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International Environmental Governance Reform: Options and Implications

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by

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Environmental problems such as climate change, oceans pollution, fisheries depletion, and loss of biological diversity have come to exemplify most starkly our current global interconnectedness. Governments continue to set up international mechanisms for addressing global-scale environmental issues which has led to a labyrinthine international bureaucracy, significant burdens on national administrative capacity in both the developed and the developing world, and, most importantly, inability on the part of existing international or national bodies to effectively address the problems at hand. In this context, the question of the most appropriate governance architecture for the scale and scope of contemporary global environmental problems has become an important focus of both policy and academic debates. Scholars and politicians alike have argued that if we do not address governance failures, our stewardship of the environment will continue to be ineffective and inequitable, with little chance of finding a path toward sustainability (Clapp and Dauvergne 2005; Young 2002; Berruga and Maurer 2006).

This paper reviews the most prominent policy options for environmental governance reform that have received attention in the literature and identifies key points of contention and convergence. It proceeds in three analytical steps. First, the history of the institutional reform debates is outlined. Second, several prominent broad institutional proposals are examined. Third, the paper concludes with a brief review of the consensus on critical functions for global environmental governance and the remaining contentions. The most current proposals emanating from the informal consultations on international environmental governance in the UN General Assembly, a process co-chaired by the Ambassadors of Mexico and Switzerland, Enrique Berruga and Peter Maurer, are summarized at the end and will form the basis for the session on Scenarios during the workshop.

The Evolution of the Global Environmental Governance Reform Debate

United Nations Secretary-General U Thant suggested the establishment of a 'super agency' for the environment as early as 1969 during the preparatory process for the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. During the following three years, the foundation was set for a debate on the form and function of an institutional arrangement for global environmental governance. A number of consultation meetings were convened by the Conference Secretariat and serious academic and policy works produced (Johnson 1971; Kennan 1970; Gardner 1971; Gardner 1972).¹ The establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with a 58-member Governing Council representing all regions effectively halted the organizational debate.² The environmental community had attained its goal – the creation of an “anchor institution,”³ a global conscience and voice for the environment.

Twenty years after UNEP's creation, in the 1990s, a new round of proposals for establishing institutional mechanisms for environmental governance began to advance. Two core issues framed the discussions: 1) a sharp increase in world trade liberalization (and with it enhanced

¹ The most prominent and controversial contribution, however, came from US foreign policy strategist George F. Kennan whose core premise was that 'a small group of advanced nations' bore the responsibility for solving international environmental problems. He thus proposed the creation of an International Environmental Agency that only constitutes developed countries. Developing countries “could contribute very little to the solution of the problems at hand” (Kennan 1970, 410) and should therefore not be expected to formally participate in the agency.

² For a review of the history of UNEP's establishment, see (Ivanova 2007).

³ For more detailed discussion of the anchor institution concept, see (Ivanova 2005).

prominence and power of the international institutions for trade); and 2) continuing doubts regarding UNEP's effectiveness. With neoliberalism advancing as the preponderant economic doctrine after the collapse of the Soviet Union,⁴ the governance architecture for trade underwent significant restructuring and upgrade. In 1995, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was succeeded by the World Trade Organization. Currently, rules and regulations advanced by the WTO govern approximately 97 percent of all world trade and through its right to review countries' domestic trade policies, the organization has considerably constrained national sovereignty (Esty 2006; Trebilcock and Howse 1995). Somewhat parallel with WTO's increasing power, UNEP's authority, visibility, and credibility declined. And while the 1997 Nairobi Declaration reaffirmed UNEP as the central global body for the environment, how the UN programme could perform such a role was disputed or left open for discussion. That same year, four governments – Brazil, Germany, Singapore and South Africa – called for the establishment of a World Environment Organization encompassing but not limited to UNEP. In the words of Germany's chancellor at the time, Helmut Kohl (1997):

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

Similar calls came subsequently from the French Environment Minister, Dominique Voynet (2000), President Jacques Chirac (2001) and Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin (2002); Mikhail Gorbachev of Russia (2001) and Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico (2001) as well as from the former head of the UN Development Programme and Dean of Yale's Environment School, James Gustave Speth (Speth 2005), and WTO directors Renato Ruggiero (1998) and his successor, Supachai Panitchpakdi (2001). This renewed political attention to global environmental governance reform spurred a vibrant debate that culminated at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. In an impassioned speech, then French President Jacques Chirac declared that the "house is burning" and that a World Environment Organization is imperative for attending to the urgent ecological pressures on a global scale.

