication aims to link up the ongoing inter-disciplinary discourse on global governance with the currently debated overall UN reform agenda. It shows that, for the sake of a more effective system of international cooperation, intelligible institutional reform can and should be combined with some of the most prominent elements of the global governance paradigm, i.e. cross sectoral and multi-stakeholder based policy instruments. The study's empirical focus lies, on one side, on the actual political efforts to reform the institutional architecture of global environmental governance, and, on the other side, on the four recently released major UN reform reports. Both processes feature a mixed portfolio of structural as well as policy-oriented reform approaches in the above sense. InterSecTions 3 further to flag out various challenges and opportunities that these for the practical area of Environment & Human Security. The publication is based on scientific literature as well as the outcomes of related political initiatives. Its general notion is rather policy-oriented than strictly academic. In the view of the author, it is high time to bring together practitioners and scientists to present forward-looking recommendations for the political process ahead.

InterSecTions 3 is inspired by the proceedings and outcomes of the international experts conference *Towards an International Environment Organization*, which took place in September 2004 at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany in Berlin, gathering some 100 high level experts and policy makers to discuss the issues of strengthening the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the so-called *United Nations Environment Organisation (UNEO)* initiative, launched in September 2003 by French President Jacques Chirac yielding the establishment of a specialised agency in charge of global environmental affairs. The symposium provided an excellent reference point for further deliberations – not only on the two named initiatives, but on the nexus between UN reform, global governance and the field of Environment & Human Security as a whole (Rechkemmer 2005).

*THE STUDY'S FOCUS LIES ON THE POLITICAL EFFORTS TO REFORM THE INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE OF GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AND ON THE FOUR MAJOR UN REFORM REPORTS.*

ENVIRONMENTAL  
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THREE LEVELS OF  
APPEARANCE: LOCAL,  
REGIONAL, AND  
GLOBAL.

## 2. Global Governance and the Environment

### 2.1 The Phenomenology of Global Environmental Problems

A lot has been said and written on globalisation, global governance, and more specifically, on global environmental governance within the past decade. Significantly enough, the terms '*globalisation*' and '*global governance*' are relatively new. Statistics show that their use in literature, science and rhetoric has basically started to become fashionable only in the early nineties (Altvater/Mahnkopf 1999:20). Markets promote efficiency through competition and the division of labour – the specialisation that allows people and economies to focus on what they do best. Global markets offer greater opportunity for people to tap into more and larger markets around the world. It means that they can have access to more capital flows, technology, cheaper imports, and larger export markets. But markets do not necessarily ensure that the benefits of increased efficiency are shared by all. Thus the issue of globalisation cannot be simplified as 'free trade' agreements, or the policies of the World Bank. It needs to be understood more systemically as a global process. A thorough reorganization of the world's economic and political activity is underway, with takeover tendencies of governance patterns by transnational corporations and the established international trade bureaucracies. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) defines globalisation as follows:

Economic 'globalization' is a historical process, the result of human innovation and technological progress. It refers to the increasing integration of economies around the world, particularly through trade and financial flows. The term sometimes also refers to the movement of people (labour) and knowledge (technology) across international borders. There are also broader cultural, political and environmental dimensions of globalization.<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that there are close links between the phenomenon of globalisation and others commonly referred to as global environmental problems: Through the environmental implications of economic activities there is also an environmental globalisation taking place

In conformity with a comprehensive classification established by the German Advisory Council on Global Environmental Change (WBGU), Udo E. Simonis names global environmental problems "changes in the atmosphere, in the oceans, and on land the causes of which can be attributed, directly or

<sup>1</sup> See at: <<http://www.imf.org>>



indirectly, to human activities; these changes affect the natural metabolic cycles, the aquatic and terrestrial ecological systems, as well as economy and society” (Simonis 1999:3). Environmental problems can be categorised along three levels of appearance. ‘*Local phenomena*’ are limited to the spatial dimension of states, e.g. emissions in industrial zones, air pollution caused by traffic in urban areas, or the locally limited contamination of a river through chemical waste. ‘*Regional phenomena*’ are of a transboundary, but regionally limited nature, e.g. pollution of transborder river basins, or drought periods. ‘*Global phenomena*’ affect worldwide shared resources and sinks, e.g. climate change and global warming, the pollution of the oceans, or loss of genetic diversity. Definitional considerations suggest that only global phenomena are of international concern. However, emphasis has to be laid on the fact that also local or regional problems may culminate to the extent of a global dimension. To give just one example: a regional drought catastrophe may trigger chain reactions such as agriculture production loss, famine and poverty, migration or social unrest (Rechkemmer 2000).

Not all globally known environmental problems are due to or interrelated with globalisation effects (Rechkemmer 2003). However, we distinguish between two types of interaction: firstly, we know of grave environmental problems that are caused or increased by globalisation-related phenomena, e.g. land degradation caused by unsustainable land use, and production patterns due to world market forces, the climate and energy dilemma – CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the greenhouse effect – due to world wide industrialisation processes and ‘exported’ unsound technologies, or unsustainable energy consumption triggered by enhanced global mobility. Secondly, there are intermediate consequences such as the erosion of environmental safety standards due to competition pressure – reference can be made, for example, to the deforestation of rain forests, or textile production patterns in Asian countries (Altvater/Mahnkopf 1999, 2002)). The interrelatedness of such issues, as mentioned above, is as obvious as are the mutual linkages between the said levels of occurrence: the local, regional, and global ones.<sup>2</sup>

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2 Further recommended articles on the interplay of globalisation, environment and global public policies are: Hirst, Paul, 1997: “The Global Economy – Myth and Realities”. In: *International Affairs*: 73: 3; and: Esser, Klaus (1998): „Nationalstaatliches Handeln im Übergang von der Industrie- zur Informationsökonomie“, in: Messner, Dirk (ed.): *Die Zukunft des Staates und der Politik*. Bonn.

*AT THE TIME OF THE UNITED NATIONS’ INAUGURATION IN 1945; ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES DID NOT MATTER – THERE IS NO REFERENCE MADE WITHIN THE PROVISIONS OF THE UN CHARTER.*

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ENVIRONMENTAL  
ISSUES.

There is broad consensus in the natural as well as social science as far as the identification of a number of environmental problems usually referred to as global is concerned: the cluster of climate change phenomena including ozone layer depletion and global warming, loss of genetic (or biological) diversity, deforestation, soil erosion, land degradation and desertification, the contamination and other critical impacts on the world's oceans and other international waters, scarcity of international freshwater resources, problems with waste and chemicals, and the use of non-renewable energies (Kreibich/Simonis 2000).

## 2.2 Genesis of Arrangements at International Level

Global environmental issues did not play a significant role in the international political stage – as far as the UN and other formal negotiation settings are concerned – until the early 1970s. The consciousness of the necessity for a sustainable use of the planet's natural resources was basically, if at all, limited to national initiatives. At the time of the United Nations' inauguration in 1945, environmental issues did not matter – there is no reference made within the provisions of the UN Charter. The Organization first focused on the issues of peace and security, international cooperation and human rights. The *Worldwatch Institute* states:

When the United Nations was created a half-century ago, such events would have been difficult to imagine. Environmental degradation was not even considered much of a national threat at that time, let alone a pressing global problem that could provoke international conflict and undermine human health, economic well-being, and social stability. Accordingly, the U.N. Charter does not even mention the word 'environment'. In 1945, as large parts of Europe and Asia lay in ruins, ensuring that no world war would ever again break out was viewed as the most urgent task before the world community (Worldwatch Institute 1995).

However, as a result of the process of decolonialisation in the 1960s, new issues such as development as well as economic and social affairs made it onto the international agenda. The environment was finally recognised as a global issue to be dealt with by the international community and in particular by the United Nations and its specialised agencies. It was in 1968 that the UN General Assembly (GA) recognised the need to engage into international environmental issues. Resolution General Assembly 23/198 states that greater attention should be given to human environment as a basis for sustainable economic and social development. Furthermore, the General

Assembly expressed the hope that donors would assist developing countries through the means of enhanced cooperation to find appropriate solutions for their environmental problems. It was the first time that a link had been established between environment and development. The same resolution called for the organisation of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE), the first world conference on environment.

This conference was finally organised by the UN in Stockholm in 1972. Its opening day, 5 June, is still celebrated as world environment day. Although the 113 participating countries insisted on their national prerogatives, two remarkable results came out of UNCHE: the main concluding document, the *Declaration on Human Environment* (Stockholm Declaration), which consists of a thorough listing of environmental problems known at the time, and, in accordance with the provisions of res. GA 23/198, a call for the foundation of a *United Nations Environment Programme* (UNEP), to be headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. UNCHE was a bold step forward. For the first time ever, stakeholders could refer to an international document addressing the full range of known environmental issues of global concern. All pertaining issues highlighted in resolution GA 23/198, notably the linkage created between environment and development, international liability and the polluter pays principle, the decision to raise the *Official Development Aid* (ODA) of the *Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development* (OECD) countries to 0.7 per cent of their *Gross National Product* (GNP), and the foundation of Earthwatch, a global satellite based monitoring system, were addressed and established through the Stockholm Declaration.

The second important achievement was the establishment of UNEP, whose onset functions consisted in the collection, systematisation and dissemination of state-of-the-art knowledge, the coordination of national and interagency efforts, mainstreaming pertaining problems of global environment into existing inter-governmental processes and conferences, and the facilitation of conferences, meetings, and workshops. However, UNEP soon started to play a more proactive role in providing leadership and catalytic support to the invocation of new conventions and regimes such as the *Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES) and the *International Convention for the Prevention of MARine POLLution from Ships* (MARPOL) convention restricting intentional discharges by ships (both 1973), the *Convention on the Law of the Sea*

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(1982), the Vienna Convention (1985) respective the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987), and the Basel Convention on controlling transboundary movement of hazardous wastes (1989). UNEP also established the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC) in October 1990. Apart from the proactive promotion measures sketched out above, the initial organisational matrix of UNEP can be considered as rather general: no enforcement, no controlling, and no initiative for international legally binding arrangements. Its budget is derived from the regular UN core budget, fund raising for programme design and administration is, as a rule, depending on voluntary contributions, trust funds and by non-governmental bodies. UNEP in its history has proven to be somewhat creative: apart from Earthwatch, the GRID/GPS satellite imaging project has been set up, input to a multitude of international, regional, and national conferences has been provided, HABITAT, and a series of international treaties have been promoted.

