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# Overview And Evaluation Of International Agreements Concerning Environment

A treaty is an international agreement entered by sovereign states, actors and international organizations under international law. It is also referred as an official document expressed in words. Purposes of the international agreements, treaties or conferences are vast. They assume a variety of form and style. Some agreements set up an international organization for an exact purpose or a variety of purposes. Despite diversities of international agreements, they can be classified according to the functions that they serve in the international society.

According to the Canada Research Chair in International Political Economy more than 3,000 international environmental instruments have been identified around the world. Most of them are legally binding countries that have endorsed them formally. Then there comes a huge list of international environmental agreements. Any agreements or conventions with regard to with regard to the human impact on nature, human interaction in natural eco systems, animals, plants, water resources such as oceans, lakes and rivers, and other natural elements, are considered as environmental agreements/conventions. Most of the environmental problems which are prevailing around the world and emerging along with the latest, modern technologies, require effective international cooperation, to be addressed from a global perspective. Environmental agreements and conventions can be categorized under multiple topics.

Agreements on nature – general environmental protection – this category targets conventions, agreements and protocols with regard to fostering sustainable development and conserving, protecting, natural ecosystems and natural resources in general.

Species – this category includes all the conventions and agreements with regard to managing and preventing human interaction with both animal and plants. It also includes agreements with regard to agricultural activities and fisheries management.

Pollution – this category includes agreements and conventions on issues on a global scale, which are related to air pollution, land pollution and water resource pollutions.

Habitats and oceans – this category includes agreements and conventions with regard to regulating water resources on a global scale. It also aims to protect and explore oceans.

Freshwater resources – this category includes agreements all about lakes and rivers.

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The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

## A Review of the Convention on Climate Change

The main aim of this Convention on Climate Change and all the related legal agreements of this convention is that the Conference of the Parties (CoP) should adopt provision to make sure that the concentration of the greenhouse gas in the atmosphere is at a level, which would prevent climate changes and other environmental issues. This level can be maintained through allowing eco systems to naturally adapt to climate changes, by ensuring food production is unharmed and economic developments are in a sustainable manner. The main policies or principles of this convention are that well developed countries should be in forefront to tackle and control the climate change issues and its post effects. It is also notable that the principles further say those measurements to tackle to the climate change issues should be cost effective to make sure that the global is receiving benefits at a lowest cost.

According to The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change if any prompt measures will not be taken to control the existing ways and amount of emission for green gases, the global temperature is expected to rise by 1.5-4.5 degree Celsius by the mid of next century. Discussions with regard to the climate change which was held from February 1991 to May 1992 ratified a framework convention that included new financial resources to complete convention goals, several long term mechanisms for the international community to address the climate change problems, coordination with the intergovernmental panels on climate changes and promoting technology transfer from well developed countries to developing countries, which was agreed by more than 130 nations. However, there were many disappointments. Most of the industrialized nations wanted to stabilize the emission of the carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), but the Convention on Climate Change did not have adequate targets and timetables to achieve that, but only guidelines and targets with an 'as soon as possible' sentence.

Accusing that the countries which were supporting the time tables did not have any plans to stabilize the gas emission, the United States postponed setting up of actual dates. They also stated that a framework to reduce greenhouse gas emission by 7-10% was underway. It is also notable that the then U. S president Bush was widely criticized for backing and avoiding to take the lead to tackle and control global warming.

According to several reports, United States stance on global warming and environmental issues is still something uncertain. Parties to this convention adopted Kyoto Protocol to bind developed countries target to reduce emission levels. From 2008 – 2012 36 industrialized nations along with the European Union promised to decrease the level of emission by 5% in comparison to the levels in 1990. However, Kyoto protocol was able to maintain emission lower during this period. In December 2015, at Paris, Countries pledged to maintain the rise of global average

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temperature below 2 degree Celsius, making the Paris agreement as the most ambitious agreement taken with regard to prevention of human induced climate changes. In 2017, 51 countries ratified the Paris Agreement before the most important climate change negotiations of the year.