The heightened political attention to environmental governance reform, however, had little in terms of an analytical foundation and was therefore unable to deliver a solid, actionable proposal. While several proposals had been elaborated in the literature (see references below), they were independent and disjointed. Moreover, academic work on core conditions for successful institutional and organizational reform in the environment was scarce and not analytical enough to provide a blueprint for reform. Even more importantly, however, the literature was sharply divided among proponents and opponents of the creation of a World or Global Environmental Organization providing little systematic input into the policy process. For example, analyses by Biermann (2001b; 2002a); Charnovitz (2002; 2005); Esty and Ivanova (2002; 2002a; 2003); Runge (2001); Tarasofsky (2002); Hyvarinen and Brack (2000); Haas (2002); and Kimball (2002) examined the need for a WEO/GEO and the conditions under which it could be established. Contributions by Juma (2000c); von Moltke (2001b); Oberthür (2002); and Najam (2002a; 2003) made "the case against GEO, WEO, or Whatever-Else-EO".

⁴ Neoliberalism has been defined as a view of the world based on the belief that the optimal economic system is achieved by giving free reign to market participants, privatization, free trade, and the shrinking of government intervention in the economy (Bernstein 2001).

The political push for global environmental governance reform has, however, continued. Currently, two main efforts are under way. First, the French and German governments continue to develop the proposal for an international environmental agency with greater political power and authority. The French proposal for a World Environment Organization transformed into a proposal for a United Nations Environment Organization (UNEO) to assuage those who feared that creating a WEO would entail taking the body outside of the United Nations. The French mission to the United Nations in New York launched a sustained consultation effort among 26 missions in New York and outlined the key elements of a strategy to upgrade UNEP into a UNEO (Tarasofsky and Hoare 2004). The European Union Presidency in 2007 represented by Germany called again for the creation of a UN Environment Organization (Green Week 2007).

Second, an informal consultation process on the institutional framework for the UN's environmental activities was launched in April 2006 involving all the UN missions in New York. Co-chaired by Ambassadors Enrique Berruga of Mexico and Peter Maurer of Switzerland, the consultations seek to identify some of the main problems and challenges of the UN system in its environmental work and suggest ways to build a more coherent institutional framework to address them (Berruga and Maurer 2006; 2007).

The political processes have now at their disposal a more advanced set of analytical reform proposals.⁵ In contrast to the 1990s, these proposals are more developed and consistent. There are also efforts to map out the institutional landscape in a more comprehensive manner outlining gaps, overlaps, and conflicts (See www.environmentalgovernance.com/database). Moreover, there seems to be a convergence of views around the nature of the problem and a set of core functions the global environmental governance system should possess. Opinions still diverge, however, on the strategy for addressing the problems and building the core functions.

Main Reform Options

Contemporary reform options fall into two categories: those that advocate the establishment of a more authoritative and better endowed international environmental organization and those that argue against such a strategy contending that a focus on improving other elements of the global governance system would be more effective. Within these two broad camps, several concrete options have emerged, including: 1) establishment of an Environmental Security Council with enforcement powers; 2) creation of a World Environment Organization equal to the World Health Organization, International Labor Organization, and World Trade Organization; 3) upgrading UNEP into a United Nations Environment Organization; 4) clustering of the multilateral environmental agreements; 5) reforming the World Trade Organization; and 6) promoting public policy networks.

Environmental Security Council

Creation of an Environmental Security Council with powers comparable to those of the Security Council is the most far-reaching reform proposal. The Security Council is the most powerful of all the United Nations bodies. Its decisions are made by two-thirds majority vote among its fifteen members and are binding on all member states of the United Nations. In his 1997 reform

⁵ See also the work of the High-Level Panel on UN System-Wide Coherence and their recommendations for environmental governance reform. See <http://www.un.org/events/panel/>

package, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposed that the Trusteeship Council “be reconstituted as the forum through which Member States exercise their trusteeship for the integrity of the global environment and common areas such as the oceans, atmosphere and outer space” (Annan 1997).⁶

At the core of this proposal lies the recognition of the need for enforcement powers in the international system relating to the environment. Currently no environmental organization possesses such authority and no dispute settlement mechanism for environmental matters exists. Among the core functions of an Environmental Security Council, therefore, would be to promote protection of the global commons beyond national jurisdiction, administrate environmental treaties, and authorize and coordinate the environmental work program of the entire UN system. Enforcement functions would be supported by an expanded World Court. The Council would also provide improved linkage between the UN and civil society on environmental matters. Ambitious and far-reaching, this proposal highlights the need for a global body responsible for the global commons and the limits of national sovereignty regarding environmental concerns of global significance. While analytically sound, it will encounter significant political obstacles at this time. However, with environmental security emerging as a vibrant theoretical and policy field, interest in exploring this idea further is likely to grow.

