



**Global  
Conventions  
and  
Environmental  
Governance**

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Photo: Susanne Wymann, CDE

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## Global answers to global challenges

### Sustainability: The emergence of a global awareness

The world has been struggling for global approaches to development since the 1970s, when several economic shocks clearly revealed the limits of economic development. The foundations for a global perspective were laid by the Brundtland Commission. Later, at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio and the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, a series of conventions and measures were initiated with the aim of linking economic development with environmental conservation and securing the conservation of natural resources on the international, national and local levels for the benefit of the global population. *The Millennium Declaration* with its *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* is the most recent global answer to the immense challenges of the new millennium. Today, environmental issues are dealt with in well over 700 international agreements and conventions, not counting bilateral conventions.

**International Environmental Agreements: Database Website**  
[www.uoregon.edu/~lea/](http://www.uoregon.edu/~lea/)  
 See also the overview table in the bibliography.

### Global environmental conventions and the MDGs

Currently, debates and international cooperation are dominated by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs emerged from a worldwide consternation with the fact that previous efforts have not succeeded in reducing social and economic gaps between the North and the South, and that the Earth's global ecosystem is more seriously threatened today than ever before. In order to change this, countries around the world have agreed to coordinate their struggle against social and ecological degradation processes and to involve the entire global society.

Nevertheless, the MDGs are only one specific expression of the efforts undertaken to formulate development approaches on an international and global level. They cannot and are not intended to replace the global environmental conventions (particularly CBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD) or other broadly supported conventions and policies on environmental issues. Combined, these international efforts contribute to creating a comprehensive and coherent framework of regulations that will eventually secure sustainable resource use and sustainable development at all levels (environmental governance).

Unfortunately, all global solutions suggested to date are ill with the same disease of lacking implementation. They are meant to complement each other, yet often they compete with one another, cancel out each other's impacts, or actually contradict each other. Finding synergies and overcoming conflicts between different approaches to sustainability is thus a central issue in current international cooperation.

**Major Global Environmental Conventions ("Rio Conventions")**

- *Convention on Biological Diversity CBD*  
[www.biodiv.org](http://www.biodiv.org)
- *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change UNFCCC*  
[www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int)
- *United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification UNCCD*  
[www.unccd.int](http://www.unccd.int)

**Millennium Development Goals MDGs**  
[www.un.org/millenniumgoals/](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/)

*Documents mentioned in the margin are annotated in the bibliography.*

# Global environmental conventions: Cornerstones

## The environmental conventions are binding

**Conventions and treaties:** These two terms can be used interchangeably and refer to legally binding agreements between states. Conventions or treaties define the duties of all states party to them, i.e. all participating countries.

**Signing a convention** represents the promise of a state to adhere to the principles and norms specified in the document. Signing does not imply any legal duties, such as adapting national legislations. Signing is the first step that states undertake towards ratifying a convention.

**Ratification of a convention** represents the promise of a state to uphold this convention and adhere to the legal norms that it specifies. Ratification is a process which may involve the development of new legislations to ensure that the given convention can be upheld. A convention "enters into force" when a predetermined number of states has signed and ratified it.

See also:  
[www.unac.org/en/link\\_learn/monitoring/susdev\\_unep\\_mec\\_bg.asp](http://www.unac.org/en/link_learn/monitoring/susdev_unep_mec_bg.asp)

Conventions are internationally recognised legal instruments and are therefore binding. By signing a convention, states commit themselves to adapt policies and institutional settings within and outside their country to the goals of the given convention. Conventions are continually further developed in the meetings of the *Conference of Parties (COP)*. This process involves open consultative exchange, also with NGOs. Member states regularly report on their efforts to implement the conventions.

## From narrow concepts to extended approaches

The names of the conventions show that they were originally designed from a sectoral perspective. For example, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands – the first of the modern international environmental agreements, dating from 1971 – pursues the goals of conservation and wise use of all wetlands. The CBD focuses on conserving the diversity of genes, species and ecosystems, while the main objective of the UNFCCC is to minimise the negative consequences of global warming by containing the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The UNCCD even takes an approach mostly based on local intervention by concentrating on the most vulnerable communities and on ecosystems in arid and semi-arid zones.