Yet, the breakthrough for global environmental governance came in the eighties.<sup>3</sup> In 1984, following a UNEP led initiative, the General Assembly established the *World Commission on Environment and Development* (WCED), the so-called *Brundtland Commission*<sup>4</sup>. Its members were independent experts supposed to come up with proposals for enhanced exploration of the nexus environment-development. The commission's final report *Our Common Future, or Brundtland Report* (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987), became the locus classicus for the term '*sustainable development*'; its definition became a paradigm: "*Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable – to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*" (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987:8). The report further defines sustainable development as "...a process of change in which exploitation of resources, the direction of investment, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987).

3 The notion of *global environmental governance* is distinct from the one of *global environmental politics*, which is an adequate description for the multi-lateral efforts of the period before 1984/87. *Global environmental governance* implies the concept of global governance.

4 This name followed the commission's chairwoman, the former Prime Minister of Norway, Mrs Gro Harlem Brundtland.

The report became influential by creating a strong link between the policy sectors of environment and development, highlighting that poverty, underdevelopment and depletion of natural resources are closely linked and mutually interactive. The concept of sustainable development became the new paradigm for global environmental governance. The publication and dissemination of the Brundtland Report coincided with the ongoing erosion process in the Eastern political hemisphere and the end of the Cold War. It thus benefited from a newly created historical momentum in which states were ready and eager to revive the principle of collective action and yield the establishment of multilateral agreements under the aegis of the UN. It was the time of an important series of world conferences, invoking new forms of international agreements, in which genuine collective goals were identified and supposed to be tackled. In this context, and following the suggestions of the Brundtland Report, the General Assembly passed the resolution 44/228 in 1989, which decided on the organisation of the *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* (UNCED), to be held in June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The mandate for UNCED was to review and to take stock of the development made on the respective sectors of environment and development since Stockholm, and to identify new strategies for enhanced collective action at both global and regional levels. It was foreseen to merge the two sectors into the field of sustainable development. Expectations of the representatives from the 180 participating countries ran high, and the concept of sustainable development, which had become a sort of slogan, introduced a new quality in international cooperation. A number of key multilateral resolutions and agreements were agreed on at UNCED, above all *Agenda 21*. Expectations were even higher for the next decade regarding prevention of environmental catastrophes, a just organisation of global markets, and the fight against poverty and famine. The nineties were supposed to bring about a worldwide change in awareness and action, which – compared to the high expectations- turned out to be less than desired.

### **2.3 The Notion of Global Environmental Governance**

What defines *global environmental governance*? Enlightening for the understanding of the concept in question, Maria Ivanova contributed the following elaboration to the discourse:

Two traditional forms of governance have dominated world affairs until recently – national governance through govern-

*THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BECAME THE NEW PARADIGM FOR GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AND BEYOND.*

*“THE COMING DECADES  
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THE GLOBAL COMMU-  
NITY: PRESERVING THE  
PLANET’S ECOSYSTEMS  
AND PROTECTING THE  
WORLD’S COMMON  
ENVIRONMENT WHILE  
MEETING THE ASPIRA-  
TIONS OF ALL PEOPLES  
FOR HIGHER [...]   
ECONOMIC WELFARE”  
(STEWART 1999)*

mental regulation and international governance through collective action facilitated by international organizations and international regimes. However, governing human relations has become a complicated endeavour that has transcended the national and interstate scale and moved to a global level involving multiple actors across national borders and multiple levels of regulatory authority – from subnational to supranational. In this context, institutional arrangements for cooperation are beginning to take shape more systematically and have now been recognized as critical to the effective tackling of any global problem. Public-private partnerships, multi-stakeholder processes, global public policy networks, and issue networks are regarded as important tools for global governance... International organizations are the traditional facilitators of collective action at the international and global level and provide a particularly interesting analytical lens for partnership arrangements. International organizations may perform a range of roles in a partnership context – enabler, facilitator, supporter, or active participant – and influence the shape, form, and function of the collaborative arrangements.“ (Ivanova 2003 : 9)

Multilateral cooperation thus experiences a redefinition of its genuine connotation. The incorporation of non state actors, scientific community, and non hierarchical patterns render the referred to networks truly multilateral. However, we should not neglect that formal and interstate negotiation processes, under UN aegis, yielding legal agreements or regimes, are forming an important part of global environmental governance, just like states as the principal actors among others. Rounding up the definitional framework provided for the term in question, Richard Stewart writes:

The coming decades pose an enormous challenge of governance for the global community: preserving the planet’s ecosystems and protecting the world’s common environment while meeting the aspirations of all peoples for higher personal and societal levels of economic welfare. Meeting this challenge will require newly developed and developing countries and public/private international partnerships for sustainable development; wider adoption of economic instruments for environmental and resource protection; improved international mechanisms for risk assessment and resolution of trade/environment controversies; and more focused and effective international environmental laws and institutions... (Steward 1999)

## **2.4 UNCED’s Various Outcomes**

The Rio Summit became the platform for the aforementioned concepts. UNCED was prepared by four committee sessions,



so-called Preparatory Committees (PrepComs), involving member states representatives as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations. Great expectations and hopes were raised in the forefront, and intense scientific preparation and media coverage seconded the deliberations. As results, there are official documents and treaties, institutional changes, and an officially agreed upon follow-up process. More interesting are structural and substantive reorientations within existing or newly founded institutional bodies and so-called informal consequences, i.e. shifts in the way multilateral cooperation in the field of sustainable development has been perceived and incorporated after Rio. UNCED's well known outcomes are the Rio Declaration; Agenda 21; the three Rio Conventions; the Forest Declaration; the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD); the Rio process including the Rio +5 conference; and a new system of world conferences.

The CSD organises its work since 1993 in annual sessions. It has 53 member countries and is mandated to elaborate proposals for the *ECONomic and SOcial Council* (ECOSOC) to influence and guide the UN's and its member countries' policies in the fields of environment and development. ECOSOC is the central coordinating body in this context within the UN system, also including agencies such as the World Bank. Until 1997, i.e. the General Assembly Special Session known as *Rio +5*, the Commission observed and monitored globally the progress made on the implementation of the Rio documents and treaties, and reported accordingly to the General Assembly. After Rio +5, the CSD followed up on thematic topics such as industrial development, sound tourism, sustainable agriculture, transport, or energy, and specific problems such as transfer of appropriate technologies or capacity building. The CSD spells out recommendations, e.g. concerning the internalisation of environmental costs, the changing of production and consumption patterns, free trade for developing countries, mainstreaming of sustainable development issues into national policies. It also follows up on ODA matters. Another important Rio outcome is the *system of world conferences* such as *CONferences of the Parties to the Conventions* (COPs), follow-up and governing bodies' meetings of other environmental regimes, single world conferences yielding a specific thematic goal, and the Special Sessions of the General Assembly. As part of the formal outcomes, Rio also brought up the so-called development goals, being summed up in the paper *Shaping the 21st Century* in 1996 by the Organisation for Economic Coopera-

RIO [+5] ALSO BROUGHT UP THE SO-CALLED UN DEVELOPMENT GOALS [...] NAMING SEVEN GLOBAL GOALS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

tion and *Development/Development Cooperation Directorate* (OECD/DAC), naming seven global goals for sustainable development. They were later, at the UN Millennium Summit, in September 2000 in New York, further elaborated and adopted as the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs), following consultations among international agencies, including the World Bank, the *International Monetary Fund* (IMF), the OECD, and the specialised agencies of the United Nations (UNGA 2000).<sup>5</sup> For each goal one or more targets have been set, most for 2015, using 1990 as a benchmark.

As stated above, Agenda 21 featured the scientific state of the art and introduced a vast collection of action plans, including detailed cost plans. It consisted of a huge environmental respective sustainable development governance compendium for governments and non-governmental organisations addressing the national, regional and global levels alike. But due to a certain clash of interests, according to some critics, some themes are not at all or only weakly reflected, e.g. biotechnology, the contamination of the oceans, or export of wastes. Another result was the enlargement of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) – which had been founded in 1990 as a major environmental credit programme, administered jointly by the World Bank, UNEP, and UNDP.

### 3. International Environmental Cooperation after Rio and Johannesburg

#### 3.1 Assessing the 2002 World Summit's Outcomes

A lot has been written on the Earth Summit (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, UNCED), and analysis and evaluation has been provided throughout (Swiderska 2002). In June 1997, at the 19<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the UN General Assembly, *Rio +5*, analysis of the progress made so far in the implementation of UNCED's results was undertaken. This process was identified as insufficient. As a result, the New York based Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was entrusted with an enhanced mandate and its programmatic priorities were reset for the following five years: climate, protection of forests, and enforcement of environmental institutions. But the real Rio stocktaking took place at the *Rio +10* conference called *World Summit on Sustainable Development* (WSSD), which took place from 26 August to 4 September 2002 in Johannesburg,

<sup>5</sup> See at: <[www.developmentgoals.org](http://www.developmentgoals.org)>.



Republic of South Africa. Preparation of the WSSD was in the hands of the CSD. Part of this preparatory process included the 2000 United Nations Millennium Summit, which led to the Millennium Declaration, whose development goals were reinforced by the WSSD. The World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial conference of Doha, Katar, November 2001, and the International Conference on Financing Development in Monterrey, Mexico, March 2002, also constituted important preparatory steps towards the Johannesburg meeting. Their outcomes were reflected in the deliberations of the WSSD.