World/Global Environment Organization

Proposals for major structural reform through the creation of a new international environmental agency (whether incorporating existing bodies or not) derive from the conclusion that the contemporary global-scale environmental architecture is deeply dysfunctional and structurally flawed, making a fresh start easier than reform along the margins. Moreover, proponents of such reform often note that the existing regime was designed for a pre-globalization era, before the full spectrum of worldwide environmental problems was understood and the depth of current economic integration was achieved. Several leading politicians (Ruggiero 1998; Voynet 2000; Chirac 2001; Jospin 2002; Gorbachev 2001; Panitchpakdi 2001), academics (Runge 1994; 2001; Esty 2000; Biermann 2000, 2001b, 2002a, 2005b; Schellnhuber et al. 2000; Whalley and Zissimos 2001, 2002; Esty 1994a, 1994b) and others (Charnovitz 2002, 2003, 2005; Zedillo Commission 2001) have proposed the creation of a World or Global Environment Organization (WEO or GEO).

Two core dimensions define the series of functional responsibilities that have been suggested: 1) scientific, regulatory and political functions, and 2) economic functions. Table 1 below outlines these functions.

Table 1. Global/World Environmental Organization Functions

Scientific, Regulatory and Political Functions	Economic Functions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Act as a global catalyst, watchdog and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Act as an economic agent

⁶ This proposal originates in ideas put forth by Maurice Strong in preparation for the Rio Earth Summit. New Zealand proposed such a Council in 1989. The Commission on Global Governance further elaborated the proposal (Commission on Global Governance 1995: 251f), Earthaction also advocated the idea (Palmer 1989, 1992; Earthaction 1998).

<p>ombudsman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage in comprehensive, accurate and accessible environmental data collection ▪ Provide both sound scientific assessment and related policy options ▪ Serve as a negotiation and rule-making forum ▪ Monitor compliance with treaties and agreements ▪ Finance environmental activities by states, NGOs and other international organizations ▪ Assist developing countries in environmental policies development and implementation ▪ Transfer technology ▪ Coordinate the environmental activities of international organizations and Multilateral Environmental Agreements ▪ Provide a platform for meaningful civil society participation in environmental governance ▪ Serve as focal point for environmental ministries much like the WHO for health ministries ▪ Provide a dispute settlement mechanism <p>See works by Biermann, Charnovitz, Esty and Ivanova, Speth, Speth and Haas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create global markets and exchanges of commitments on forest cover, maintenance of coral reefs, species management, biodiversity protection, and other environmental concessions in return for cash or policy changes ▪ Provide the organizational, legal and financial arrangements required for deals among countries, international organizations, NGOs or even individuals ▪ Monitor the above arrangements ▪ Provide insurance ▪ Create package deals among all interested actors that minimize free-riding incentives and help internalize environmental concerns ▪ Transfers of resources to poorer countries as the main custodians of environmental assets <p>See works by Whalley and Zissimos</p>
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The starting point for a World or Global Environmental Organization therefore is the identification of a core set of functions that need to be performed at the global level. Reforming the institutional landscape is then necessary only insofar as it ensures that these functions would be effectively performed. The value added of this proposal thus lies in the potential consolidation and coordination of the numerous international organizations and environmental conventions.

United Nations Environment Organization

The main justification behind the proposal for a UN Environment Organization is the assumption that UNEP's authority and mandate are inadequate for effective performance in addressing global environmental challenges. The upgrading of UNEP into a specialized agency is suggested to rectify these concerns. The core supposition is that the new status would accord UNEP greater visibility, status, independence, authority, and finances and strengthen it "so that it can fulfil [sic] its mandate as the principal agency for international environmental governance" (Permanent Representative of France to the UN 2006: 2).