However, growing awareness of an urgent need for regarding and treating the Earth as one coherent global ecosystem has led to continual reinterpretation of the conventions. Step by step, the underlying approaches, in many cases originally focusing one-sidedly on conservation, have been extended towards a more "holistic" view. As a result, the conventions have also become more closely linked among each other. Today, efforts generally focus on a combination of conservation and sustainable use based on extended ecosystem approaches.

## Focus on poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods

Poor countries, and the poorest population groups within them, are most vulnerable to the direct threats of environmental change and environmental destruction. While they are directly dependent on a healthy natural resource basis for their livelihood, their choice of ecological and social adaptation strategies and economic alternatives is closely limited. The international community has increasingly come to realise that poverty reduction can only be successful if sustainable use of the environment is achieved on the local, national, regional and global levels. Based on this insight, debates related to the implementation of the conventions now focus on all issues that are relevant to *sustainable livelihood systems*.

## The Global Environment Facility: A financing mechanism

In 1991, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established as an independent financing organisation to promote the implementation of the conventions in developing and transition countries who otherwise lack the necessary financial means. UNFCCC, CBD, UNCCD, and POPs (the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants) determine the criteria governing the *GEF Council's* decisions on financing projects and programmes. The GEF also cooperates closely with other conventions and agreements, particularly with regard to synergies. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank are the *implementing agencies* of the GEF. They are supported by seven international organisations, the so-called *GEF executing agencies*. Along with the GEF, financing mechanisms within the individual conventions, such as the UNCCD *Global Mechanism*, contribute to the implementation of the conventions.

[www.thegef.org](http://www.thegef.org)  
[www.gm-unccd.org](http://www.gm-unccd.org)

## Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

The international Millennium Assessment (MA) work programme (2001–2005), initiated by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, is another effort to promote the conventions, support human well-being, and contribute to poverty reduction. The work programme has conducted inter-linked assessments on various levels (*"multiscale" assessment on local, watershed, national, regional and global scales*). The assessments are intended to provide decision-makers and the public with the necessary scientific information on changes in ecosystems, their impacts, and possible countermeasures. The MA has now released its final reports. There are plans for integrated assessments of this type to be repeated.

*Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis*  
[www.millenniumassessment.org](http://www.millenniumassessment.org)

# Implementation poses major challenges...

## MDG Task Force on Environmental Sustainability 2005

Why is environmental sustainability elusive?  
Eight obstacles to ameliorating environmental degradation:

- Lack of clear operational objectives
- Insufficient direct investment in environmental management
- Poor integration into sector policies
- Inadequate institutional capacity, misalignment of goals, and poor governance
- Widespread market failures and distortions
- Underinvestment in science and technology
- Difficulty of regional and international cooperation
- Limited public awareness

[www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/1f\\_environment.htm](http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/1f_environment.htm)

## "Sachs Report"

[www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/index.htm](http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/index.htm)

## OECD/DAC Guidelines:

*Integrating the Conventions into Development Co-operation*

[www.oecd.org/dataoecd/49/2/1960098.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/49/2/1960098.pdf)

From time to time, the conventions are subject to fundamental questioning. Critics see them as being too descriptive and functioning too strongly in a standardising and *top-down* manner, which, in their view, does not adequately reflect the diversity and complexity of the environmental issues at stake. It is true that the signatory states appear to have difficulties operationalising the objectives and introducing them coherently in all sectors and at all levels. However, pushing aside the conventions due to implementation difficulties would mean that their great potential for improving *environmental governance* would be left untapped. Analyses and initiatives to overcome difficulties are therefore timely.

## Parallel structures and competition

Because the conventions are formulated from a sectoral perspective, parallel structures and procedures have emerged both within countries and between development organisations, creating competition with regard to finances and influence. This can hamper cooperation between the various ministries of a state. Moreover, different institutions have developed different ways of thinking and different terminologies to express their ideas. This further complicates joint action and the emergence of synergies.

- ▶ The challenge is to transform competition and parallelisms between different institutions into a coherent approach and coherent action.