The WSSD, the largest conference to date, provided an opportunity for a comprehensive review of the achievements of sustainable development since Rio. At the same time, it was expected to provide a new impetus for a breakthrough on urgent matters. However, prior to the conference in Johannesburg, it was already clear that the record of the Rio decade left a lot to be desired in terms of effectiveness and achievements of the agreements and action plans mentioned above. This resulted in both raised expectations and doubts in equal measure. Would the World Summit finally be the turning point in international environmental policy that many had demanded for so long? Would it be capable of providing the decisive impetus to cooperation on development issues?

When it came to assessing the record of results from Johannesburg, the sceptics from science and media were having a field day. In their eyes, the final document pointed to progress on a number of issues, but the qualifications added to nearly every conclusion left them sceptical. Some examples: World fish reserves *ought to* be protected by 2015. The most dangerous toxins to the environment are to be banned, but violators have *no sanctions* to fear. Subsidies for fossil fuels should be reduced, though *no strict time frame* was agreed on. There were also a number of impressive sounding declarations of intent: free and democratic access to fresh water was established as a basic right, energy production from non-fossil fuels is to be fostered, and the necessity of debt relief for the poorest countries was recognised. But, here too, the prospect of a breakthrough is questionable given the lack of concrete plans of action and clear mechanisms for imposing sanctions. The final documents *Johannesburg Declaration* and *Plan of Implementation* are full of lax time frames and goals, open questions regarding financing, and a lack of ideas of how to implement the plethora of good intentions at the institutional and organizational level.

*THE WSSD, [...] PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SINCE RIO.*

*IN JOHANNESBURG, 190 STATES WERE ABLE TO AGREE ON A DETAILED LIST OF ACTIONS; SOMETHING THAT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN ASSUMED PRIOR TO THE SUMMIT.*

But some observers interpreted the record more positively. Above all, they noted that measures to ensure safe water and drinking water for the world's poor, one of the EU's biggest goals, were adopted (Bogardi/Szollosi-Nagi 2002), though water commitments had been 'watered down' in the final declaration (Bogardi 2002). According to them, another success story was the agreement by the US, despite a rejection of concrete time frames and quotas, to the basic goal of putting an end to species extinction and to reducing the dangerous effects of chemicals. Moreover, they described regulations for corporate liability, fisheries, and a review of modes of consumption and production in industrialised states, as well as the mention of 'global public goods' such as air and the oceans, as steps in the right direction. It would be inappropriate to doubt that the summit brought progress. First, the very fact that it took place was in itself important. This has helped to put global environmental policy back on the international agenda. The identification and acknowledgement of the central issues and goals of sustainable development in the final documents is also important. This provided an updated and nearly complete frame of reference for future initiatives and negotiations, be they unilateral, bilateral, or multilateral. And 190 states were able to agree on a detailed list of actions, something that could not have been assumed prior to the summit. Thus, a common vision is in place and many important issues were taken into account. The key question is whether the Plan of Implementation, which is based on an already minimal consensus, will be effectively implemented. The current established institutional framework for international cooperation and the shrinking willingness of rich states in particular to cooperate on a multilateral basis leave room for doubt.

It became one of the rituals of Johannesburg to criticize the US and denounce them for their immobility in climate change issues in particular. However, upon closer examination, this criticism appears to be too one-sided. Japan, for example, denied the demand for more foreign aid. Brazil refused to protect its rainforest according to international standards. France insisted on maintaining EU agricultural subsidies. Particularistic state interests characterized the global meeting. Indeed, there is a firm trend discernible among OECD member states of renewed emphasis on protecting their own interests and their concern in solving national problems. This runs counter to the notion of global governance which would entail seeking consensus at the international level at the expense of individual interests. Explanations offered for this

development include the weak economy and protectionist tendencies.

Without a doubt, it has become quite difficult to create a momentum for a global collaborative effort by *all* UN member states to solve common problems at this stage, however necessary and desirable that would be. Furthermore, one cannot and should not expect the organs of multilateral cooperation, the UN institutions, to provide results that are not brought about by the member states working in concert. Chronic under-financing of the existing instruments simply adds to the difficulties. This could be the hour of a practical middle way. Initiatives of individual states or groups of states and their allies of convenience in so called *coalitions of the willing* may contribute to helping out of the dilemma posed by the current gridlock in the implementation of important environmental measures. It could soon lead to first stage victories, for example in the area of climate protection, particularly after Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, and to overcome the extensive inertia. German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder succeeded in Johannesburg in getting the EU and some 90 other states to sign a declaration calling for the promotion and firm establishment of renewable energy that was outside the framework of the summit and goes well beyond the conclusions of the final documents. Gorbachev's Green Cross Announcement can also be named here (Bogardi/Szollósi-Nagi 2002).

These important moves forward, which go well beyond the official conference results, happened in parallel to the WSSD and are not part of the tediously negotiated final documents. The strength of these initiatives lies in the very fact that they are not orientated toward the least common denominator; they are rather manifestations of the political intentions of those who are truly interested in progress and change. That improves their chances of success. It may well be that a strategy seeking to unite progressive actors of the world would make the transition to global sustainability easier. The entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, for example, could set a new dynamic in motion that helps promote the use of better energy technology, not just in the rich North, but also in the poor South. The second glimmer of hope lies in the EU and other states which want to lead the way, both at a national level and in cooperation with developing countries, even without having set out concrete goals at Johannesburg (Rechkemmer 2002).

*THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE KYOTO PROTOCOL; [...] COULD SET A NEW DYNAMIC IN MOTION THAT HELPS PROMOTE THE USE OF BETTER ENERGY TECHNOLOGY [...].*

### 3.2 Synchronicity of Realities

In an article (Messner/Schade/Weller 2003), Dirk Messner, Jeanette Schade and Christoph Weller claim that in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, classic security issues have once more dominated the global agenda, bringing forth a restoration of power politics based on national interests. According to the authors, this tendency not only challenges international law, but also undermines efforts undertaken and already established towards the principles of collective action and global governance:

After World War II, the US triggered the process of institutionalization of global politics and catalyzed multilateral cooperation. They succeeded in the formation of a global system of interdependent collective action through balance of interests. This system, which naturally served US aspirations, however stabilized international relations and united a multitude of states within an international order having the United Nations as its gravity center. Meanwhile, America has withdrawn from this approach. (Messner/Schade/Weller 2003 : 236)<sup>6</sup>

This movement of consistent withdrawal from multilateral cooperation comprises strategic policy fields such as arms control regimes – e.g. the so-called diversification of nuclear arsenals to tackle the problem of international terrorism, the cancellation of the bilateral US-Russian ‘ABM’ treaty, the treaty on nuclear test ban, and the verification regime for biological weapons –, the Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court (ICC) and bilateral trade treaties to bypass and undermine the regulatory provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Messner, Schade and Weller use the term ‘selective multilateralism’, sometimes also called ‘multilateralism à la carte’, which could serve as an adequate description of some important states’ policies towards global issues (Messner/Schade/Weller 2003:237). Yet, empirically speaking, we are living in a period of growing interdependence between unilateralism, global governance concepts, multilateral initiatives, and globalisation (Messner/Schade/Weller 2003:242-244). Despite all the hysteria about the threat of new empires or aggressive unilateralism, we should understand that Johannesburg was a signal that multilateralism and collective action still exist. At the end of the day, the most important result of the WSSD was the maintenance of the crucial results from Rio, although some

<sup>6</sup> Translation by Andreas Rechkemmer

*[...] GLOBAL GOVERNANCE; PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT; IS DEFINITELY PRACTISED BY A MULTITUDE OF ACTORS WORLDWIDE.*

speakers had called for their erosion. And even more decisions were taken against the resistance of the so-called unilaterals: equality of environmental agreements with WTO standards, corporate accountability principle accepted by the UN, the biodiversity loss rate to be reduced by 2010.

The strict obstinacy of the US and other governments towards global environmental management has triggered a certain change in international politics: since consistent multilateralism is lacking, willing states are forming new alliances of political forerunners. This phenomenon creates a new form of 'multilateralism at different speeds' (Messner/Schade/Weller 2003:247)<sup>7</sup>

Despite all contradictions, empirical studies referring to the Secretary-General's report quoted before admit the advanced institutionalisation of global environmental governance, even as of today. Some 900 agreements have been decided upon. And no one would seriously neglect the growing role of private actors, scientific networks, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) – seconded by new economic instruments such as certificates trading (Helm/Simonis/Biermann 2004/2005).<sup>8</sup> It seems that an adequate description for the present phase in international relations would be *synchronicity of realities*. While some empirical findings suggest to us that unilateralism and coalitions of the willing are a paradigm for the contemporary international order, others speak about an age of newly emerging empires. On the other hand, global governance, particularly in the field of environment or sustainable development, is definitely *practised* by a multitude of actors worldwide. Analytically speaking, it's all of it in combination. While nation-states will remain the dominant actors for some time, be it as unilateralists, multilateralists, or partners, governance will in any case, in a further globalising world, comprise new avenues and strategies for joint implementation, so-called type II outcomes or informal agreements, be they between states or in the form of voluntary networks and partnerships (Hamm 2002; Rechkemmer 2005a).

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7 Translation by Andreas Rechkemmer; Examples are, inter alia, the EU energy initiative or the commitment towards the implementation of the Kyoto protocol.

8 On market based means for the public sector, reference is made to the classic: (Osborne/Gaebler 1992).

THE RECENTLY  
RELEASED REPORT 'IN  
LARGER FREEDOM' BY  
KOFI ANNAN AND ITS  
IDENTIFICATION OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
GOVERNANCE AS  
PARTICULARLY  
RELEVANT [...] SIGNALS  
THE CURRENT PEAK  
SEASON OF THE  
POLITICAL PROCESS.

