

Total ODA - which in 1972 was far less than \$30 billion - grew to \$38 billion by 1980, while private flows amounted to \$66 billion, and export credits were \$16.5 billion. By 1988, however, private flows dropped to \$33 billion, and export credits to \$3 billion, while ODA increased to \$51 billion (and other official development finance grew from \$8 to \$16 billion). Recent statistical data reported to the General Assembly in the report by the Director General for Development and International Economic Cooperation reviewing "Operational Activities of the UN system,"²⁷ shows a declining share of ODA flowing through the UN system, a problem first highlighted in the UN Joint Inspection Unit report of 1985, "Some Reflections on Reform in the United Nations," better known as the "Bertrand Report." It may be hoped that reduced needs for military base rights and similar political favors will encourage a return to reliance on multilateral channels.

The combination of the critical role now played by ODA financial flows into developing countries, as the principal source of investment in their future economic strategies - of which a shrinking portion goes through multilateral agencies - and awareness of the need for preventive action in the face of long lead-times raises difficult choices for allocating resources between near and long term benefits. General Assembly guidance on this point - allocating resources between near-term and long-term environmental objectives - was expressed in 1987:

"Although it is important to tackle immediate environmental problems, anticipatory and preventive policies are the most effective and economical in achieving environmentally sound development."²⁸

But lofty policy guidance at the global level is of little use at the national and local levels where tough choices have to be made in specific contexts that vary from country to country. The relationship between abundant coal supplies in some developing countries, and the climate implications of growing CO₂ emissions from their use highlights the difficult choice between near and long term benefits as well as between local and global benefits when allocating current investment capital in ways that determine future energy strategies, and also raises the question whether bilateral or multilateral mechanisms are more effective in securing agreement on a common policy. (The related question of "additionality" is discussed in Chapter 9.)

4. Ambitious Goals Set By National Leaders. Today, as in 1972, "the constitutional strengths, and weaknesses, of any international organization