## Contradictions and incompatibilities

Precisely because the conventions are so closely linked with regard to the issues they deal with, they can also be detrimental to each other. Whether UNFCCC activities – e.g. under the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) programme – have a positive or a negative impact on biodiversity, for example, depends strongly on how much account is taken of the local social and ecological situation. If reforestation projects to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> give preference to monocultures of exotic species, this can have a negative impact on biodiversity (whereas natural regeneration supports both biodiversity and *livelihood systems*). Hydropower plants, while helping to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, always have a negative impact on the environment (which, through appropriate measures, can be minimised, but never eliminated). Therefore, the objectives of the different conventions must always be kept in mind and weighed against each other. This is a difficult task, especially in poor countries, where tensions between the need for rapid economic improvements and that for long-term environmental conservation are particularly high.

- ▶ The challenge is to weigh the objectives of various approaches against each other and negotiate *tradeoffs* between these objectives, the negative environmental side-effects they imply, and appropriate accompanying measures.

### Overlapping regulatory frameworks

Every convention is under pressure from other organisations and treaties that function each along their own lines, with other objectives, regulatory frameworks, and procedures. For example, most signatory states of the environmental conventions are also members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Economic development, however, is often the driving force behind environmental degradation. Despite global negotiations, the gaps between economic and environmental multilateral regulatory systems are widening. On the one hand, industrial opportunities and trade relations can indeed help to reduce pressure on natural resources. On the other hand, the driving principles of the WTO are contradicted by the *precautionary principle* that forms part of all more recent environmental conventions. On the whole, the environmental conventions form a central counterbalance to the WTO.

- ▶ The challenge is to integrate treaties on trade, environmental conventions, and poverty reduction in a coherent strategy for sustainable development.

### The missing link between the macro and micro scales

The conventions must be implemented in consideration of local social realities. The call for *bottom-up* procedures with regard to the concrete design of implementation processes thus seems justified. Yet, advocates both of *top-down* and of *bottom-up* approaches are reluctant to make compromises. Behind this lies the problem of a *missing link* between the macro and micro scales: There is a lack of knowledge on how global, national and sub-national levels interact – and how they can be influenced with a view to overall objectives.

The fact that conventions and activities on higher levels have an impact on the field, goes uncontested. But what is the nature of this impact? Another uncontested fact is that regulatory frameworks on development processes need to be developed from the bottom to ensure that they respect local realities and involve the local people as stakeholders. On the other hand, these bottom-up processes appear as vague, lengthy, and weak in comparison to the dominant economic paradigms and development dynamics.

- ▶ The challenge is to identify interfaces where top-down and bottom-up processes can be interlocked in order to create a socio-political environment that in the medium and long term will be favourable to sustainable development.

*"Emerging from German National Law in 1976, the precautionary principle now appears in numerous international environmental conventions and declarations. Principle 15 of the 1992 Rio Declaration defines the precautionary principle as follows: 'Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.'"*

[www.unac.org/en/link\\_learn/monitoring/susdev\\_unep\\_mec\\_bg.asp](http://www.unac.org/en/link_learn/monitoring/susdev_unep_mec_bg.asp)

[www.wto.org/index.htm](http://www.wto.org/index.htm)  
[www.greenyearbook.org](http://www.greenyearbook.org)

*Franchising Global Governance: Making Sense of the Johannesburg Type II Partnerships, Yearbook of International Co-operation on Environment and Development*  
[www.greenyearbook.org/articles/03\\_01\\_andonova-levy.pdf](http://www.greenyearbook.org/articles/03_01_andonova-levy.pdf)

## ... how can they be tackled?

In its 2005 report, the MDG Task Force on Environmental Sustainability emphasises that its suggestions regarding procedures and necessary structural adaptations are not new; the one thing that could be new is the implementation of measures that have long been decided upon! The following tendencies can be interpreted as a contribution towards this goal:

### **Sustainable land management links poverty reduction, MDGs, and conventions**

Great integration efforts are made particularly under the guidance of the CBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD secretariats, benefiting also the work of the MDG Task Force on Environmental Sustainability. These efforts involve a return to the actual *rationale* behind the conventions. *Sustainability, equity, and benefits* are named as key elements common to the conventions as well as the MDGs. Poverty reduction and sustainable development are objectives pursued at both the policy and the operational level. The same policies and measures often simultaneously address climate, biodiversity and desertification objectives. This becomes obvious in the field of sustainable management of natural resources. Even if the role of sustainable resource management may not be obvious in the formulation of the conventions, it is increasingly acknowledged as a basic condition for sustainable development and as a starting point for finding synergies among the conventions. With this in mind, the GEF has now launched its own operational programme on sustainable land management.