## 4. Reforming the Institutional Architecture of Global Environmental Governance

### 4.1 A Highly Fragmented Setting

In the past few years, the often primarily academic debate on the creation of a World Environment Organization has received more and more attention from policy makers and subsequently been incorporated into an intergovernmental process (Bauer/Biermann 2005; Subkus 2004; Schmidt 2003). The recently released report *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All* (UNGA A/59/2005) by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and its identification of environmental governance as particularly relevant for the upcoming international system signals the current peak season of the political process described above. Annan's report draws upon the report of his High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (UNGA A/59/565) and the so-called Jeffrey Sachs report of the UN Millennium Project on the Millennium Development Goals (UN Millenium Project 2005). With these official documents – along with the recent *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment* (MA)<sup>9</sup> – the question of strengthening international environmental governance has been linked to the overall UN reform process and has gained, as a result, new and high level political momentum. These latest developments at the supranational level coincide with a political process led by a number of national governments, best represented by the Chirac initiative, focusing on a stronger UNEP and its eventual upgrading to a fully-fledged United Nations specialised agency. These parallel processes have created an interesting negotiation situation, and the upcoming months and years will be particularly important in this regard. Since it is not yet evident whether the efforts towards strengthening international environmental governance would benefit significantly from decisions taken within the UN reform process, it is advisable to present a stocktaking of the steps and measures that have already been taken, and to provide possible recommendations based on this analysis. Because UNEP is the key actor in the field of the environment within the United Nations system (Nairobi Declaration, 1997: §1)<sup>10</sup>, it is at the core of these considerations.

9 See at: <<http://www.maweb.org/en/index.aspx>>

10 See at: <<http://www.unep.org>>



Focusing on the wider UN system, global environmental governance has meanwhile become a widely-stretched, dense and diversified institutional framework consisting of a multitude of agencies, structures and bodies – in addition to the less formalised ongoing negotiation processes and conference series. The main organs of the *United Nations* (UN), the *UN General Assembly* (UNGA), the *ECONomic and SOcial Council* (ECOSOC) as well as the *Commission on Sustainable Development* (CSD) are dealing with environmental issues, just like the *Department of Economic and Social Affairs* (DESA) of the Secretariat. Moreover, *United Nations Environment Program* (UNEP), *United Nations Development Program* (UNDP), the *Regional Commissions*, and a number of funds, programmes, and specialised agencies such as *International Fund for Agriculture Development* (IFAD), *Food and Agriculture Organisation* (FAO), *United Nations Children’s Fund* (UNICEF), *United Nations Educational and SCientific Organization* (UNESCO), the *World Meteorological Organisation* (WMO), the *United Nations University* (UNU) and others, work on the same line. Finally, we should mention the convention secretariats such as *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC), *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD), and *United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification* (UNCCD), the *UN Forum on Forests Secretariat* and other administrative bodies entrusted with managing international regimes of environmental concern. Last but not least, the *World Bank* has enlarged its environmental efforts. This orderly disorder of agencies, bodies, and regimes working in the field of sustainable development requires particular attention. The institutional picture of global environmental governance reveals a number of organizational pathologies, i.e. an ineffective and certainly also inefficient multiplication of efforts due to a multitude of actors and agents involved. In addition to the above-described approach to upgrade UNEP into a specialised organization, a number of other proposals for reform have been submitted, amongst which are the so-called mainstreaming approach – ‘*greening the IMF/ World Bank and the WTO*’ – or the foundation of a completely new world organization for sustainable development, which would render UNEP and UNDP obsolete, but maybe even take over the existing conventions and regimes.

Even though there seems to be a consensus for strengthening the institutional dimension of international environmental governance, the proposals vary widely (UNU/IAS 2002; Bauer/Biermann 2005; Rechkemmer 2005b). Some argue that

*THE INSTITUTIONAL PICTURE OF GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE REVEALS A NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONAL PATHOLOGIES.*

*IT IS IMPORTANT TO  
ACHIEVE A MORE SOCIETY-  
CENTRED VIEW OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
GOVERNANCE FOR THE  
21ST CENTURY.*

the existing institutions are sufficient, but, given the necessary political will, have to be used in a much better way. From this perspective, the above mentioned fragmented and complex structures have their own advantage in that they are sensitive to specific problems – ranging from the very global level, e.g. for climate change, to very concrete areas of intervention, e.g. the protection of specific endangered species in various world regions – and in being able to deal with them in a flexible manner.<sup>11</sup> Proponents of extensive reform of the existing structures call for a UNEP featuring a much broader mandate, a more legitimate basis – such as universal membership – and enhanced financial support (Biermann 2005 : 182). Far-reaching voices even claim that UNEP should be able to act as a counterpart to the WTO and the World Bank/ IMF. While different steps of strengthening UNEP are proposed and do already exist, in the end the transformation of UNEP into a UN specialised agency, or in other words, into the UN Environment Organization (UNEO), is the most prominent position within this group.

This latter proposal is heavily criticised by its opponents, often even arguing against positions which have never been raised. For instance, no one who is in favour of the creation of a specialised agency seriously wants to build up a highly centralised bureaucracy whose only surplus would be of symbolic nature (Biermann/Simonis 1999 : 3-11). One outspoken opponent to a World Environment Organisation, Konrad von Moltke, suggested through his *clustering concept* a reform perspective that is very radical in many ways (Moltke 2002). With his focus on functional clusters aiming at regrouping multilateral agreements and single secretariats, such as the ones on the atmosphere or the marine environment, into a few activity centres, he cuts across well established organisational lines and proposes a position that is hardly likely to be implemented within the coming years. The same applies to Adil Najam, who opts for global governance and partnership based solutions (Najam 2002). Of course, it is important to achieve a more society centred view of environmental governance for the 21st century under the academic auspices of global governance concepts. However, Najam's major concern – to save and revitalise the Rio compact between developed and developing countries on sustainable development – will be poorly considered without stronger institutions for environmental governance.

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<sup>11</sup> See the contributions of Thomas Gehring and Sebastian Oberthür, as well as of Adil Najam in the mentioned: Bauer / Biermann 2005.



## 4.2 Reform Approaches

As a whole, one can distinguish four major types of proposals for *International Environmental Governance* (IEG) reform. For the sake of analytical clarity, it is useful to present them as follows (Brunnengräber 2004: 12-16):

1. *'Mainstreaming Approach'*: To integrate ecological aspects and considerations into already existing and preferably powerful international organisations, e.g. "greening the WTO", is the main objective of this approach. Such an effort has been pushed by several NGOs and academics over the past years;

2. *'Global Governance Approach'*: Stemming from the theoretical concept of "global governance", this approach highlights the rising importance of nongovernmental actors as players in the field of global environmental governance. NGOs, transnational corporations, trade unions, and the epistemic community are the most prominent actors amongst them. As a result of this, a postmodern governance structure has to involve these actors more extensively, and will replace the common state-centric view by a more people oriented or society centred one. Proponents of this position are most sceptical about the creation of a World Environment Organisation;

3. *'Upgrading Approach'*: The main objective of this approach is to strengthen UNEP as the already existing 'global player' in the field of the environment. This position is based on a stepwise approach starting with broadening the financial, and personnel capacities of UNEP, and also, where appropriate, the mandate of the Programme. To reach higher compliance and enforcement power, UNEP's ability to provide firm political guidance has to be improved by raising the profile of environmental concerns to ministerial levels. Finally, the legitimacy needs to be enhanced by moving towards universal membership, given that UNEP is currently headed by its Governing Council consisting of only 58 elected UN member states. In the last five years some progress has been made in each of the mentioned areas; and

4. *'Specialized Agency Approach'*: This approach favours the creation of a World Environment Organisation as a specialised agency within the UN system, which would change the current status of UNEP – being only a UN Programme subordinated to the UN Economic and Social Council – into a specialised organisation of the UN family. Some supporters of the specialised agency approach even

*THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTED AT ITS 53RD SESSION TWO MAJOR INNOVATIONS: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT GROUP (EMG), AND THE GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM (GMEF).*

suggest establishing an all-encompassing organization, swallowing existing agencies and autonomous regimes with their convention secretariats. Even more far-reaching postulations highlight that it is high time to fulfil the major policy shift established in Rio 1992 and integrate the institutional realm of environment and development under one super organisation for sustainable development (Biermann/Simonis 1999).

#### **4.3 The Actual Political Processes: UNEP Upgrade, UNEO Initiative**

At this point in time the latter proposal is mostly of a theoretical nature, but, as described further above, some momentum for a more far-reaching reform within the institutional dimension of global environmental governance exists. In 1998 a task force on global environmental governance was established, led by Klaus Töpfer, the current Executive Director of UNEP. Far from being the “big break-through”, this was a starting point for a new institutional reform process galvanising around the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. The task force’s proposals, which were adopted by the UN General Assembly at its 53rd session (UNGA A/53/242), brought about two major innovations, mainly dealing with coordination and harmonisation of environmental and sustainable development matters within the UN as well as stronger political guidance and visibility:

- The establishment of the *Environmental Management Group (EMG)* to coordinate activities dealing with the environment within the UN; and
- The *Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF)*, a high level forum consisting of the Ministers of the Environment, widely recognised as successful.

The GMEF has been convening since 2000, held back-to-back with the UNEP Governing Council. It provides a good opportunity to make sure that the “voice of the environment” is being heard. Building up on these efforts, in February 2001 the open-ended *Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or their Representatives / International Environmental Governance (IGM/IEG)* was created and presented its proposals on the third GMEF in 2002 in Cartagena. The so-called Cartagena package (UNEP/GC SS. VII/1), which was also highlighted within the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, strengthened the political power of the GMEF and proposed the implementation of the already mentioned principle of univer-

sal membership of UNEP's Governing Council (GC). This step is highly contested, since opponents fear that this would be the first move towards a World Environment Organisation.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, the UNEP Governing Council in February this year had to postpone the envisaged decision on this issue for another year to 2006, because no consensus has been reached so far. While the issue of strengthening the scientific basis of UNEP also lags behind the intended schedule, in December 2004 a very promising step was taken. The so-called Bali-Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building was finalised and subsequently adopted at the Governing Council in February 2005. This was a major step forward to meet the provisions of the Cartagena package and an important accommodation to the agenda of developing countries. Even though the financial situation of UNEP is still precarious, the voluntary indicative scale of contributions, initiated by Klaus Töpfer, proved to be very good in the first years, and the budget for the biennium 2006/2007 is, with an amount of US\$144 million, the largest ever.<sup>13</sup>

In autumn 2003, France proposed the establishment of an informal working group to consider the transforming of UNEP into a UNEO. The French proposal is based on four main guidelines: the preservation of the environment as a key issue for collective security; the degradation of the environment as a threat to development; the need for a multilateral response; and the important and privileged role of the United Nations in this respect. The working group following the principles of geographical balance and diversity of analysis on the issue was launched in February 2004 in New York. 26 countries initially accepted to take part, without specifying their positions on the creation of a UNEO. Between February 2004 and March 2005, the group met regularly to follow up. A meeting on the issue at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs was held in New York in September 2004. Several meetings of Environment Ministers were held during international meetings and in particular in April 2005, within the framework of Commission on Sustainable Development 13 (CSD). The initial phase of the group's deliberations was devoted to an analysis of the various weaknesses and oppor-

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TRANSFORMATION OF  
UNEP INTO A UNEO.*

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12 Issue paper concerning the question of universal membership prepared for the 8th special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme: Note by the Executive Director: UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/11.

