



# **Sustainable Development: Theory and Policy**

**Week 10**

**New International Institutional Contexts**

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## 10.1 Multilateralism

### Environment- Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

On the environmental side, there is no single international legal agreement that is comparable to the GATT/WTO on the trade side.



# Multilateral Environmentalism

*However...*

There is an increasing trend toward the **direct harmonization** of approaches to issues involving international protection of the environment, health and safety through the negotiation of regional and global agreements to deal with very broad environmental problems.



# Types of MEA's

In recent years, attention has focused on three of these MEAs because of their explicit restrictions in international trade:

- **the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)**
- **the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and**
- **the Basel Convention**



# Time Frames examples

- **The Montreal Protocol** was negotiated in just two years, between 1985 and 1987, although some preparation had taken place during the negotiation of the Vienna Convention, completed in 1985.
- **The Basel Convention**, completed in 1989, was also negotiated in a relatively short period,



## Two Implications

- (a) Some environmentalists see protection-of the environment as an absolute imperative.**
  
- (b) Some trade specialists see free trade (or the best approximation of free trade that can be achieved in the real world) as the only way to maintain a healthy global economy and support economic development.**



## 10.2 Nestedness Again

### Four Levels or Images:

- Man – individuals
- The State – the country
- The International System
- The Global System



# The Realities are Defined by:

- The requirements and conditions of **anarchy of the international system** (the third level). Stated differently, multilateralism -- as coordinated action among sovereign states -- emerged as a means of protecting the interests/ and activities of states in the international system -- in their pursuit of wealth and of power (Gilpin 1987).
- This pattern of interaction, driven by the imperatives of the sovereign states and the realities of power politics -- recognized no constraints on state action other than those agreed upon by the contracting parties. And the agreements were about **state action** in the international arena.



## 10.3 Reversing the Process

### The State - Reminder

- Historically, multilateralism emerged as a means of defining and stabilizing relations among nations-- and specifically with respect to their international property rights.
- Reverting to the traditional literature in the study of international relations, as articulated by Boulding (1956, Waltz 1957, and synthesized by North 1990), multilateralism emerged as a means of accommodating state-level actions (the "second image" in international relations) to the realities



# Reversing the Process:

- The "reverse process" evident in multilateralism for environmental management is to **protect common spaces** -- defined in terms of air, atmosphere, land and oceans.
- Indeed, this "reverse process" served to consolidate attention to the importance of common spaces and to accord to these ~spaces a quasi legal status in international law.
- Importance of Reversing the Process:



## **10.4 Barriers to Knowledge – Reducing Barriers – A Strategy**

- **Coherent Conceptual Framework**
- **Multidisciplinary Perspectives**
- **Knowledge Screening for Reliability**
- **Cross Indexing & Content Connectivity**
- **Multiple Search Strategies**
- **Multilingual Capabilities**
- **Strategic Partnerships**
- **Development of New Knowledge**