

- The United Nations Principles on the Human Environment (from the Stockholm Conference, 1972);
- Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1925 and 1949 on protection of International Armed Conflict, including: Victims of International Armed Conflict (1977), Protection of the Environment (1991 - under negotiation);
- Partial Test Ban Treaty 1963, and other agreements respecting nuclear weapons in 1968, 1974, 1976, 1982;
- Conventions concerning: biological, bacterial and chemical warfare (1925 et. seq.) military action in Antarctica (1959); nuclear activities in Latin America (1967); nuclear explosions or military exercises on the moon (1979); nuclear activities in the South Pacific (1985);
- ENMOD 1978;
- Inhumane Weapons Convention (1981).

Each of these agreements has had a specific intent and narrow focus. A narrow, well-defined focus has been necessary in order to achieve international agreement through traditional legal negotiation methods, and to produce a text to which signatories could be held accountable. But it has become apparent that the proliferation of agreements has, in total, become piecemeal nibbling at what is an increasingly integrated and expanding problem. The large number of treaties and conventions, each separately negotiated, has resulted in inconsistency in scope and method of application, and, in some cases, contradictions in definitions.

Together, some critics have called the assembly of conflict-limiting and environmental protection agreements little more than statements of honourable intent. Those critics have stated that to make the agreements "real", there must be vigorous programmes of verification and surveillance, with public disclosure of breaches. Verification may be passive (including self-reporting and free access to observers) or active and intensive, including on-site inspections and monitoring devices. Some of the agreements, e.g. The Antarctic Treaty, make provision for this. Others do not. The success of verification of an international agreement depends upon compliance with an obligation to report, and identification of the authority, resources, and responsibility to take action.

Many students of international treaties (e.g. Goldblatt (1991)) have pointed out the shortcomings and limitations of piecemeal agreements to achieve environmental protection; and at the same time have drawn attention to the impracticability and undesirability of any umbrella or master agreement to which nations would agree to be held accountable. There thus remains the dilemma of how to bring about general environmental protection through commitment to specific narrowly focused actions.

Another characteristic of the present generation of international agreements is that, because in general they address broad problems through specific narrow actions, it is difficult to assess how effective they are in practice. What should be the criteria for effectiveness? Protection of the environment can of course be demonstrated in a material way if previously observed damage to an ecosystem is seen to have ceased, or improvement of some measurable physical or biological parameter, such as acidity of a lake or the number of songbirds, can be demonstrated. But it