13 On UNEP's history, performance and reform prospects see the excellent article Ivanova 2005.

*TRANSFORMING UNEP  
INTO A UNITED  
NATIONS SPECIALISED  
AGENCY SHOULD  
IMPROVE EFFECTIVE  
IMPLEMENTATION.*

tunities of the current system of *International Environmental Governance (IEG)*. The second phase, in late 2004 and early 2005, was dedicated to an initial analysis of concrete options for addressing the weaknesses identified. Four main observations on gaps and weaknesses were identified:

- severe problems of coherence and efficiency;
- gaps in scientific expertise, early warning systems, and information;
- specific needs of developing countries not sufficiently taken into account;
- complexity of existing sources of financing.

The majority view of the group members and UNEO proponents alike is that the creation of a UNEO should be achieved by transforming UNEP – and not by establishing a new body parallel to UNEP. Such a process of transformation should be seen as an enhanced plan to implement the Cartagena recommendations. The UNEO headquarters should remain in Nairobi (Töpfer 2005). The legal autonomy of the main conventions should be maintained. The UNEO would not have a mandate for standard setting similar to the WTO. In particular, a UNEO should result in:

- the strengthening of coherence and efficiency of the current international system, including the regional dimension;
- enhanced scientific expertise, information and early warning systems on environmental deterioration;
- responses to the specific needs of developing countries in order to ensure that the environment fully contributes to their sustainable development; and
- resolving financial aspects such as rationalizing efforts in order to mobilize additional resources to assist developing countries.

The working group considered giving more visibility and legitimacy to international efforts in the area of the environment, reducing the risks of loss of coherence and efficiency related to the number of fora and the dispersed nature of multilateral environmental agreements, contributing to capacity building in developing countries, so that they are in a better position to implement the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA)*, and strengthening scientific expertise in order to provide Member States with the best choices. Group members also elaborated the following proposals: institutional structure of a UNEO should ensure the

legitimacy of decisions made by Member States, and it should give the organisation the capacity to fulfil its mandate. Transforming UNEP into a United Nations specialised agency should guarantee effective implementation. Based on existing models, the following institutional components could be proposed: an Assembly whose membership is universal; a Director-General elected by this Assembly; an executive board; a secretariat created out of UNEP's secretariat; and strengthened regional offices. After conclusion of the working group's deliberations, the initiative was referred to the diplomatic channels. Observers expect the group of UNEO supporters to further grow. France and other proponents, e.g. Germany, will seek opportunities to broaden the basis for an intergovernmental initiative for the establishment of a UNEO by a two-thirds majority vote in the United Nations General Assembly. The *Millennium Development Goals* (MDG), the Plus Five Conference in September 2005, plus the 60th session of the UNGA will provide further momentum as do the three reports for UN reform mentioned further above. Independently from ongoing political discussions, efforts and proposals, this volume aims to cover a wide range of relevant issues, desiderata and goals to be discussed and analysed within the framework of IEG reform, UNEP upgrade and the UNEO initiative. The following crucial issues, inter alia, appear indispensable for the forthcoming talks:

- Implementation of the concept of IEG reform requires adherence to the following strategy: the Cartagena package has to be adopted and implemented in the coming years – in addition, the UNEO establishment process should be taken into consideration;
- The various needs and concerns of developing countries will have to constitute an important cornerstone of any future deliberations upon strengthening global environmental politics and institutional reform: in this context issues of financing and capacity strengthening are crucial: the Rio compact of sustainable development has to be maintained throughout; and
- Reformed and enhanced environmental governance at global level requires profound substance and capacity building as concerns its scientific and advisory base; the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC) may serve as a blueprint when designing an advisory body (Vlek 2005) as part of a UNEO architecture (Ecologic 2005).

*REFORMED AND ENHANCED ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AT GLOBAL LEVEL REQUIRES PROFOUND SUBSTANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING AS CONCERNS ITS SCIENTIFIC AND ADVISORY BASE.*

*KOFI ANNAN CREATED THE HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON THREATS, CHALLENGES AND CHANGE TO GENERATE NEW IDEAS ABOUT THE KINDS OF POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONS REQUIRED FOR THE UN TO BE EFFECTIVE IN THE 21ST CENTURY.*

## **5. Current Agendas for UN Reform: The Status of Environment and Human Security**

Under the impression of the Iraq war in 2003, the post-war situation in Iraq, and particularly as regards the severe crisis of the United Nations system and the functioning of international law caused by the circumstances under which these developments occurred, Secretary-General Kofi Annan launched an important initiative whose goal was elaborating a comprehensive agenda for overall reform of the UN and the international system – based on analysis of the new threats and challenges for humanity in the changing environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In his address to the General Assembly in September 2003, Annan warned member states that the UN had reached a fork in the road. It could rise to the challenge of meeting new threats or it could risk erosion in the face of mounting discord between states and unilateral action by them. He created the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change to generate new ideas about the kinds of policies and institutions required for the UN to be effective in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This initiative was meant to bring about two reform reports:

- one elaborated by the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel, issued in December 2004; and
- the Secretary-General's own agenda released in March 2005.

Both were drafted in the forefront of the Millennium +5 Summit and the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNGA, respectively, in September 2005. Two further reports compliment the named contributions, highlighting issues related to the MDGs:

- the Sachs Report on the UN Millennium Project; and
- the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA)*.

These four strategies altogether aim to provide a meaningful, comprehensive matrix. Based thereon, the international community is asked to deliberate so as to eventually take decisions towards significant reform measures of a structural and substantive nature alike. In the following, the four agendas will be introduced briefly, with a particular focus on the aspects of environmental change and/or human security.

### **5.1 The High-Level Panel Report. “A More Secure World” (UNGA A/59/565)**

The Panel comprised 16 eminent personalities whose mandate was to elaborate a detailed agenda for a strength-



ened United Nations and the international system, enabled to secure collective security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In its report, the High-Level Panel sets out a bold, new vision of collective security. We live in a world of new and evolving threats that could not have been anticipated when the UN was founded in 1945, e.g. nuclear terrorism, state collapse, poverty, disease, and civil war. According to the Panel, there are six clusters of threats with which the world must be concerned now and in the decades ahead:

- economic and social threats, including poverty, infectious diseases and environmental degradation;
- inter-state conflict;
- internal conflict, including civil war, genocide, and other large-scale atrocities
- nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons;
- terrorism; and
- transnational Organised Crime.

The main target of the UN Charter is to provide collective security for all. The Panel Report highlights the continuing relevance of the idea of collective security today, emphasizing the growing vulnerability of the world's citizens. The new concept of *human security* relates to the holistic approach the report undertakes towards its classification of threats. Those are obviously no longer solely the ones identified by the UN Charter in 1945. „*The threats are from non-State actors as well as States, and to human security as well as State security*“ (High-Level Panel Report 2004: 11). In contrast to more traditional conceptions of security, the report identified the named six clusters. Emphasis is placed on the importance of promoting development as the 'indispensable foundation for a collective security system that takes prevention seriously.' The report calls on all states to recommit to the goals of eradicating poverty, achieving sustained economic growth, and promoting sustainable development. More specifically, it calls for donors to establish a timetable for reaching the 0.7 per cent gross national product target for ODA, for greater debt relief and improved access to global markets for poorer countries, for more resources to be channeled to combat HIV/AIDS, and for new initiatives to assist in the development of public health systems and to help tackle global warming.

Which role environmental matters play as a whole for collective, i.e. human security? Paragraph 22 states:

*THE MAIN TARGET OF THE UN CHARTER IS TO PROVIDE COLLECTIVE SECURITY FOR ALL. [...]THE HLP REPORT PERCEIVES GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE AS A MAJOR THREAT TO HUMAN SECURITY.*

*THE SECRETARY-  
GENERAL'S REPORT  
PERCEIVES THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL STATE  
AS A NEW CHALLENGE  
AND THREAT FOR  
COLLECTIVE SECURITY.*

Poverty, infectious disease, environmental degradation and war feed one another in a deadly cycle. Poverty [...] is strongly associated with the outbreak of civil war [...]. Such diseases as malaria and HIV/AIDS continue to cause large numbers of deaths and reinforce poverty. Disease and poverty, in turn, are connected to environmental degradation; climate change exacerbates the occurrence of such infectious disease as malaria and dengue fever. Environmental stress, caused by large populations and shortages of land and other natural resources, can contribute to civil violence. (High-Level Panel Report 2004: 20)

The report perceives global environmental change as a major threat to human security; environmental degradation is thus listed under cluster one. For instance, global warming is perceived as a threat to human health (through growing infectious diseases), and the depletion of natural resources such as land is being linked with civil violence due to population pressure. It is important to note that environmental degradation is not only linked with other phenomena of the same cluster, but also with topics listed under different clusters. Environmental change is therefore given a much higher significance than often perceived: the explicit link to civil unrest or war speaks for itself. The nexus *environment and human security* is definitely stressed as relevant for a reformed and strengthened UN and international system by the High-Level Panel.

