

IGOs and the Environment

Beginning with the UN Conference on Environment and Development (dubbed the Earth Summit) in 1992, the UN has sponsored several global meetings on the environment. These have resulted in the initiation of programs that will slow down, stop, or begin to reverse the degradation of the environment. IGOs are increasingly, also requiring that environmental Impact statements accompany requests for economic development aid and in some cases are refusing to finance projects that have unacceptable negative impacts on the biosphere.

IGOs and International Law and Norms

An important and increasing role of the UN and other IGOs is defining and expanding international law and international norms of cooperation. International courts associated with IGOs help establish legal precedent. Also, the signatories to the UN Charter and other IGO constitutions incur obligations to obey the principles of these documents. International organizations additionally sponsor multinational treaties, which may establish the assumption of law. Over 300 such treaties have been negotiated through the UN's auspices. As one scholar sees the norm building function of IGOs. "The procedures and rules of international institutions create information structures, They determine what principles are acceptable as a basis for reducing conflicts and whether governmental actions are legitimate or illegitimate. Consequently, they help shape actor's expectations.

IGOs and the Quality of Human Existence

More than 30 million refugees from war, famine, and other dangers have been fed, given shelter, and otherwise assisted through the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. A wide variety of IGOs also devote their energies to such concerns as health, nutrition, and literacy. For example, UNICEF, WHO, and other agencies have undertaken a \$150 million program to develop a multi-immunization vaccine. This vaccine program is designed to double the estimated 2 million children who now annually survive.

The increased interdependence of the world has heightened the impact of diplomat and economic sanctions. In recent years, these have been applied by the UN, the OAS, and other IGOs against such countries as Haiti, Iraq, Libya, South Africa, and Yugoslavia. As we will know, sanctions are controversial and often do not work. But there have been successes. For example, in 2003 the sanction that been in place against Libya for 15 years finally persuaded it to pay \$2.7 billion in reparations to the families of the 280 people killed when a bomb planted by Libyan agents destroyed Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988. The wheels of justice sometimes grind slowly, but grind they did.

Peacekeeping

The United Nations additionally has a limited ability to intervene militarily in a dispute. Other IGOs, such as the OAS, have also occasionally undertaken collective military action. In the UN, this process is often "called peace keeping. It is normally conducted under the au because of such international medical assistance. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has launched a program to identify, preserve, and strengthen through new genetic techniques those domestic animals that might prove especially beneficial to LDCs. Western breeds of pigs, for example, usually produce only about 10 piglets per litter; the Taihu pig of China manages 15 to 20. The FAO hopes to use the latter and other appropriate animals to increase protein availability in the LDCs.

IGOs and Independence

Yet another role of IGOs has been to encourage national self-determination. The UN Trusteeship Council once monitored numerous colonial dependencies, but the wave of independence in recent decades steadily lessened its number of charges.

Than, in October 1994, the United States and Palau notified the council that as Kuniwo Nakamura, Palau's president, put it, We base made our own decision that we are ready to embark on the journey of independence with confidence".

Inasmuch as Palau was the last trust territory, the announcement meant that the Trustee ship Council's mission was fulfilled and, while it continues to exist technically, it no longer meets.

Chapter Six

Nongovernmental organizations

Ideas only become powerful when those who hold them begin to take action. This is what has increasingly taken place. There is good evidence of this change in the phenomenal growth in the number and activities of transnational organizations called nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). These are organizations that operate across national boundaries and whose membership is composed of individuals, and who do not answer to any government.

The Growth of NGOs

In 1900, there were 69 NGOs. Now the Union of International Associations lists more than 47,000 NGOs. Of these, 2,143 hold consultative status with the United Nations. Up from 928 such groups in 1992 and 222 such groups in 1952. The diversity of interests represented by these groups touches on human rights, the environment, and virtually every other public concern.

The growth in the number of NGOs and range of their interests and activities reflect, globalization in several ways. First there is a growing awareness that many issues are in part or wholly transnational, rather than just national. For instance, the discharge of gases in one country that attack Earth's vital ozone layer increases the rate of skin cancer globally, not just in the country that emitted the gases. Similarly, many women linked to the treatment of women ever where. For example, they see domestic violence as a global, not just a national. Problem. Second, NGOs have flourished because advances in transportation and communication have made transnational contacts easy, rapid, and inexpensive. Third, the growth of NGOs reflects disenchantment with existing political organizations based in or dominated by states in an age of globalization. "Stifled by the unwillingness of nations and international organizations to share decision making, and frustrated by the failure of political institutions to bring about reform". one study explains, "political activities began to form their own cross border coalitions in the 1970s and 1980s".