Background

• United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was created in 1972

• Since then, two major conferences have been held, multiple agreements have been signed and another body was conceived (the Commission on Sustainable Development)

• Notwithstanding, little of substantial positive effect has occurred

• In 1997, a proposal was submitted to the UN General Assembly that called for the establishment of a “global umbrella organization for environmental issues, with the [UNEP] as a major pillar”²

• The proposal was not adopted, but the concept of a World Environment Organization (WEO) has become a contentious topic among political scientists

Purpose

• To examine the failure of current international institutions in addressing environmental concerns

• To prescribe a WEO as a normative remedy

Method

• Survey of the literature

• Literature includes
  • academic articles from scholarly journals located through online databases
  • books located through the Scott Library database
  • media reports

• This paper heavily relied upon the work of three authors who have conducted extensive analysis on global environmentalism: Steffen Bauer, Frank Biermann and Steve Charnovitz

• Arguments were framed within the liberal-pluralist perspective of international relations

Findings

A WEO is necessary because it would provide:

1) Organizational Centralization
   • Enhanced mandate
   • Bigger budget
   • More staff
   • Elimination of coordination deficit

![Employee base of UNEP vs. those of two national environmental agencies](image1)

2) A Counterbalance to the World Trade Organization
   • Equal powers and capabilities
   • A WEO could garner more national and civil support for itself through a greater commitment to cooperation and inclusivity than the WTO

3) Greater Assistance to the Global South
   • North’s moral obligation to South
   • Equal representation in decision-making
   • Encouragement of clean development mechanism

Limitations

This analysis is not designed to:

• Address some of the fundamental realist arguments for why a fully-functioning WEO is not possible

• Study specific inter-state or domestic environmental initiatives (other than those of Canada)

• Examine the role of environmental NGOs

Conclusion

• A WEO, while not sufficient to end the current ecological crisis, is a necessity

• It could provide the organizational base from which all other causes could stem

• Its expansive mandate could command respect on the world stage

• WEO could have the resources to effectively plan, implement, oversee and redress

• Harmful effects of world commerce could be curbed

• Could lead to fairer relationship between Global North and South

• The seeds of human preservation can be sown, but it must be done together, as united individuals and as united nations

References

