

wildlife management, land use and local industrial pollution and waste management in urban areas. This is not to say that local environmental degradation has no transborder or global effects, but that the principal direct impact is on local conditions and the solutions are primarily local in nature. On the other hand, the global and transboundary nature of some of the most pressing environmental problems dictates that countries individually cannot develop effective solutions. Recognizing that ecological interdependence requires collective action, a range of environmental issues, such as on ozone layer depletion, global warming and climate change, biodiversity, long distance airborne pollution, forestry management, hazardous waste management, and marine resource management, have been addressed in international forums.

The existing "system" that addresses this broad set of issues is fractured. The use of the term system seriously overstates the coherence of international environmental management. The ad hoc structure of international environmental policy-making does not provide an integrated system for the development or implementation of policy. Efforts to date on generating global cooperation on environmental issues as a single undertaking and reducing environmental stress in general have had only moderate success. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) cannot claim great success in terms of concrete results, although it was a start and raised political and public awareness.² The comprehensive program to guide national and international action, Agenda 21, agreed to by governments, for example, lacks the force of law. The implementation of Agenda 21 is dependent upon "best endeavours" and not contractual obligations. UNCED laid the basis for action, but did not translate this groundwork into a commitment to action. Nor did the conference bridge the North-South gap, where the South placed relatively greater emphasis on economic development and poverty alleviation. Much remains to be done by countries unilaterally or collectively to make firm commitments and take action toward reducing environmental stress.

An important achievement of UNCED was agreement to institutionalize a process to monitor progress on environmental and sustainable development issues, leading subsequently to the establishment of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). The CSD was formally established by the United

² "... the sad bottom line is that governments did not agree to implement any measures that would alter the dismal trends that brought them to Rio...Our leaders left almost nothing unsaid and almost everything undone." Jim MacNeil, the former Secretary General of the Brundtland Commission, statement before the Canadian Parliament's Standing Committee on the Environment. Quoted in Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Environmental and Demographic Threats to Canadian Security", Canadian Foreign Policy, Vol. 2, No.2, Fall 1994, p. 28.