

Hybrid Arrangements

There is a growing body of experience in bringing together various constituencies to work productively toward common goals. Many governments have taken measures to structure their relationships with universities, NGOs, and business in a way that optimizes constructive interactions on issues of importance, including the environment.

In Canada, for example, national- and provincial-level Round Tables on Environment and Economy have been formed, comprising government ministers, heads of corporations, and representatives of diverse public interests including labour unions and the environmental movement. These fora have several distinguishing features. They are multi-stakeholder in membership. They have a definite mandate to address policy and programming linkages between environment and development. They reach out to various communities and interests to obtain input and to expose them to innovative ideas. They seek to achieve consensus. And their members serve as ambassadors to their respective constituencies. Such approaches may be applicable at the international as well as the national level.

In the field of international cooperation, there are a number of successful institutional models which are substantially different from the standard intergovernmental model of the UN system. Possibly the best known of these hybrid multilateral institutions is the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) in which a mix of donor nations, developing country research agencies, NGOs, parastatal organizations, multilateral development banks and agricultural scientists in their personal capacity oversee a \$250,000,000 per year research system. The CGIAR system is highly decentralized, and operates without having any formal or legal entity. Group decisions are non binding, but are reinforced by strong commitment to the general goals of the system, and underpinned by the World Bank's willingness to support research centre budgets as a donor of last resort.

Negotiations among funding and recipient institutions are mitigated through a technical advisory group, in which attention to technical validity overrides political expediency. Thus both funders and recipients are spared the necessity of reaching agreement on details of text. All decision making is by a process of iterative consensus building. The CGIAR is still evolving, and may have a structural weakness in not sufficiently incorporating the views of developing country research institutions. However it is a prototype for non-confrontational multilateral negotiation which has been operating successfully and on a growing scale of operation for twenty years.