

institutions - the multilateral development banks, IMF, and GATT - as well as the regional development banks, have become central participants in world economic and development policy matters, and are increasingly involving themselves in environment and development matters.

The scientific community, the NGO community, and the business community also effectively carry out international functions outside the aegis of the UN system, and often provide the scientific and intellectual basis for multilateral action, as has been the case with the current negotiations on biodiversity. These interests are implicated in global environment and development questions and should be considered as major "stakeholders" in the outcome of UNCED. One of UNCED's key achievements may be to harness the energy, expertise and vision of these diverse groups for global environment and development needs.

#### Informal Multilateral Fora

Networks of institutions, expert meetings, and periodic high-level meetings could provide non-institutionalized vehicles for furthering the momentum generated by UNCED. Representatives have considerable freedom to express their experienced, expert views through such fora and are able to carry the "consensus of judgments" to their own institutions for consideration and individual action. The key challenge of such approaches is to maintain links with UN and other multilateral agencies in order to be relevant in decision making and ensure commitment to follow-up action, while at the same time maintaining sufficient independence to prevent the mechanism from becoming mired in bureaucracy.

The Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is an example of a non-permanent arrangement, involving experts. The work of this group has been instrumental in raising the world's understanding of the scientific basis for climate change and its policy implications to a high enough level that political action began nationally and internationally.

A regional approach to institutional cooperation has been suggested by the Secretary General of UNCED, to provide for fund raising and priority setting in meeting regional and national environment and development needs. This collaborative group or network may involve the regional development banks, UN regional economic commissions, regional UNDP and UNEP representatives, regional economic cooperation organizations, and others.