Several core principles define the UNEO proposal: 1) UNEO should be established by upgrading UNEP; 2) existing agencies operating in the environmental field would neither be

integrated into the new agency nor otherwise disbanded; 3) funding will be through assessed contributions but not envisioned to significantly increase; and 4) the UNEO headquarters should remain in Nairobi. The basic functions of a UNEO resemble those of the proposed World Environmental Organization (Permanent Representative of France to the UN 2006: 8):

- serve as a platform for political discussions
- provide ample information on the state of the environment
- strengthen scientific expertise, monitoring, and early warning systems
- mobilize institutions to act on environmental matters
- assist developing countries implement environmental policies
- strengthen governance at the regional level
- coordinate and promote coherence among institutions involved in environmental governance⁷

Among the distinctions between this proposal, and the WEO above, is that supporters do not view it as competitor to the WTO, nor challenging, in any way, the legal autonomy of the main environmental conventions (Permanent Representative of France to the UN 2006: 4-9). This logic derives from practical and political considerations of feasibility and suffers from the lowest-common-denominator syndrome.

With an enhanced mandate including better capabilities to build capacity in developing countries, UNEO is expected to improve the facilitation and coordination of norm-building and norm-implementation processes in comparison to UNEP. The specialized agency status should accord the organization the ability to engage in operational activities, which is currently beyond the reach of UNEP, and allow UNEO to engage in project implementation in the field. Furthermore, additional legal and political powers that could come with the status of a UN specialized agency could enable the organization to approve by qualified majority vote certain regulations which are then binding on all members. Its governing body could be a general assembly that could adopt drafts of legally binding treaties that have been negotiated by sub-committees under its auspices. Such powers could exceed those entrusted to the UNEP Governing Council, which has initiated intergovernmental negotiations on a number of issues, but cannot adopt legal instruments by itself (Biermann 2007).⁸

Clustering of Multilateral Environmental Agreements

Clustering defines the grouping of several multilateral environmental agreements so as to make them more efficient and effective (von Moltke 2001d: 3). Theoretically, the rationale for clustering is based on the notion that ‘the environment’ is too complex to be dealt with by one institution. The environmental agenda reflects multiple issues—from hazardous waste to oceans pollution to climate change to biodiversity—that exhibit distinctively different problem structures. In practice, the rationale for clustering rests on the assumption that it would be easier to bring together the functions of several convention secretariats than establish a full-fledged international environmental organization with similar powers.

⁷ See also (Tarasofsky and Hoare 2004; Tarasofsky 2005).

⁸ For a full-length analysis of the various aspects of a UNEO from a policy, political, and an academic perspective, see (Rechkemmer 2005).

While the large number of MEAs is seen by some analysts as “rooted in the fact that structural differences exist between many environmental problems, thus requiring separate institutional responses” (von Moltke 2005: 177), the need for integration of related or overlapping international environmental regimes is undeniable. The current informal consultations on international environmental governance within the UN General Assembly have identified clustering of Multilateral Environmental Agreements as a major component of reform. Summarizing government discussions, Ambassadors Berruga and Maurer (2007) suggest four thematic clusters: 1) conservation, 2) global atmosphere, 3) hazardous substances, and 4) marine and oceans concerns. The core functions of MEA clusters will comprise streamlining activities and meetings; coordinating operations and budgeting; close tracking and active coordinating of funding; consolidating the implementation review by country or by issue; and improving transparency and participation (Oberthür 2002; von Moltke 2001d, 2005; El-Ashry 2004; von Moltke 2001a). Clustering the numerous international environmental agreements will therefore minimize institutional overlap and fragmentation in global environmental governance while avoiding the pitfalls of securing agreement for more radical institutional reform.

This approach, however, cannot advance without leadership. Just like with the more ambitious proposals, it will require at least one of two necessary conditions - 1) individual governments ready to champion the establishment and maintenance of a cluster, and/or 2) coordinators and facilitators, be they existing institutions such as UNEP or newly established ones. Moreover, clustering is likely to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for more effective global environmental governance. It is indeed a critical requirement in both the World Environment Organization and UN Environment Organization scenarios.

Reforming the World Trade Organization

In 1999, then-WTO Director-General Renato Ruggiero argued that “to strengthen the bridge between trade and the environment [the] bridge needs two pillars” – a World Trade Organization and a World Environment Organization. Critics of the WEO idea, however, claim that “environmental issues in the WTO are better served under a “one-pillar” concept with the WTO as the sole column” (Calderin 2002: 36). The rationale behind the ‘one-pillar’ system builds on three arguments.

