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EVENT

Dinner Dialogue
Global Environment
Governance

Global Environmental Goals and Obligations: The Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing Environmental Conventions



[1]

Multiple international environmental agreements govern countries' treatment and protection of their natural resources and environment. The treaties have different requirements for the Parties to report on the implementation, e.g., regulations, policies, strategies, etc. However, to date there has been no comprehensive assessment regarding implementation of these agreements on the national level. The Global Environmental Governance Project, spearheaded by Prof. Dr. Maria Ivanova, Associate Professor of the McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies at University of Massachusetts Boston, aims to fill this knowledge gap.

Ecologic Institute together with the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) hosted a Dinner Dialogue on 8 June 2015 titled "Global Environmental Goals and Obligations: The Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing Environmental Conventions". Prof. Dr. Ivanova, outlined the background and methodology of her extensive study. The study will examine international legal instruments for mobilizing collective action toward solving global environmental problems. Outputs of the work will include, inter alia, an Environmental Conventions Index measuring countries' implementation over time.

Global Environmental Governance Project

The world has crossed a number of planetary boundaries, notably in

relation to climate, land-system change, loss of biosphere integrity, and altered biogeochemical cycles. But countries have little systematic, comparative information about their performance on global environmental goals and obligations. As a result, policymakers cannot analyse and evaluate their performance adequately, articulate clear goals, strategies, and actions and mobilize necessary financial, human and institutional resources.

In the [Global Environmental Governance Project](#) [2], Parties' submissions from ten global environmental agreements are being analysed and uniformly ranked for compliance with the reporting requirements. This information will be compiled into an Environmental Conventions Index.

Prof. Dr. Ivanova stressed that the purpose of the Index is not a "name and shame" exercise. Also, at this stage there will be no assessment if the reports of Parties match the actual situation and compliance on the ground. Instead, the study approaches the reported implementation from an informational standpoint in order to see where countries are at with international environmental agreement compliance. It tries to understand the triggers for differences in the reporting and what lessons or conclusions can be drawn from this.

Results of the ongoing project

The results have shown interesting and, in some cases, surprising trends. Countries' compliance with reporting and/or implementation did not always correlate with the size of the country, number of questions in the reporting obligations, performance levels, etc. For instance, contrary to initial assumptions, high reporting compliance was found even for some countries with very low implementation scores and despite lengthy reporting obligations required by the convention (e.g., the Ramsar Convention).

Various factors may influence whether a government prioritises compliance with different conventions, such as interest of funders, problems on the ground, individual motivation of the national representative for reporting, amongst others. Additionally, Prof. Dr. Ivanova pointed out that the response to and interest in the study has been quite positive since it is being conducted as neutral academic research outside of the political realm (i.e., by the Secretariats of the conventions).

Dinner dialogue event

The dinner included guests from various backgrounds, including politics, academia, business, diplomacy, non-profit, NGO, and research. The diversity of perspectives and insights within the group fostered a lively discussion focused not only on the information being captured by the Environmental Conventions

Index but also the future sustainability and value of the project.

Prof. Dr. Ivanova is not only Professor at UMass but also a faculty associate in the Governance, Environment and Markets Initiative at Yale University. Partner at the Ecologic Institute, Prof. Dr. Ivanova has also been a member of the U.N. Secretary-General's Scientific Advisory Board since 2013. For the study outlined above, she received the inaugural Andrew Carnegie Fellowship supported by Carnegie Corporation of New York.

8 June 2015

Berlin

[Dr. Maria Ivanova](#) [3]

Main Link

Global Environmental Governance Project

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Date

8 June 2015

Location

Berlin, Germany

Language

English

Number of Participants

15

Keywords

Global environmental governance, implementation, international agreements, conventions, law, index, performance, Dinner Dialogue, discussion, Berlin

Source URL (modified on 11/16/2018 - 19:00): <https://www.ecologic.eu/12434>

Links

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[2] <https://www.environmentalgovernance.org/>

[3] <https://www.ecologic.eu/2853>