*Environment and human well-being:  
A practical strategy*  
[www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/  
tf\\_environment.htm](http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/tf_environment.htm)

### **The country-level approach links global and local scales**

After having been somewhat evaded for a certain time, the national level is now again being mentioned as a major avenue for international cooperation. For several reasons it is seen as the element that should take on the function of the *missing link* between macro and micro levels with regard to convention implementation: First, the country level is an important entry point for international cooperation. Secondly, it offers existing and institutionally established procedures and instruments that can be used for implementing the conventions. And thirdly, the general formulation of the conventions can be concretised in accordance with the existing needs and capacities of a local environment. Another central issue is seen in the fact that by signing a convention, the governments assume the responsibility for implementing it. They must be supported in the task of balancing national interests and global concerns in terms of geography and timing.

*The Millennium Development Goals  
– Thinking beyond the Sachs Report*  
[www.die-gdi.de/die\\_homepage.nsf/  
FSepub?OpenFrameset](http://www.die-gdi.de/die_homepage.nsf/FSepub?OpenFrameset)

### **Coordination and division of tasks**

Partner countries do need financial and know-how support in order to fulfil the function of a central implementation agency. However, the local presence of too many development actors and interference between different development goals and policies slow down implementation. This is where both the possibilities and the need for coordination among donor countries

and the various institutions are greatest. Today, the emphasis is therefore on multilateralism instead of the bilateral forms of cooperation commonly undertaken in the past. Multilateral cooperation facilitates an adequate division of tasks between various international actors.

### Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers as a basis for integrated national development planning

Emphasis on the role of the country level gives new significance to Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) – a pivotal and widely supported planning instrument. PRSPs could also be used with a view to implementing the conventions and the MDGs. However, this would require that they be expanded. The idea is to use them for devising a single coherent country strategy that would unite previous parallel policies and strategies in one single document, implying also the subordination of sector policies. Themes such as *good governance* or *gender mainstreaming* would need to be integrated at an equal footing with *environment*. Furthermore, such a document should also embody implementation principles such as decentralisation, capacity-building and multi-stakeholder approaches. Success can be expected in the event that these country strategies are internationally embedded and secure positive developments in field projects by supporting strong governments, regulations, and monitoring mechanisms at the national level.

### Transforming conflicts into trade-offs, synergies, and win-win options

On the national level, one of the main tasks is to identify and balance options for action between sector strategies and environmental objectives. Long-term changes in the environment need to be considered just as seriously as short- and mid-term social and economic needs. Only broadly supported dialogue – involving government officials, people directly concerned, and experts – will make it possible to optimise environmental goals and formulate coherent procedures that are accepted and secured on all levels.

In the best of cases this leads to win-win options that allow for national and global objectives to be pursued jointly. If this is not the case, and national interests and global concerns are in conflict, negotiations and trade-offs at a higher level are all the more important. The GEF can provide support with regard to compensations for environmental services delivered by least developed countries (LDCs) to the benefit of the global society as a whole.

*Return to multilateralism: Example*  
In the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture is placed under the authority of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The FAO has recently set up a multilateral system that protects plants considered as vital for world agriculture, endowing them with a special status that prevents monopolisation of the supply of their genetic resources.

[www.greenyearbook.org](http://www.greenyearbook.org)

*MDG-Based PRSPs Need More Ambitious  
Economic Policies*  
[www.undp.org/poverty](http://www.undp.org/poverty)

*Gender Perspectives on the Conventions  
on Biodiversity, Climate Change,  
and Desertification*  
[www.fao.org/sd/dim\\_pe1/pe1\\_041002\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/dim_pe1/pe1_041002_en.htm)

*Integration of Biodiversity Concerns in Climate  
Change Mitigation Activities – A Toolkit*  
[www.umweltbundesamt.org/fpdf-l/2793.pdf](http://www.umweltbundesamt.org/fpdf-l/2793.pdf)

# Swiss assets for implementing the conventions

Switzerland is in a rather advantageous position with regard to emerging efforts by the international community to harmonise the implementation of the conventions. The priorities and the experience of Swiss international cooperation offer a considerable potential for improving the implementation process. This shows that even a small country can make valuable specific contributions within a multilateral structure.