First, proponents of this system suggest that the real governance problems lie with the paradigms of the economic system and the remedies should therefore be targeted at the WTO, not the environmental organizations. Second, the mission of the WTO already includes environmental aspects. The Preamble of the WTO Agreement encourages countries in the WTO to “allow for the optimal use of the world’s resources in accordance with the objective of sustainable development, seek both to protect and preserve the environment and to enhance the means for doing so in a manner consistent with their respective needs and concerns at different levels of economic development” (WTO 1994). Third, all aspects of human activity – including trade, investment, and development – affect the environment. Consequently, all organizations must integrate environmental rules and practices into their operations. The lack of a WEO therefore accentuates the fact that all organizations should be environmental and pushes the WTO and other international organizations to accept their environmental responsibility (Calderin 2002).

Proponents of the WTO reform strategy argue that effective protection of the environment from the negative impacts of trade requires only slight changes in the framework of the WTO. The

WTO will continue to execute its main function as the international organization overseeing the liberalization of world trade but also institute mechanisms that would better allow it to address its environmental mandate (WTO 1994). It is in the WTO's interest to regulate international trade in an environmentally friendly manner since depletion of natural resources will destroy world trade in goods. Moreover, the elimination of trade-distorting practices such as governmental subsidies for agriculture, fishing, or timber extraction will remove perverse incentives for environmental destruction. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, the WTO is envisioned as an appropriate forum for the settlement of environmental disputes (Strauss 1998).

While 'greening the WTO' is indeed necessary, it is not sufficient. Effective global governance for the *environment* is indispensable for the solution of *environmental* problems. A greener WTO is no way incompatible with a systematic effort at improving the global environmental governance system (Esty 1999b; Runge 2001; Charnovitz 2000b, 2005).

Global Public Policy Networks

Some analysts have argued that the intergovernmental governance system, burdened by numerous constraints and unable to take and implement decisions, needs to be supplemented by new mechanisms. Networks – whether bureaucratic or scientific – have emerged as viable tools for both decision-making and delivery of results (Speth and Haas 2006: 136-138; Florini 2003; Streck 2002). Attempts to improve global governance should therefore focus on these new institutional arrangements (Gupta 2005).

Despite the growth of the number of non-state actors in global environmental governance over the last thirty years—by some accounts, there are over 100,000 NGOs working in some capacity for environmental protection (Wapner 1996)—global issue networks are a fairly recent phenomenon in global environmental governance. They are multisectoral partnerships that bring together different sectors and levels of governance including governments, international organizations, corporations, and civil society. They are built around the realization that complex political, economic, and social systems cannot be governed by a single sector – the public sector – or from a single level – the national level. Networked governance structures are expected to “bridge the gap between the public, the for-profit, and the non-profit sectors and integrate human and financial resources to find solutions to multifaceted problems” (Streck 2002; Howlett 2000).

Networks, however, usually emerge in the shadow of an international organization. Because of their diversity, effective and efficient operation of public policy networks requires the existence of an institutional hub. Similar to the clustering and the greener WTO proposals, therefore, networks present a complementary rather than an exclusive solution.

Emerging Consensus and Remaining Contentions

While the debates on global environmental governance reform have been heated and the critiques have been vehement at times, analytical positions are beginning to converge. The central point of agreement is that the status quo is no longer acceptable. The core disagreements about global environmental governance reform have thus moved from the need for reform to the form of any new institutions likely to emerge as a result of reform. In this context, the World or Global Environment Organization concept has generated the most

vigorous debates. Some of the critics, however, have recognized that a revitalized international environmental organization is necessary to serve as the global voice for the environment (Juma 2006; Najam, Papa, and Taiyab 2006). While the form the organization would take is still hotly contested, a consensus around a core set of functions is beginning to emerge.

The informal consultations on international environmental governance produced consensus on seven building blocks for a revitalized system: 1) scientific assessment, monitoring and early warning; 2) coordination and cooperation at the level of agencies; 3) Multilateral Environmental Agreements (including clustering); 4) regional presence and activities at the regional level; 5) Bali Strategic Plan, capacity-building and technology support; 6) IT, partnerships and advocacy; and 7) financing. These fall within three broad core functions for the global environmental governance system: 1) **information and analytical function** including scientific assessment, monitoring and early warning; 2) **policy function** including norm and law development, coordination, and cooperation among agencies and MEAs; and 3) **support function** including financing, capacity-building, technology support, and outreach. Table 3 at the end of this paper summarizes the building blocks and the concrete actions attached to each of them.