Human development is interpreted as prerequisite for human security throughout:

In describing how to meet the challenge of prevention, we begin with development because it is the indispensable foundation for a collective security system that takes prevention seriously. It serves multiple functions. It helps combat the poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation that kill millions and threaten human security." (High-Level Panel Report 2004 : 25)<sup>14</sup>

## **5.2 Report of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan "In Larger Freedom" (Annan 2005)**

Annan delivers analysis of the actual needs with regard to a strengthened international system. His report is perceived as an *agenda of highest priorities*, while other issues, namely the environmental agenda as a whole, are supposed to be treated in other fora. The overarching goal and target is the *triangle*

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<sup>14</sup> See also: Prins 2005; Annan 2004; Bogardi/Brauch 2005 and Brauch 2005



*of development, freedom and peace.* In the author's view, the issues of development, security, and human rights are the major threats to collective human well-being, and will constitute the cornerstones of the future system as well as of any collective measures aiming at UN reform. The Secretary-General report does not explicitly link up the factors *environment* and *security* to the working field *environment and human security* as particularly relevant for the UN reform agenda. However, the environmental state is perceived as a new challenge and threat for collective security. Environmental issues are mostly treated in connection with development aid, the MDGs and institutional reform of the UN system.

The most prominent link to environmental matters can be found under the heading „Governance of the Global Environment“ (Annan 2005:51), in Section V:

212. Given the number and complexity of international agreements and agencies that cover it, the environment poses particular challenges to coherence. There are now more than 400 regional and universal multilateral environmental treaties in force, covering a broad range of environmental issues, including biodiversity, climate change and desertification. The sectoral character of these legal instruments and the fragmented machinery for monitoring their implementation make it harder to mount effective responses across the board. There is a clear need to streamline and consolidate our efforts to follow up and implement these treaties. Already in 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, emphasized the need for a more coherent institutional framework of international environmental governance, with better coordination and monitoring. It is now high time to consider a more integrated structure for environmental standard-setting, scientific discussion and monitoring treaty compliance. This should be built on existing institutions, such as the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as the treaty bodies and specialized agencies. Meanwhile, environmental activities at the country level should benefit from improved synergies, on both normative and operational aspects, between United Nations agencies, making optimal use of their comparative advantages, so that we have an integrated approach to sustainable development, in which both halves of that term are given their due weight.

This paragraph relates to the ongoing intergovernmental discussions highlighted in Chapter 4 of this publication. Even without the explicit mentioning of the UNEO initiative, it is easy to grasp the notion of Annan's statement, which is in favour of a strengthened, synergetic and more coherent structure for global environmental governance – possibly

*“THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AS A WHOLE IS STILL NOT DELIVERING SERVICES IN THE COHERENT, EFFECTIVE WAY THAT THE WORLD'S CITIZENS NEED AND DESERVE” (ANNAN 2005)*

built around UNEP as its gravity centre. More substantive remarks on the relation between environmental change and human security are made, among others, under Section II: natural hazards due to environmental change are described as hitting the poorest much more dramatically than industrialized countries. Annan recalls the importance of the environmental dimension for achieving the MDGs (see in particular Goal 7). The environment is perceived as one dimension of a multi-dimensional conception of human development:

41. Countries should adopt time-bound environmental targets, particularly for such priorities as forest replanting, integrated water resources management, ecosystem preservation and curbing pollution. To achieve targets, increased investments in environmental management need to be accompanied by broad policy reforms. Progress also depends on sector strategies, including strategies for agriculture, infrastructure, forestry, fisheries, energy and transport, which all require environmental safeguards. Further, improving access to modern energy services is critical for both reducing poverty and protecting the environment. There is also a need to ensure that enhancing access to safe drinking water and sanitation forms as part of development strategies.

The report relates environmental degradation with development and collective security, the latter also mentioned within the context of natural catastrophes such as the recent tsunami in the Indian Ocean. He calls for a strengthened humanitarian response system (p. 49). Institutionally, apart from the described idea of enhancing the environmental governance system, Annan calls for a strengthened ECOSOC:

177. Third, there is a need to address economic and social challenges, threats and crises as and when they occur. To this end, the Council should convene timely meetings, as required, to assess threats to development, such as famines, epidemics and major natural disasters, and to promote coordinated responses to them.

Furthermore, under Section D, more systematic coherence and streamlining, avoiding duplication of efforts are proposed:

196. These efforts have paid significant dividends by enabling the various agencies to work more closely together at the country level, both with each other and with other partners, such as the World Bank. Nevertheless, the United Nations system as a whole is still not delivering services in the coherent, effective way that the world's citizens need and deserve.

Summarized are as follows the most pertinent concrete reform proposals (Annan 2005: 56):

I. (k) Recognize the need for significantly increased international support for scientific research and development to address the special needs of the poor in the areas of health, agriculture, natural resource and environmental management, energy and climate; (l) Ensure concerted global action to mitigate climate change, including through technological innovation, and therefore resolve to develop a more inclusive international framework for climate change beyond 2012, with broader participation by all major emitters and both developing and developed countries, taking into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities; (m) Resolve to establish a worldwide early warning system for all natural hazards, building on existing national and regional capacity. II. (a) Affirm and commit themselves to implementing a new security consensus based on the recognition that threats are interlinked, that development, security and human rights are mutually interdependent, that no State can protect itself acting entirely alone and that all States need an equitable, efficient and effective collective security system; and therefore commit themselves to agreeing on, and implementing, comprehensive strategies for confronting the whole range of threats, from international war through weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, State collapse and civil conflict to deadly infectious disease, extreme poverty and the destruction of the environment. IV. (i) Mandating the Economic and Social Council to hold annual ministerial level assessments of progress towards agreed development goals, particularly the Millennium Development Goals.

### **5.3 Report on the UN Millennium Project** (UN Millennium Project 2005a)

This so-called Jeffrey D. Sachs report is foremost about poverty eradication and human development. Environmental matters are being taken care of throughout the whole report. Through the consequent and coherent mentioning of the nexus between the environment and issues of human development such as poverty, economic under-development and health, the factor 'environment' is perceived as crucial for human development and, implicitly, also human security:

A healthy environment underpins human life and well-being by providing food, clean water, disease control, and protection from natural disasters – and is thus necessary to achieve each Goal. But the environment is under threat in all parts of the world because of rising pollution, soil degradation (including rapid desertification), deforestation, destruction of coastal and freshwater fisheries, rising water scarcity, and declining biodiversity. Anthropogenic climate change, already causing

*“THE DEGRADATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT THREATENS THE VERY BASIS OF SUSTAINED ECONOMIC GROWTH, PARTICULARLY WHERE AGRICULTURE ACCOUNTS FOR A LARGE SHARE OF NATIONAL INCOME”  
(UN MILLENNIUM PROJECT 2005)*

*THE MILLENNIUM  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS  
ARE SEEN AS UNIVERSAL  
TARGETS FOR INTER-  
NATIONAL AND NATIONAL  
SECURITY AND STABILITY.*

environmental change, is projected to threaten agricultural productivity in many parts of the developing world, spread vector-borne diseases, and lead to a rise in sea levels and a higher incidence of natural disasters. Environmental degradation and the effects of climate change are therefore major development issues. Most countries cannot wait until they reach higher incomes before investing in better environmental management. The degradation of the environment threatens the very basis of sustained economic growth, particularly where agriculture accounts for a large share of national income (Sachs 2005: 90).

Especially the Millennium Project's 'Task Force on Environmental Sustainability', which named their report contribution *Environment and Human Well-being: a Practical Strategy*, systematically relates the MDGs with environmental matters and underpins the importance of a healthy human environment for all aspects and dimensions of development and thus security.<sup>15</sup> More specific on security aspects, the Sachs report states:

Extreme poverty can be defined as "poverty that kills," depriving individuals of the means to stay alive in the face of hunger, disease, and environmental hazards. When individuals suffer from extreme poverty and lack the meager income needed even to cover basic needs, a single episode of disease, or a drought, or a pest that destroys a harvest can be the difference between life and death. In households suffering from extreme poverty, life expectancy is often around half that in the high-income world, 40 years instead of 80 (UN Millennium Project 2005a: 4).

The Millennium Development Goals are seen as universal targets for international and national security and stability. Through this link, the environmental dimension of human development is once more tabled as prerequisite for human security:

The Goals not only reflect economic targets, global justice, and human rights—they also are vital to international and national security and stability, as emphasized by the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change (UN 2004a). Poor and hungry societies are much more likely than high-income societies to fall into conflict over scarce vital resources, such as watering holes and arable land—and over scarce natural resources, such as oil, diamonds, and timber. Many world leaders in recent years have rightly stressed the powerful relationship between poverty reduction and global security... (UN Millennium Project 2005a: 4; 15)

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<sup>15</sup> See recommendations 7 and 10 of the task force's report.

In its conclusion, the Sachs report refers to the High-Level Panel and stresses once more the triangular link between environment, development and security:

In laying out tangible targets, the Goals make explicit the most obvious costs of inaction—in terms of lives and opportunities lost. They also form a centerpiece for the world's security agenda. As the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change and many others have noted, human development and environmental management are intricately linked to peace and security. Only by reducing poverty and improving environmental management over the coming decades can a rise in conflicts and state failures be averted. If the Goals are not met, millions will die who would otherwise live. Countries that would be stable will descend into conflict. And the environment will continue to be degraded. In short, many crises we face today will only be more pronounced and expensive to resolve in 10 years unless the world starts investing in the MDGs straight away. (UN Millennium Project 2005a: 262)

#### **5.4 The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: Synthesis Report “Ecosystems and Human Well-being” (UN Report 2005)<sup>16</sup>**

One of the main theses the report is dealing with is that of ecosystem services. As noted in the preface of the Summary for Policy Makers:

Everyone in the world depends completely on Earth's ecosystems and the services they provide, such as food, water, disease management, climate regulation, spiritual fulfillment, and aesthetic enjoyment.