## Advocacy for international environmental governance

Switzerland regards ecological sustainability as an indispensable prerequisite for any development policy focusing on poverty reduction. Switzerland therefore advocates international environmental governance. In accordance with this view, Switzerland has ratified the Rio Conventions, which are binding for all institutions and on all levels of action and include the commitment to support partner countries in implementing the conventions. Switzerland has taken on an active role in international environmental organisations and processes, such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the UNCCD, UNCBD, UNFCCC and the related protocols; as well as the GEF. Switzerland is also one of the most important donors of the International Tropical Timber Agreement. Switzerland played an active part in the World Summit and is currently focusing on following up the commitments made within the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

*Examples of Swiss cross-institutional approaches:*

• **Global Environmental Programme (GEP)**

*In 1992, with additional financial resources, Switzerland launched a bilateral Global Environmental Programme, which pursues the objective of supporting efforts of developing countries to implement the environmental conventions. The GEP has three focal areas: climate change / energy; biodiversity / management of natural resources; and sustainable management of natural resources.*

• **Renewable Energy Promotion in International Cooperation (REPIC)**

*REPIC is an interdepartmental platform that acts as a market-oriented service centre. It strengthens and coordinates Swiss official activities to promote renewable energy in international cooperation. It further creates new strategic partnerships with private enterprises and the civil society in order to contribute to the development of renewable energy systems in developing and transition countries.*

[www.replic.ch/files/index\\_en.html](http://www.replic.ch/files/index_en.html)

## Ensuring the division of tasks and coherence within the country

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco) are jointly responsible for planning and implementing Swiss international cooperation. The Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL) is responsible for environmental policy on the national and international levels. It leads and coordinates negotiations and the implementation of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, as well as cooperation with the GEF. The UNCCD is within the responsibility of SDC, the CBD focal point is housed at SAEFL. Cooperation with seco mainly concerns activities related to the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, as well as the CBD and the Cartagena Protocol.

SDC and seco closely collaborate with other relevant institutions to find and use synergies and coherences between different environmental approaches. In order to strengthen coherence, they have adopted a shared outline (2004) and a shared multilateral strategy. These documents confirm that Switzerland's approach to development corresponds to the state of the art of international cooperation.

**Multilaterale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit  
– Strategie der Schweiz**

[www.deza.ch/ressources/  
deza\\_product\\_de\\_2002.pdf](http://www.deza.ch/ressources/deza_product_de_2002.pdf)

*This document is not yet translated into English.  
It is based on the previous SDC Multilateral  
Strategy published in 2002.*

### Embedding national development policies in global environmental policy

It is increasingly acknowledged that a programme approach based on national ownership is more promising for reducing poverty than a conventional project approach. It is thus no coincidence that institutions like the OECD and the MDG Task Force on Environmental Sustainability set their hopes on the country level and PRSPs as the entry point for environmental concerns. Switzerland has a rich experience and a good reputation for cooperation at the country level. Since 1999 Switzerland has also been working with PRSPs. A recent evaluation emphasises the significance of PRSPs for joint efforts of SDC and seco.

It is therefore an obvious consequence to concentrate Swiss development efforts increasingly on expanding national PRSPs to integrated and coherent national development policies that can guide other policies, sectoral policies and strategies. This requires harmonisation with other donors and institutions as a basic prerequisite. An overall policy must integrate concerns and strategies of the various conventions as well as principles like *gender mainstreaming* and good governance, which have long been established in Swiss development policy. On this basis, Switzerland will be able to focus even more on its specific areas of competence.

### Exploring links: Innovative and pilot function in project work

One of Switzerland's specific strengths is that it is firmly rooted and accepted in the field through its project work. Increased emphasis on overall strategies at the country level does not mean neglecting this project work. On the contrary: only the knowledge of how decision-making structures at higher levels undermine or support local development processes, and the experience of how positive accordance between the various levels can continually be enhanced and monitored, will make it possible to create the necessary coherence at the country level.

Previously, Switzerland has hardly capitalised on its broad experience with regard to interaction between the micro level of field projects and the meso level of national administrations in its priority countries. Pilot projects can create possibilities to approach the link between project work and the conventions. In this regard, it is important to recognise that discrimination between projects related to the environment and the environmental conventions and projects oriented towards other goals is obsolete: based on their contribution to poverty reduction and sustainable development, all projects are "environmental projects".

