Environmental Governance Reading List

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Environmental Governance

- Readings have been categorised by sector, beginning with a key readings section on International Environmental Governance which is arranged according to history, current and future thinking.
- Readings are arranged alphabetically. Those in bold are those thought to be the most important though all those included are thought to be relevant and informative.
- Guidance is provided for key readings texts and some others in the list.

1. Key Readings: International (Global) Environmental Governance (GEG):

History of Global Environmental Governance

This detailed text displays familiarity with and understanding of the negotiation process of environmental issues within the United Nations. *Earth Negotiations* contains a review of historical examples rather than current analysis. It features eleven case studies of multinational treaties and conventions covering a wide range of environmental regimes. Each of the case studies analyzes the phases and turning points of the negotiations and how internal and external events influenced the resulting agreements. The main focus of the work is a meticulous analysis of the process of negotiation itself, from the development of the problem as part of international consciousness to the post-negotiation phases. This book includes information about the inner workings of the United Nations, but is quite specific and institutionally focused. Chasek’s analysis of the successes and failures of the historically cumbersome negotiating process reveals important insights that need to be accounted for when considering reform for institutions of international environmental governance.

Not much has been written on why and how the system for global environmental governance and the organization at its core – UNEP – were designed. Yet, a critical assumption has been reinforced in the literature and in policy circles, that UNEP was purposefully designed as a weak organization. The implications from this thinking are that reform is meaningless and futile.

The role of the United Nations in global environmental governance was determined in 1972 when a new international body for the global environment was created as a programme within the United Nations rather than as an autonomous specialized agency. A set of political dynamics between developed and developing countries led to the decisions on the functions, form, financing, and location of the new intergovernmental organization—the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). This article traces the historical roots of these choices and exposes the motivations behind them. The article debunks the myths that UNEP was created as weak and ineffective and opens a new line of analysis in the context of current UN environmental reform. If the system was not deliberately designed as ineffective, change in course becomes possible and even practical.
Present thinking on Global Environmental Governance

This volume approaches global environmental governance through analysis of the Kyoto process. Unlike the majority of the other texts concerning GEG, the editors of *International Environmental Policy* say that their skepticism about the potential effects of environmental change motivated them to write this book. Their stated purpose for writing this text is to explain how environmental policy that contradicts the interests of nations and people is inherently ineffective. To do this, the editors follow the Kyoto negotiation process from the 1980s when interest in climate change was just beginning through the final ratifications of Kyoto in 2001. Ultimately, the authors expand their analysis beyond the climate change regime to explore general problems associated with international environmental policy making. This is an interesting example of a GEG work because it begins from an unconventional starting point but uses the analytical style of academic international policy texts. While the analysis of only one environmental regime limits the usefulness of this work as a general GEG text, the criticisms it contains about the tactics and sophistication of the “green movement” are insightful and appropriate and should be recognized.

This volume is a true “introductory GEG text.” While the book is now nearly twelve years out of date, it addresses a wide range of issues including international relations theory and political economy, history of the global environmental movement, international environmental institutions, causes of environmental degradation, a brief discussion of climate change, and a critical section entitled “global ecology.” While the coverage is indeed broad, many of the issues discussed are only discussed briefly (~20 page chapters).

*Published: 2008*
This publication reports on an expert workshop held at Chatham house that aimed to find a way forward within ongoing discussions on reform of the International Environmental Governance (IEG) system. A particular goal was to consider how best the UK and EU can contribute to and facilitate progress on these issues. Key sections of this report are;
- Appendix 1: Building Blocks for Reform: options suggested in the informal consultations of the UN General Assembly and in the Chatham House IEG workshop.
  Session 1: What Needs To Be Fixed and What Are the Optimal Outcomes?
  Henrike Peichert, Ecologic.
  Session 2: Options and Implications
  Maria Ivanova, College of William and Mary, Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy.
  International Environmental Governance Workshop.
- Appendix 4: International Environmental Governance Workshop
  Assessing the return on political capital: how can we profit from the most recent round of discussions on international environmental governance?
  Jacob Werksman, World Resources Institute.
http://www.centerforunreform.org/node/251
Organizational multiplicity in the global environmental governance system has been cited by some as reflecting a productive overlap of goals and efforts and as indicative of fragmentation, conflict, and inefficiency by others. This article outlines a systematic approach to understanding the pros and cons of the multiplicity of organizations in global environmental governance. The basis for the analysis is a set of empirical data on the environmental activities of the forty-four international organizations which are members in the Environment Management Group. A preliminary result of an ongoing research project (see www.environmentalgovernance.org), this data set provides the first step toward an analytically based assessment of multiplicity and fragmentation. Future analysis will reveal a more nuanced picture, identify areas of complementarity and conflict, and point out possible collaborative initiatives.