The Millennium Assessment is trying to give an overview on the significance of these services, and on how changes on the environment can affect local populations, especially poor people. It presents several links between ecosystem services and different constituents of well-being (UN Report 2005: VI). The report names three major problems

associated with our management of the world's ecosystem. Approximately 60% (15 out of 24) of the ecosystem services examined are being degraded, including fresh water, capture fisheries, air and water purification, and the regulation of regional and local climate, natural hazards, and pests. There is established but incomplete evidence that changes being made in ecosystems are increasing the likelihood of nonlinear changes in ecosystems that have important consequences for

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<sup>16</sup> See at: < <http://www.maweb.org/proxy/document.356.aspx>>

*THE CHANGES THAT ECOSYSTEMS HAVE UNDERGONE CONTRIBUTED TO HUMAN WELL-BEING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. YET, THESE GAINS HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED AT GROWING COSTS IN THE FORM OF THE DEGRADATION OF MANY ECOSYSTEM SERVICES.*

*THE MILLENNIUM ASSESSMENT MAKES CLEAR THAT THE ONGOING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THE ENVIRONMENT POSES A THREAT TO REACHING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS.*

human well-being. The harmful effects of the degradation of ecosystem services are being borne disproportionately by the poor, are contributing to growing inequities and disparities across groups of people, and are sometimes the principal factor causing poverty and social conflict. (UN Report 2005: 1)

The Assessment states as follows: the changes that ecosystems have undergone contributed to substantial net gains in human well-being and economic development. Yet, these gains have been achieved at growing costs in the form of the degradation of many ecosystem services, increased risks of nonlinear changes, and the exacerbation of poverty for some groups of people. These problems, unless addressed, will substantially diminish the benefits that future generations obtain from ecosystems. The degradation of ecosystem services could grow significantly worse during the first half of this century and is a barrier to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The challenge of reversing the degradation of ecosystems while meeting increasing demands for their services can be partially met under some scenarios that the MA has considered, but these involve significant changes in policies, institutions, and practices that are not currently underway. Many options exist to conserve or enhance specific ecosystem services in ways that reduce negative trade-offs or that provide positive synergies with other ecosystem services.

The Millennium Assessment makes clear that the ongoing behaviour towards the environment poses a threat to reaching the Millennium Development Goals:

Already, many of the regions facing the greatest challenges in achieving the MDGs coincide with those facing significant problems of ecosystem degradation. Rural poor people, a primary target of the MDGs, tend to be most directly reliant on ecosystem services and most vulnerable to changes in those services. (UN Report 2005: 2)

There exists already a threat to human security from underdevelopment, which will be increasing, depending on the future destruction rate of local ecosystem services.<sup>17</sup> There are two services, one of whom is of exceeding importance closely linked to this matter: *“The use of two ecosystem services—capture fisheries and fresh water—is now well beyond levels that can be sustained even at current demands, much less future ones.”* (UN Report 2005: 6) In the past,

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<sup>17</sup> Page 61 gives additional brief insight into connections between the Millennium Assessment and the MDGs.



trying to increase one service often decreased others. As an example, the report mentions increased food production combined with decreased water supply.

The Millennium Assessment pays attention to connections between environment and security, while security includes “*secure access to natural and other resources, personal safety, and security from natural and human-made disasters*” (UN Report 2005: V). It defines “human well-being” as consistent of five main components: “The basic material needs for a good life, health, good social relations, security, and freedom of choice and action.” (UN Report 2005: 50)

By security, we refer to safety of person and possessions, secure access to necessary resources, and security from natural and human-made disasters. Changes in regulating services such as disease regulation, climate regulation, and flood regulation have very strong influences on security. Changes in provisioning services such as food and water have strong impacts on security, since degradation of these can lead to loss of access to these essential resources. Changes in cultural services can influence security since they can contribute to the breakdown or strengthening of social networks within society. Changes in supporting services have a strong influence by virtue of their influence on all the other categories of services. These benefits are moderately mediated by socioeconomic circumstances. The wealthy have access to some safety nets that can minimize the impacts of some ecosystem changes (such as flood or drought insurance). Nevertheless, the wealthy cannot entirely escape exposure to some of these changes in areas where they live. One example of an aspect of security affected by ecosystem change involves influences on the severity and magnitude of floods and major fires. The incidence of these has increased significantly over the past 50 years. Changes in ecosystems and in the management of ecosystems have contributed to these trends. The canalization of rivers, for example, tends to decrease the incidence and impact of small flood events and increase the incidence and severity of large ones. On average, 140 million people are affected by floods each year – more than all other natural or technological disasters put together. Between 1990 and 1999, more than 100,000 people were killed in floods, which caused a total of \$243 billion in damages. (UN Report 2005: 54)

*HOLISM VIS-À-VIS THE ENVIRONMENTAL AGENDA MEANS DEEPENING THE LINK BETWEEN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE AND THE AGENDA OF HUMAN SECURITY.*

## **6. Conclusions: Challenges and Opportunities for the Field of Environment and Human Security**

### **6.1 Strengthening the Security Dimension of Environmental Governance**

In designing any future international arrangements on environmental issues, it is important to take into account the contemporary political realities at the global level. A lot of governments' political attention is nowadays directed foremost to societal concerns such as economic, social and human development, poverty reduction, health, water and sanitation, food security, national security and statehood protection. In a number of countries, reduced political status, reduced budgets as well as reduced *Official Development Aid* (ODA) have hampered progress in the environmental management field. To ensure significant political support for any future objectives, it is thus a prerequisite to explicitly include the crucial issues of enhanced and sustainable management of complex ecosystems and natural resources into the societal agenda of developing countries and actual as well as potential donors.

The majority of background and discussion papers elaborated by developed countries tend to propose the following strategic objectives with regard to the global environmental agenda: (a) enhance the conservation of natural resources to ensure long-term benefits for people that depend on them; (b) secure high-level political support to mobilise financial and technical resources; (c) reduce degradation of natural resources and restore degraded areas to a productive state; and, (d) establish partnerships with constituencies external to natural resources to proof contributions of natural resources to the societal agenda of states (Maini /Jagmohan 2004). Notwithstanding the evident importance of these objectives, such exclusive approaches may not lead to an effectively reshaped and impact-driven new policy for global environmental management. More holistic requirements seem to be needed: the global targets of nature conservation, sustainable resource management, production and trade firstly have to be addressed in a balanced and integrated manner – harmonizing needs and objectives of recipients and donors, producers and consumers alike. Secondly, holism vis-à-vis the environmental agenda means deepening the link between global environmental change and the agenda of human security.

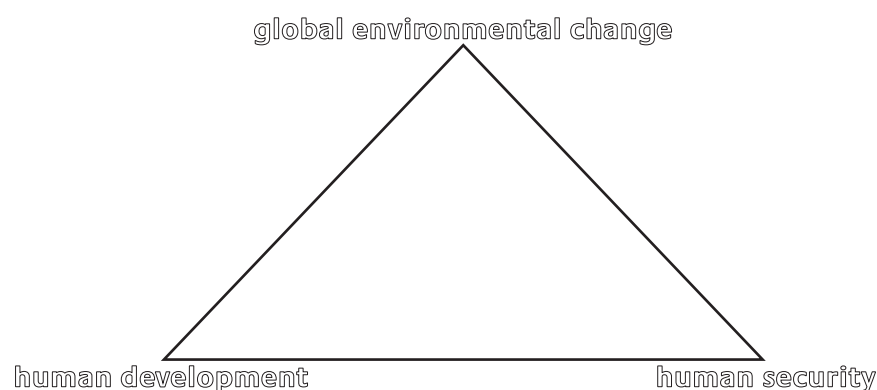


Sustainable development is about improving the quality of life for all of the Earth's citizens without increasing the use of natural resources and sinks beyond the capacity of the environment to supply them indefinitely. It underlies an understanding that action has consequences and that humanity must find innovative ways to change institutional structures and influence individual behaviour. It is about taking action, changing policy and practice at all levels, from the individual to the general or collective. The Brundtland definition also implies a very important shift from an idea of sustainability, as primarily ecological, to a framework that also emphasises the economic and social context of development. In this regard, since the *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* (UNCED), more responsibilities have been placed on states and civil society to protect local, national, sub regional, regional, and global environment, especially those which are the concern of entire communities such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, land degradation, desertification and deforestation. In other words, there was conceptualisation of a need for more effective implementation of conventions on environment and development, through integration with domestic law and policy. A number of examples clearly point out the human concerns and need for meaningful incentives for communities and individuals to achieve sustainable development.

It is commonly recognised that global environmental threats such as climate change and global warming are mainly produced in developed countries, and are thus part of the epiphenomena of globalisation, but have significant and often disastrous impact on developing countries. Loss of biodiversity, deforestation and desertification are among the most prominent ones, since rainfall patterns change significantly in arid, semiarid and dry sub humid areas. But this is not yet the end of the story. Desertification itself is a driving force for further downstream problems of severe magnitude, such as marginalisation of rural areas, economic disaster and poverty, migration, urbanisation, and social conflict, just to name some. There is, as has been mentioned above, a clear link between environmental issues, economic development, and more particular, human security. It was of utmost importance already at UNCED to understand what are the linkages, underlying forces, causes and effects or, in other words, to find an answer to the question: how can sustainable development and human security be obtained in the age of globalisation? How can the structures, trends and effects of a globalising world, be utilised to serve the needs of

those affected by natural/environmental and socio-economic disaster?

Analysis of the four reports examined in Chapter 5 provides the insight that a new paradigm shift for environmental governance is likely to be taking place – in analogy to the one initiated by the Brundtland report leading to UNCED and its outcomes as well as to the conception of sustainable development. Matters related to global environmental change should no longer be treated as a stand-alone, perceiving nature conservation as a good for itself, nor should environmental care be perceived as depending on a certain given state of domestic economic development. The Brundtland nexus between environment and development, which implies mutual interdependence, should not be given up. Moreover, the factor of human security should be systematically added to the matrix of sustainable development, bringing about a triangular understanding of the inter-relatedness of environmental change, development, and human security:



Without any doubt, the human dimension of global environmental change has meanwhile more than ever before entered the focus of science and policy makers alike. The link between global environmental change and human security has nowadays become part of the portfolio of a number of departments and agencies of the United Nations system. In some cases, it constitutes a major, in others, a minor target area. There is evidence that the level of attention towards the working field / issue area in question has gained, yet is of a growing nature.