## **The Convention on Climate Change: What Happens Now?**

Upon the ratification by thirty states, the Convention on Climate Change has been signed and became legally bound. This Convention conducts regular meetings with member states. In April 2018, United Nations Climate Change launched its first ever annual report, indicating the achievements that have been made in the year 2017 and plans for the future. The report covers wide range of areas including Kyoto protocol and Paris Agreement. United Nations Climate Change built a global response momentum, with regard to climate change in 2017, having set greater plans for the future. The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro on 5th of June 1992 and entered into force on 29th of December 1993. The Convention on Biological Diversity focuses on three main goals, which are: fair sharing of benefits from the usage of genetic resources, conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of bio diversity.

To date, there are 193 Parties in support of this convention. Conservation of biodiversity is something more than a moral issue, as it is vital for human health and world economy and it is also integral to maintain environmental activities including carbon cycle, oxygen cycle, water purification and soil production. Natural resources are being threatened by species loss. According to the estimation one fourth of all pharmacological products in North America contain ingredients derived from wild plants. This convention is a global attempt to protect biodiversity. Countries pledge to protect endangered species and their habitats, under this treaty. International and national levels measures include multiple inventories to protect threatened and vulnerable species.

Under this Convention, new rules have been set up to provide access to tropical species and animals, which are important to the genetic tailoring of ingredients for new crops and other products. Under this convention, tropical countries will get a percentage of profit from such development projects and also assistance for meeting their obligations. Even in this Convention the United States is the one and only country which has not signed the biodiversity treaty, as it feared that this might hurt biotechnology industries competitiveness by forcing them to release confidential information. The United States also claimed the convention might incur costs without creating any benefits. But still the United States support the preservation of biodiversity.

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## The Convention on Biological Diversity: What Happens Now?

This convention cannot be expected to act straight forward like the Convention on Climate Change, as the issues are not defined properly. Moreover, issues arising are not only be technical but also political and legal. However, this convention is a framework from which more comprehensive agreements might be reached in future.

### An Overview of Agenda 21

The popular 'Agenda 21' is a plan concerning the environmental for the next century. It was the major and most important document, came out of Rio, which was set to address fundamental problems of resources of the developing world. The main aim of Agenda 21 is to make sure that the global developments are taking place in a sustainable manner. The other primary aim is to eliminate poverty worldwide through comprehensive management of energy resources and improvement of quality life, by providing access to clean water, sewage and waste management. Moreover, Agenda 21 also succeed in the sustainable usage of atmosphere, freshwater and marine organisms, as according to the reports, one third of deaths around the world are caused by contaminated food and water. Issues like desertification, forest protection and ownership of the responsibility to look after Agenda 21 implementations were not agreed upon prior to the conference. Desertification is a serious issue in Africa while it affects one fourth of earth's landmass. Desertification affects one-quarter of the earth's landmass and is a particular problem in Africa. Over 100 countries and some 800 million people are affected by desertification, which can only be tackled through reforestation and soil conservation. Coming back to the Agenda the serious concern was who would take the responsibility of monitoring the implementation and financing of Agenda 21.

Most nations wanted to establish a Commission for sustainable development, which is indirectly a UN monitoring agency. This was agreed but no outcomes are yet been determined. It was recommended Global Environmental Facility (GEF) to handle the funding of this convention but it was opposed by the Third World indicating GEF's connection with World Bank and industrialized nations. World Bank has a poor record of protecting environment and more importantly, third world has less or no influence over the World Bank. At the conclusion of negotiations it was agreed that funds will be directed through a variety of entities including the GEF, regional banks and bilateral aid. According to some of the reports, the minimum fund required for the implementation of Agenda 21 was not mentioned. However, the current total for development assistance from the industrialized countries is \$55 billion annually.

The average assistance would amount to 0.7% of each industrial country's gross national product (GNP) to total U. S. \$625 billion, the estimated annual cost of implementing the 115

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projects of Agenda 21. Nations want solutions to the debt problems of low and middle income nations. Creditors were requested to provide debt relief to the poorest heavily indebted countries.

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