*Independent Evaluation of SDC's Bilateral Engagement in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) Process*  
[www.deza.ch/ressources/deza\\_product\\_e\\_620.pdf](http://www.deza.ch/ressources/deza_product_e_620.pdf)

*Addressing Climate Change through Development*  
[www.sdc.admin.ch/ressources/deza\\_product\\_en\\_1434.pdf](http://www.sdc.admin.ch/ressources/deza_product_en_1434.pdf)  
*Fourth National Communication of Switzerland 2005 (forthcoming)*  
[unfccc.int/national\\_reports/annex\\_i\\_natcom/submitted\\_natcom/items/1395.php](http://unfccc.int/national_reports/annex_i_natcom/submitted_natcom/items/1395.php)

## Selection of important conventions on environmental issues

<b><i>CBD Convention on Biological Diversity (1992/1993)</i></b>	<a href="http://www.biodiv.org">www.biodiv.org</a>
(188 parties in 2005; includes Cartagena Protocol) ... promotes conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components, and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from genetic resources, including appropriate access to genetic resources, appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, and appropriate funding.	
<b><i>UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992/1994)</i></b>	<a href="http://www.unfccc.int">www.unfccc.int</a>
(189 parties in 2005; includes Kyoto Protocol) ... aims to achieve stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, and to reach such a level within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened, and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.	
<b><i>UNCCD The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (1994/1996)</i></b>	<a href="http://www.unccd.int">www.unccd.int</a>
(191 parties in 2005) ... aims to combat desertification and reduce effects of droughts in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, through effective action at all levels.	
<b><i>Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (1971/1975)</i></b>	<a href="http://www.ramsar.org">www.ramsar.org</a>
(146 parties in August 2005) ... provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources as a contribution towards achieving global sustainable development. At present, 1459 wetland sites are designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.	
<b><i>Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972/1975)</i></b>	<a href="http://whc.unesco.org">whc.unesco.org</a> <b><i>(UNESCO World Heritage Convention)</i></b>
(180 parties in March 2005) ... aims to establish an effective system for the collective protection of cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, currently also referred to as "global commons". By 1995, the convention's World Heritage List consisted of 469 cultural and natural sites in 105 countries around the world; at present it includes a total of 812 sites in 137 countries. The Convention embodies the important concept of linking together the conservation of nature and that of culture.	
<b><i>UNEP Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (1973/1975)</i></b>	<a href="http://www.cites.org">www.cites.org</a>
(169 parties in 2005) ... aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the species' survival. Today, it accords varying degrees of protection to more than 30,000 species of animals and plants, whether they are traded as live specimens, for coats, or dried herbs.	
<b><i>Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1979/1983) (CMS or Bonn Convention)</i></b>	<a href="http://www.cms.int">www.cms.int</a>
(92 parties in 2005) ... aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range. CMS acts as a framework convention concerned with the conservation of wildlife and habitats on a global scale.	
<b><i>Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (ECE Water Convention) (1992/1996)</i></b>	<a href="http://www.unece.org/env/water">www.unece.org/env/water</a>
(35 parties in 2005) ... promotes protection and management of transboundary waters, both surface water and groundwater, as well as related ecosystems, including the marine environment (European and transition countries).	
<b><i>UNEP Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (1989/1992)</i></b>	<a href="http://www.basel.int">www.basel.int</a>
(166 parties in August 2005) ... has set up a framework for controlling movements of hazardous wastes across international borders. It has also developed the criteria for "environmentally sound management" and put into place a control system. Building on this framework, the Convention is currently emphasising full implementation and enforcement of treaty commitments, along with the minimisation of hazardous waste generation.	
<b><i>Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (1998/2004)</i></b>	<a href="http://www.pic.int">www.pic.int</a>
(98 parties in August 2005) ... promotes shared responsibility and cooperative efforts in the international trade of certain hazardous chemicals in order to protect human health and the environment from potential harm and contribute to the environmentally sound use of these hazardous chemicals.	
<b><i>Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants POPs (2001/2004)</i></b>	<a href="http://www.pops.int">www.pops.int</a>
(107 parties in August 2005) ... aims to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants, mainly by addressing the use and emission of POPs and the management of POP waste in developing countries.	