## 6.2 Final Remarks

The year 2005 has brought momentum into two important reform projects: the one that foresees the strengthening of the institutional architecture of global environmental governance through a step-wise upgrading process of UNEP

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HUMAN SECURITY.*

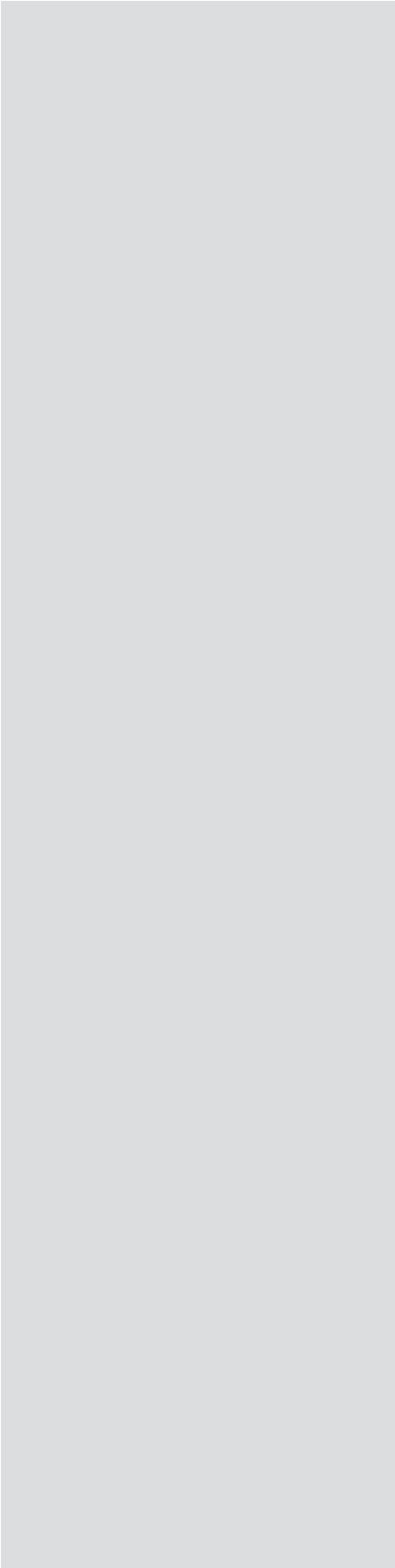
*THE HUMAN DIMENSION  
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or even the establishment of a UN Environment Organization (UNEO); and the one on reforming the overall UN system. Various political initiatives and processes, be they multi-lateral, nation-state based or initiated by the UN Secretary-General, are underway, and a number of scientific proposals have been tabled. However: while the concept of *Human Security* is perceived as a driver for overall UN reform – through a more holistic and interrelated understanding of the nature of threats and challenges to the international community in the future, thus shaping a new task portfolio for the United Nations –, it does not yet appear to have been fully integrated in the organisational as well as task related outfits of those UN agencies and bodies responsible for environmental concerns. Moreover, most of the reform agendas the United Nations are pursuing as a whole appear somewhat biased towards societal concerns while the environmental factor, although mentioned, is not fully recognised in its challenging dimension.

For both reform processes, mutually raised awareness appears to be a necessity. The environmental dimension of human security could still gain higher profile and awareness in those proposals and strategies aiming to reform and strengthen the United Nations system, e.g. the High-Level Panel Report, the Secretary-General's report of 21 March 2005, and the Sachs Report. On the other side, the aspect of human security appears to redeem more attention at the level of UN agencies in charge of global environment. Both ongoing reform processes, UNEP upgrade and UNEO initiative, could benefit from a stronger adherence to the cross-sectoral field of environment and human security. For ongoing implementation and/or negotiation processes of environmental agreements or programmes, the factor of human security should thus be underlined more so as to overcome the current gridlock in this context. For instance, the debate about upgrading UNEP and the UNEO initiative could gain further support and advocacy, also from developing countries, if their *raison d'être* would be derived more strongly from the nexus between environment and human security. The same logic may apply to existing multilateral agreements such as the Rio conventions. These could gain new momentum through a more holistic understanding as exposed by the triangle above.

The field of environment and human security thus has the potential to constitute the conceptual bridge between the two described processes, i.e. global environmental governance and UN reform. It appears to be prerequisite that the

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REFORM.*



mutual interdependence and causality between the three components described above – global environmental change, human development, human security – be further and deeper explored by scientists and policy makers. Through such holistic views, the here-to-fore parallel reform processes could experience integration, rendering the striving for more effective institutions responsible for the global environment as part and parcel of the efforts of the United Nations to build up a stronger system ready to effectively address the challenges of the 21st century.

## Abbreviations

ABHS	Advisory Board on Human Security
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COPs	Conferences of the Parties
CHS	Commission on Human Security
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
DAC	Development Cooperation Directorate of OECD
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs of UN
DEWA	Division of Early Warning and Assessment of UNEP
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EMG	Environmental Management Group
ENVSEC	Environment and Security Initiative
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
GA	General Assembly (of the United Nations)
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GMEF	Global Ministerial Environment Forum
GNP	Gross National Product
GRID/GPS	Global Resource Information Database/Global Positioning System of UNEP
HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
HLP	High-Level Panel
HSU	The Human Security Unit
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IATF/DR	Interagency Task Force on Disaster Reduction
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICSU	International Council for Science
IEG	International Environmental Governance
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
IGM	Intergovernmental Group of Ministers
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (of UN)
MAB	The Man and the Biosphere Programme (of UNESCO)
MARPOL	International Maritime Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment/ Multilateral Environment Agreement
NGO	Non-Governmental-Organisation
ODA	Official Development Aid
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/ Development Cooperation Directorate,
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

PPEW	Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning (of ISDR)
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCHE	United Nations Conference on the Human Environment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEO	United Nations Environment Organization
UNESCO	United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
(UN)GA	(United Nations) General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNTFHS	United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security
WBGU	German Advisory Council on Global Environmental Change (Wissenschaftlicher Beirat der Bundesregierung Globale Umweltveränderungen)
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre of UNEP
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WTO	World Trade Organization

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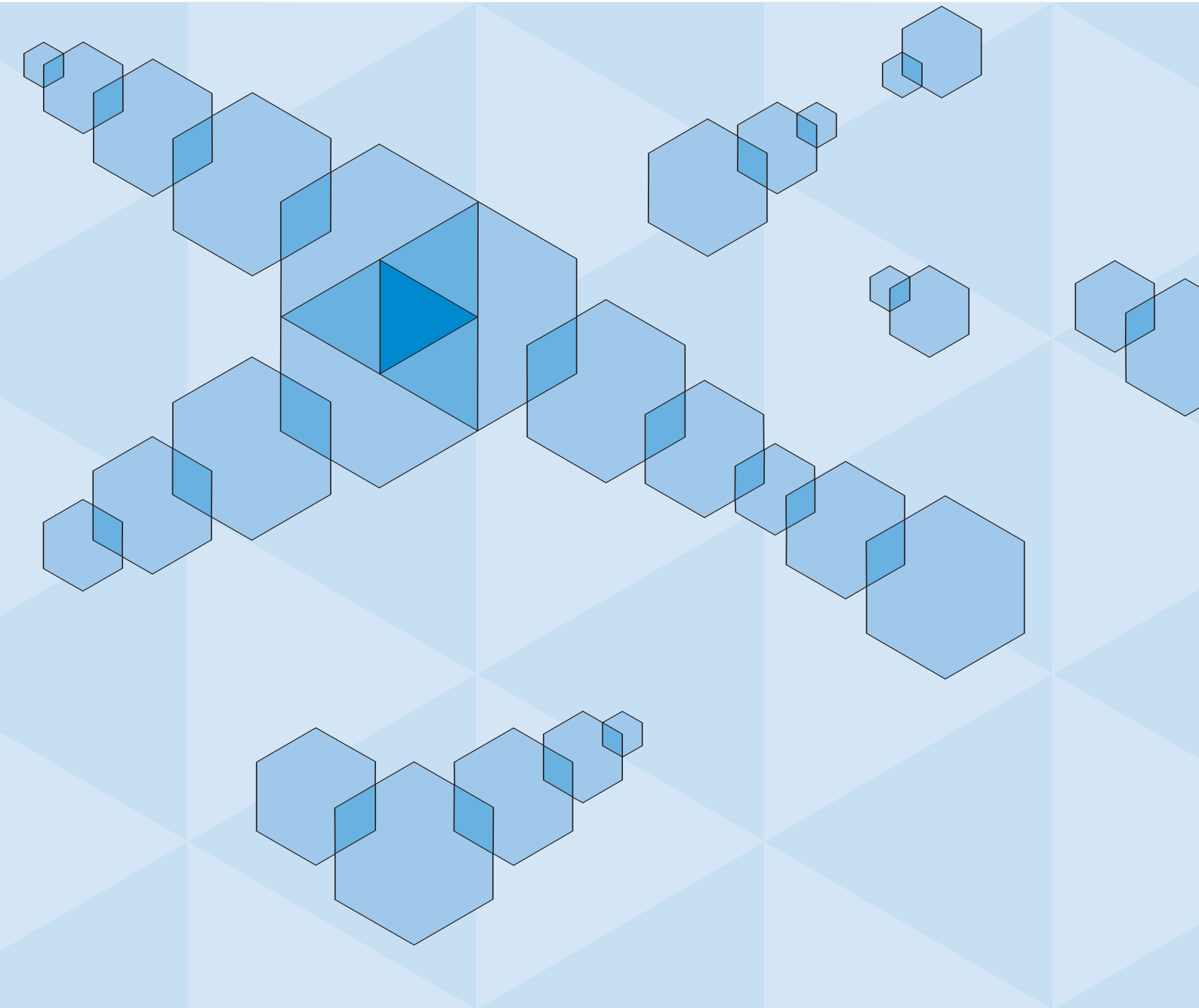
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