

UNEP
Training Manual
on International
Environmental Law

FOREWORD

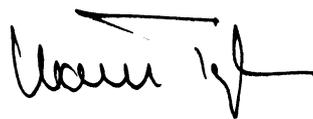
Today's world is facing an unprecedented environmental crisis. Deterioration of the Earth's environment increasingly threatens the natural resource base and processes upon which all life on Earth depends. Without strong and multifaceted action by all of us, the biosphere may become unable to sustain human life and future generations will suffer deprivation and hardship unless current patterns of production, consumption and waste management dramatically change. The urgency of balancing development with the Earth's life support systems is being finally recognized and understood. Now it is time to act upon this understanding.

It is widely recognized that most environmental problems, challenges and solutions are transboundary, regional or global in scope. The environment is an area where states and stakeholders are cooperating extensively and progressively. Although environmental degradation and competition for scarce resources are potential sources for conflict, history has repeatedly shown that they are more often catalysts for cooperation. Problems of shared resources regularly produce shared solutions. The environment can make its full and rightful contribution to peace and stability in the world.

Worldwide commitments are necessary to protect environmental features such as the biosphere including the ozone layer, migratory species, habitats and ecosystems. Control of movement of wastes, environmentally harmful activities and installations can only be achieved by common and widely applied standards. Environmental law is recognized as an effective tool for catalyzing national and international action to achieve such protection and control. As one of UNEP's priority areas, environmental law has expanded rapidly over the last decades and today comprises hundreds of global and regional norms that aim to protect our Earth.

Without analyzing each of the hundreds of agreements and instruments in the field, this Training Manual seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the current body of environmental law. It is aimed at legal stakeholders from all backgrounds including government representatives, judges, university professors and students from both developed and developing countries, to enable them to more effectively participate in the global, regional and national efforts to preserve our Earth for future generations.

Specific topics are first presented at the international level and then followed by extracts of national legislation showcasing real life examples of how national law today reflects developments in the international arena.



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