

BRAZILIAN FORUM OF NGOS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT

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IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM TO BE ADDRESSED

- UN Reform and IEG:** These have not been popular issues in Brazil and Latin America for NGOs and social movements up to now. This is mainly due to lack of structures and access to documents in English language, and to the difficulty of grassroots' organisations to link daily life to the discussions within the UN system. UN resolutions are soft laws and therefore, people do not recognise that their life will improve as a consequence of the bureaucratic and for them poorly visible work done within the UN system. Global civil society discussions on IEG have been started several years ago and the UNEP Global Civil Society Forum has been a privileged discussion space. Declarations on IEG have been issued signed by the organisations assisting the Forum. However, the Northern NGOs strongly dominate discussions on IEG thanks to better access to technical, human and financial resources.
- Multilateral Environment Agreements:** MEAs are frequently undermined in favour of the WTO regime. The UN system is weak when it comes to guarantee the implementation of agreements compared to the powerful WTO with its enforcement mechanisms. One example of the existence of contradictions between WTO rules and sustainability is the TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement. The agreement has made it more difficult for the South to access pharmaceutical products and technology from the North. Biopiracy, the appropriation and patenting by biotechnological corporations of the North of biological resources and traditional knowledge originating in the South, has also increased during the last years, threatening national sovereignty over natural resources and traditional knowledge. The WTO agreements also weaken domestic policy sectors deregulating legal frameworks. Bilateral agreements sometimes prevail and undermine the MEAs. The WTO should never be allowed to have the final say in matters relating to perceived conflicts between trade and the environment and the agenda for the sustainable use of natural resources, the protection of traditional knowledge and the right of access to genetic resources must weigh upon neoliberal market reforms.
- Financial Mechanisms:** The UN system is also weak in ensuring implementation of its agreements when compared to the multilateral financial institution mechanisms. The Bretton Woods Institutions, especially the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, have destabilised economic structures in many developing countries. Conditionalities attached to credits and loans such as the adoption of macro-economic policies and structural adjustment programs have contributed to environmental degradation and social exclusion.

PROPOSALS FOR APPROACHES OR SOLUTIONS

- Strengthening of UNEP:** Consider the specific needs of developing countries and respect of the fundamental principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities". Developed countries should promote technology transfer, new and additional financial resources, and capacity building for meaningful participation of developing countries in IEG. Strengthening of IEG should occur in the context of sustainable development and should involve civil society as important stakeholder and agent of transformation.
- Strengthening MEAs in face of the WTO regime:** Developed countries, instead of fulfilling their commitments made under the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, and other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), have prioritised the agenda of the WTO that promotes a regime of rules that are counter-running the Rio spirit and principles. The unilateral rejection of MEAs, such as the Kyoto Protocol, by some countries is another fact that puts at risk the common and binding efforts needed to advance towards sustainable development. The developed countries' commitment to contribute with 0.7% of their GNI for Official Development Assistance (ODA) and to provide new and additional funds to implement MEAs has not become true and ODA has even decreased in some countries. Synergies among the MEAs, for instance, among UNFCCC, the CBD and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification have also to be strengthened.

6. **Civil society engagement:** Non-governmental organisations and grassroots movements have to get involved in discussions on UN reform, system-wide coherence and IEG. The Global Civil Society Forum during MOP-3 and COP-8 on the CBD in Curitiba, organised by the Brazilian Forum of NGOs and Social Movements for the Environment and Development (FBOMS) was an excellent opportunity to involve civil society organisations in the debates on the effectiveness of the MEAs.
7. **Capacity-building** has to be carried out in developing countries on the efforts necessary to be done within the UN to improve system-wide coherence. A better cooperation between the UN and civil society organisations can help to make sustainable development programs and projects more effective.
8. **Make adequate financing available:** National implementation of MEA is weak in many cases because of highly inadequate financial resources. OECD countries should finally designate 0.7% of GNI for ODA. All developed countries and developing countries within the realm of their possibilities should increase financial contribution for environment and sustainable development programs.
9. **Support cross-ministerial approaches:** Sustainable Development has to be the context within IEG is discussed and this should involve other sectorial ministers, other than environment ministers, so that the linkages between development and environment can be promoted.
10. **Promote increased regional cooperation:** South-south cooperation for IEG is crucial so as to share resources, exchange technologies and defend the specific needs and interests of developing countries, based on strong alliances experienced in other multilateral negotiations processes such as the WTO.
11. **More public participation:** As a central component of IEG the implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration should be promoted and fully put in place at all levels in order to ensure public participation, access to information and to environmental justice. This has been repeatedly requested by the Global Civil Society Forum hosted by UNEP.

INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT AND/OR FUTURE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

12. **Institutional framework:** A better cooperation and coherence has to be put in place not only among the MEAs but also among all programs and projects that deal with the environment, development and human rights, in order to maximise the available resources and minimising administrative cost. The UN regional commissions have to be strengthened so as to support the discussions and organise regional preparation meetings, such as the Regional Implementation Meetings for CSD. The role of the CSD itself has to be improved so that it can better play its integrative function. An enhanced UNEP will make the environmental dimension of the CSD stronger. Other relevant organisations and agencies dealing with IEG have also to be strengthened, together with the institutions dealing with economic and social affairs, and the institutions working with the integration of environment and development.
13. **Financial mechanisms:** When discussing IEG it is important to consider the reform of the international financial system and link it to the overall goals of sustainable development.
14. **Umbrella structure for MEAs:** Discussion on a centralised umbrella structure for MEAs: The same geographical location of program secretaries such as UNEP and UN-Habitat in Nairobi, Kenya, is an interesting option. The parallel organisation of various Conferences of the Parties may save travel costs and promote synergy in discussions and decision-making. However, with more financial and human resources in the North, there is a risk that centralisation will be dominated by the stronger Northern countries.

Further Resources

- Panel Discussion on UN Reform and the Environment, New York, USA, May 9th
http://www.unep.org/dpdl/civil_society/features/csd_newyork2006.asp
- Global Civil Society Forum during MOP3 and COP8 on the Convention on Biological Diversity in Curitiba, Brazil. www.fboms.org.br