This article analyses the potentially symbiotic role of business and the United Nations in global environmental governance. Contending that a stronger and more coherent UN in the realm of the environment is in the interest of the business community, the article focuses on three main issues: what the UN needs to become stronger in environmental affairs; what business could provide on this behalf; and how business could benefit from a strengthened UN. The authors consider the current structural dilemmas of the UN environmental system, including concerns about institutional multiplicity and how these may affect business engagement. After reflecting on perceived and actual challenges and opportunities for business participation, they conclude with three substantive solutions towards more efficient collaboration. These solutions centre on the continuation of an interactive database begun by the Global Environmental Governance Project, a joint initiative of the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy and the College of William and Mary.

This report assesses UNEP’s performance as an “anchor institution” for the global environment and identifies key factors that have shaped its performance over the past thirty years. Analysts of UNEP offer a wide range of opinions regarding the effectiveness of the organization, yet few of these statements are grounded in empirical evidence, as no systematic assessment of UNEP’s performance has been carried out to date. The report evaluates UNEP’s performance more systematically by examining three core functions – monitoring and assessment; agenda setting and policy processes; and capacity development. The report identifies four key factors that have limited UNEP’s ability to fulfill its mandate: formal status, governance, financing structure, and location. It also outlines institutional options and advances a set of concrete and operational recommendations for UNEP, as well as for governments.
The Future of Global Environmental Governance


This volume includes a well organized and well researched collection of essays focusing on the reform of the environmental policy making within the United Nations. Published by the Center for UN Reform Education, this collection of articles is divided into three sections: a description of current reform proposals and initiatives, analysis of the current structure of the system, and options for policy and institutional reform. This text is targeted towards an audience with understanding of the GEG system and more specifically the role of the United Nations in this system. The collection brings together a comprehensive overview of the current state of GEG within the United Nations. *Global Environmental Governance* presents an overview of different scholarly views on UN reform without promoting any specific agenda to readers.


*Emerging Forces in Environmental Governance* is a collection of essays analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the current institutional arrangement of the global environmental governance system. The topic of GEG reform is extremely well suited to treatment by a compilation of essays because this format allows for the inclusion and presentation of many original viewpoints. This compellation includes creative and progressive analysis of both the problems associated with the current institutional system as well as potential reforms. The book is well organized into subthemes that catalog interactions between the institutional system and various social, political, and economic variables. The focus on GEG institutions as part of an extensive and interactive system encourages discussion on the problems that developed as environmental policy has become more complex. Additionally, the editors encourage real consideration of both the costs and benefits associated with change in the international system. Understanding the pieces in this book requires significant knowledge of the GEG system, especially the institutional arrangements within the United Nations. This text would be best suited for supplemental use to address in depth specific issues within the institutional system of GEG.


This report focuses mostly on the current state of GEG and what should be done to remedy the multiplicity and inefficiency in the system. The report gives a strong overview of the multiplicity, lack of coordination, lack of implementation, and non-state actors. It offers a “Primer on the GEG Reform Debate” and a reform agenda. The report highlights key aspects of the evolution of GEG, identifies the challenges that have accompanied this evolution, categorizes broad reform packages that have been proposed, and explains some of the ongoing and recent GEG reform initiatives.


This environmental governance text uses an “issues-area” framework to explore the subjects of environmental governance and sustainable development. The editors identify areas including water, agriculture, energy, biodiversity, economy, and society in order to unpack the challenges and opportunities of GEG. The work is a “baseline” introduction for policy makers and serves that purpose well. It is more a description of the state of GEG rather than an attempt to explain exactly why institutions are designed the way they are and how such institutions can be improved to take advantage of how states (and institutions) make decisions. While useful to understand environmental concerns, the issue-area framework
overlooks some of the key aspects of the GEG system including domestic, international, and institutional politics.


Ellil L (2006). International environmental law: fairness, effectiveness, and world order, Cambridge University Press. Environmental science should not be seen as a neutral backdrop for political analysis of environmental problems, but should be exposed to political analysis as well. This book argues for ways of politicizing scientific techniques without reverting to simple relativism.


This paper brings together various writings on CBC, natural resource management and the need for multi-level governance.


This dictionary and introduction to global environmental governance (GEG) provides a compilation of over 5000 terms, organizations and acronyms, drawn from hundreds of official sources. An introductory essay frames the major issues in global environmental governance and outlines the pitfalls of talking past one another when discussing the most critical issues facing the planet. It challenges those who are concerned with the management of our planet and its inhabitants to understand and accept a vocabulary common to the often-opposing objectives sought in the many GEG instruments.

**2. General**


3. Water Governance


4. Fisheries and marine


### 5. Biodiversity governance


6. Climate Change


7. Forest Governance


8. Land governance


Contributors

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