These proposals go to the heart of the rationale behind the establishment of an international environmental agency that goes beyond UNEP's current capabilities. Such reforms seek efficiency gains, increased cross-treaty communication, elimination of MEA fiefdoms, reduced pressure on developing countries, more continuity in representation, and better coordination and coherence. The debate on functional reform has therefore reached a point of analytical convergence. The divergence remains more in the semantics rather than the substance.

Where serious disagreement remains is on the form of the institutional response. In essence, all of the broad proposals reviewed above aim to deliver a better option on at least some of the three core functions. Yet, none delivers a full-fledged, analytically grounded and practically thought out reform blueprint. Creating a World Environmental Organization modeled on the World Health Organization or the International Labor Organization, for example, may not be the most appropriate proposal. Given the complexity and multidimensionality of environmental problems, the original logic of 1972 stating that the environment cannot be treated as a separate sector, still holds. Environmental issues require a multi-tier and a multi-dimensional governance structure because they arise on various geographic scales, involve various actors, and demand capacities in multiple areas. Today's global environmental governance thus requires a more virtual structure with a multi-institutional foundation capable of drawing in a wide array of underlying disciplines through governments, the private sector, NGOs, and global public policy networks. A UN specialized agency model from the 1960s may therefore not be suitable in the contemporary context.

Similarly, the upgrading of UNEP into a UNEO is not likely to solve the inherent problems of fragmentation, lack of resources, authority, and expertise unless core issues such as leadership, management, and staff are addressed. Yet the UNEO proposal despite taking UNEP as the organization to build upon focuses exclusively on its form and proposes little change in terms of functions. As illustrated in Table 2 below, the UNEO proposal fails to significantly alter and improve UNEP's mandate. It does not address the need for a dispute settlement mechanism for the global environment. Moreover, the proposal limits itself to calling for mandatory financial contributions to the new organization but not for dramatically increased levels of funding.

Ultimately, feasibility remains the most contentious concern in international environmental governance reform. All reform options have been criticized for either being too ambitious and

therefore infeasible or too limited and therefore irrelevant. Reform of the global environmental governance system needs to begin with a holistic assessment of the strengths and weaknesses in the current system. To this end, a comprehensive assessment of the mandates and achievements of the organizations making up the system should be initiated. Such an assessment, if carried out in an open, inclusive yet efficient manner, would help clarify and understand the roles, responsibilities, and resources of three core groups of actors in global environmental governance: international environmental organizations and conventions, development banks and organizations, and other UN agencies and large NGOs. The assessment would reveal institutions' comparative advantages, highlight the current division of labor, and enable the development of reform proposals grounded in fact rather than fable.

Table 2. Comparison between UNEP and UNEO mandates against core functions

Core Functions		UNEP's Mandate ⁹	UNEO Proposed Mandate ¹⁰
Information and Analytical Function	Data and Indicators	Keep under review the world environmental situation	Monitor and provide early warning on the state of the environment
	Monitoring and Verification	Provide policy advice, early warning information on environmental threats, and	Provide information, facilitate communication, and mobilize stakeholders
	Assessment	to catalyze and promote international cooperation and action, based on the best scientific and technical capabilities available	
	Information Reporting and Exchange		

⁹ Mandated functions as elaborated in G.A. Resolution 2997 and the 1997 Nairobi Declaration.

¹⁰ See <http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/frmonde/onue-en/> and (Tarasofsky and Hoare 2004).

Policy Function	Goal and Priority Setting	Promote international cooperation in the field of environment and recommend policies to this end	Provide a political platform for international legal and strategic frameworks
	Rulemaking and Norm Development	Provide advisory services for the promotion of international environmental cooperation	Improve coherence and coordination, including the convergence of norms, implementation of international obligations and financing.
	Coordination	Bring up any matter that requires consideration by the Governing Council	
		Develop international environmental law Coordinate environmental programs within the UN system, review their implementation and assess their effectiveness	
Support Function	Education and Training	Provide policy and advisory services in key areas of institution-building to governments and other institutions	Undertake capacity building within developing and transition countries
	Financing		Strengthen regional governance
	Technical Assistance	Advance implementation of agreed international norms and policies and stimulate cooperative action	
	Institution and Network Building		
Resolutive Function	Dispute Settlement and Resolution	No dispute resolution authority	No proposal for dispute resolution authority

