The Policy Process in International Environmental Governance

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Sheila Aggarwal-Khan

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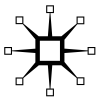

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Preface and Acknowledgements

There is growing criticism about the outcome of international environmental governance (IEG). Proposals to reform IEG continue to emerge. Some carry the same recommendations as 20 years ago. The reforms recommended, however, do not sufficiently contend with the social, economic and political factors underlying environmental problems. The extent to which the diverse agendas and interests of multiple actors affect IEG is underestimated.

This book represents an attempt to improve outcomes of IEG by understanding how people frame environmental problems in ways that represent their beliefs and agendas, shaping the design of policy and its direction. The book questions taken-for-granted practices in the policy processes of international institutions. It looks at the formal and informal practices that are routinely undertaken as part of the structure of international policy processes. The book analyses how people behave and with what outcome for IEG.

The starting point for this book was understanding the structure of policy processes and how and why people behave in certain ways within such structures. I am indebted to Piers Blaikie for his guidance and inspiration, which evolved this book from a simple 'technical study' to a perspective that included social behaviours and political and economic interests. I also especially thank Mike Stocking for his help in improving the structure, argument and presentation of this work.

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Foreword

The Policy Process in IEG provides an insight into why decisions taken by governments aimed at furthering environmental sustainability continue to fall short of the original aims and the challenges faced across the world.

It is written by someone who has witnessed the process of international environmental diplomacy, policymaking and national implementation of multilateral environment agreements first hand.

Sheila Aggarwal-Khan is well placed to provide her unique insight into why the system of international agreements has not made the decisive and transformational impact intended by many when first agreed.

A primary observation is the disconnect between nation states as to what they really wish to achieve through bodies such as the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and how this is transformed into language that at times can mean all things to all men and women.

Another observation is that many of those with knowledge on the challenges, including the relevance of policy and its implementation within nations and communities, may be failing to find their way into the negotiations, undercutting the effectiveness of the policy in the first place.

Through spotlighting the realities of international environment governance in the context of real-life settings in her native, Kenya — Lake Naivasha and Lake Elementita, for example — one glimpses the way different users and interests in the environment interpret global policy to fit their aims and perceptions of what it means.

In some ways it underlines the complexity of the environment as a single topic. In other ways it highlights how the international community and nation states need to do better to maximize the impact of the instruments agreed.

International Environment Governance is an issue that has preoccupied politicians, academics and civil society to varying levels of intensity as the world struggles to deliver sustainable development that balances economic, social and environmental interests internationally and at the level of the member state.

Ms. Aggarwal-Khan's illuminating book points to not one but multiple factors, from the original negotiation of an agreement to the

cultural and political contexts of countries down to the communities whose lives and livelihoods are requested to respond to such decisions, as all are part of the chain where the links between ambition and reality can be lost.

The book provides a thought-provoking and fresh analysis of the governance dilemma written by an esteemed colleague and staff member of UNEP who continues her work at the interface of theory and practice.

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General
and UNEP Executive Director

List of Acronyms

ACABQ	[United Nations] Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
CBD	[United Nations] Convention on Biological Diversity
CFCs	Chlorofluorocarbons
CITES	[United Nations] Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
COP	Conference of Parties
CoW	Committee of the Whole
CPC	[United Nations] Committee for Programme and Coordination
CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives
EEZ	Exclusive economic zone
EMG	Environment Management Group
EU	European Union
G77	Group of 77
GC	Governing Council
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEMS	[United Nations] Global Environmental Monitoring System
GMOs	Genetically modified organisms
IBAMA	Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources
IEG	International environmental governance
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IMC	International Minerals and Chemicals Corporation
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

ITTA	International Tropical Timber Agreement
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
IWG	Intergovernmental Working Group
KWS	Kenya Wildlife Service
LNMC	Lake Naivasha Management Committee
LNRA	Lake Naivasha Riparian Association
LNROA	Lake Naivasha Riparian Owners Association
LRTAP	Geneva Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution
MARPOL	Convention for the Prevention of Pollution by Ships
MEA	Multilateral environmental agreement
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NEMA	Kenya National Environment Management Authority
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODP	Ozone-depleting potential
ODS	Ozone-depleting substances
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIOS	[United Nations] Office of Internal Oversight Services
PoW	Programme of work
QAS	Quality Assurance Section
SBSTTA	[CBD] Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
SF	Strategic Framework
SWMTEP	[United Nations] System-Wide Medium-Term Environment Programme
UN	United Nations
UNCHE	United Nations Conference on the Human Environment
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEO	United Nations Environment Organization
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
USA	United States of America (also US (United States))
WGRIC	[CBD] Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention
WHC	World Heritage Convention
WWF	World Wildlife Fund