Table 3. Reform options suggested by delegations in the informal consultations on international environmental governance within the UN General Assembly

Building Blocks	Rationale	Main Options
<p><i>Building block 1</i> <i>Scientific assessment, monitoring and early warning capacity</i></p>	<p>Make UNEP a leading authority within the UN system for scientific assessment and monitoring on the state of the global environment. UNEP should provide authoritative advice and early warning.</p>	<p>Create a chief scientist at UNEP</p>
		<p>Systematic partnerships between UNEP and research institutions</p>
		<p>Establish Environment Watch Strategy Vision 2020 as a global information network system</p>
		<p>Request scientific bodies of MEAs to contribute to and cooperate with Environment Watch Strategy</p>
<p><i>Building block 2</i> <i>Coordination and cooperation at the level of agencies</i></p>	<p>Strengthen the capacities of UNEP to cooperate and coordinate with other UN entities and the World Bank on environmental issues.</p>	<p>Improve cooperation between UNEP and UNDP by clarifying roles in regard to financing institutions and MEAs</p>
		<p>Establish joint units between UNEP and UN agencies</p>
		<p>Task UNEP with chairing environmental sub-group of UNDG</p>
		<p>Involve UNEP in “one UN” pilot countries</p>
		<p>Coordinate UNEP activities with UN Regional Commissions</p>
		<p>Use the Environment Management Group more effectively in coordination</p>
		<p>Set up issue-management groups within EMG</p>
		<p>Task EMG with integrating environmental challenges into economic strategies</p>
		<p>Make UNEP and MEAs formal observers on all WTO Committees and vice versa</p>
<p><i>Building block 3</i></p>	<p>Enhance cooperation and coordination amongst MEAs,</p>	<p>Include UNEP in the joint liaison group of the secretariats of Rio</p>

Table 3. Reform options suggested by delegations in the informal consultations on international environmental governance within the UN General Assembly

<i>Multilateral Environmental Agreements</i>	promote working in clusters and rationalize secretariat activities.	conventions
		Cluster MEAs in four areas: 1. Conservation (Biodiversity: CBD, Migratory Species, UNCCD; Forests in collaboration with Ramsar; CITES and the Whaling Commission 2. Global atmosphere 3. Hazardous substances (Chemicals: PIC, POPs, SAICM, Basel) 4. Marine and Oceans
		Establish joint MEA institutional structures, including: 1. secretariats 2. legal financial and conference services 3. reporting 4. scientific structures 5. programmatic structures
		Integrate MEA secretariats with UNEP as secretariat
<i>Building block 4 Regional presence and activities at the regional level</i>	Use regional offices of UNEP as entry points for scientific activities and capacity building	Strengthen links between UNEP regional offices and relevant scientific networks
		Assess and expand UNEP-UNDP pilot programmes
		Give UNEP regional offices mandate for capacity-building and technology support
		Use UNEP regional offices to coordinate with regional Commissions and other programmes
<i>Building block 5 Bali Strategic Plan,</i>	Deepen and broaden capacity-building and technology support	Make the Bali Plan the overarching framework for operational activities of MEAs, UN agencies and IFIs

Table 3. Reform options suggested by delegations in the informal consultations on international environmental governance within the UN General Assembly

<i>capacity-building, technology support</i>	throughout the IEG system and foster implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan	Integrate environmental sustainability into UN Common Country Assessments (CCA) and UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)
		Ensure that UNDAFs and RRS reflect needs expressed by governments in regard to the implementation of the Bali Plan
		Ensure that capacity-building and technology support become an integral part of national development frameworks
<i>Building block 6 IT, partnerships and advocacy</i>	Strengthen key support functions relating to IEG such as the use of IT, expanded partnerships and advocacy activities	Establish a clearinghouse of best practices and lessons learned in all environmental fields
		Better use partnerships with science, civil society and business
		Encourage UNEP to establish a partnership forum
		Develop a common environmental information and advocacy strategy with the MEAs
<i>Building block 7 Financing</i>	Improve financing of the IEG system and for environmental activities through timely and adequate funding	Strengthen UNEP's financial basis through better balance of earmarked and non-earmarked resources
		Assess financial needs
		Establish a standardized financial tracking system of environmental expenses in the UN system
		Create new focal areas if appropriate in the GEF along with increased replenishments
		Enable UNEP to receive private donations
		Consolidate accounting structures of similar MEAs
		Use resources more efficiently by avoiding duplication of effort

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