(adopted /entry into force)

## Recommended reading

The following list features a documented and targeted selection of print documents and internet sites of relevance to "Global Conventions and Environmental Governance". For easier reading they have been listed by title in alphabetic order in four rubrics.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Overview and general context |  Policies and strategies |
|  Methods and instruments      |  Case studies            |

The documents are available online (accessed on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2005).

**SDC. 2005**

### Addressing Climate Change through Development Cooperation: An Orientation on Climate Change Issues in the Field of Natural Resource Management, Livelihoods and Food Security



15 p. [www.sdc.admin.ch/ressources/deza\\_product\\_en\\_1434.pdf](http://www.sdc.admin.ch/ressources/deza_product_en_1434.pdf)

Written as an input for defining the SDC's role in addressing climate change with a particular emphasis on natural resources management and food security, this paper discusses the importance of climate change for development cooperation and determines key elements to guide future action addressing climate change within the SDC's overall mission. It takes into account the current state of international negotiations within the UNFCCC, the need for harmonisation, as well as the main objective of the SDC's Global Environmental Programme (GEP).

**A.V. Rojas Blanco. 2004**

### Comprehensive Environmental Projects: Linking Adaptation to Climate Change, Sustainable Land Use, Biodiversity Conservation and Water Management



*bothends, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 69 p. [www.bothends.org/service/Final\\_report\\_synergies.pdf](http://www.bothends.org/service/Final_report_synergies.pdf)*

Overview of the Rio Conventions including an analysis of synergies between environmental policies and the development of comprehensive environmental projects. More specifically, the report shows how climate change, sustainable land use, biodiversity conservation and water management considerations can be linked in order to help local communities and organisations to develop and strengthen environmental projects. Special consideration is given to adaptation to climate change.

**Shardul Agrawala et al. 2004**

### Development and Climate Change in Uruguay: Focus on Coastal Zones, Agriculture and Forestry



OECD. 71 p. [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/42/7/32427988.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/42/7/32427988.pdf)

An output from the OECD Development and Climate Change project, this document aims to provide guidance on how to mainstream responses to climate change within economic development planning and assistance policies. The key message from the Uruguay case study is that strategic sectoral policies can in fact create considerable synergies between climate change objectives, natural resource management, and economic development priorities.

**WBGU. 2005**

### Development needs Environmental Protection: Recommendations for the Millennium + 5 Summit



*German Advisory Council on Global Change, Policy Paper 4. 20 p. [www.wbgu.de/wbgu\\_pp2005\\_engl.pdf](http://www.wbgu.de/wbgu_pp2005_engl.pdf)*

The current poverty debate tends to overlook the environmental problems that exacerbate poverty in many developing countries. Emphasising the message sent out by the Earth Summit 1992, that environmental and development policies are inextricably linked, the WBGU gives core recommendations for (1) Linking poverty reduction with environmental policy; (2) Forging strategic partnerships with anchor countries; (3) Reforming the development and environment policy architecture; and (4) Increasing the funding commitments.



**Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. 2005**

### **Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis**

**World Resources Institute. Island Press Washington. 137 p. [www.millenniumassessment.org/en/Products.aspx?](http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/Products.aspx?)**

Synthesis report of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. Between 2001 and 2005, the MA has prepared scientific information on the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being and options for responding to these changes. MA helps to meet assessment needs of the CBD, UNCCD, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the Convention on Migratory Species, as well as the needs of other users in the private sector and civil society. This report's major shortcoming is its inadequate consideration of the linkage between poverty reduction and changes in the environment.



**UN Millennium Project. 2005**

### **Environment and Human Well-being: A Practical Strategy**

**Report of the Task Force on Environmental Sustainability. London: Earthscan. 139 p. [www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/tf\\_environment.htm](http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/tf_environment.htm)**

The detailed analyses and recommendations of the UN Millennium Project Task Forces are presented in a series of in-depth reports. Task Force 7 emphasises environmental sustainability as an essential prerequisite to achieving all other MDGs and points out the links between the MDGs, the environment, and poverty reduction. This report is a guiding document with regard to the search for synergies and coherence for environmental governance.



**Yianna Lambrou and Regina Laub. 2004**

### **Gender Perspectives on the Conventions on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification**

**FAO/World Agriculture Information Centre WAICENT. 32 p. [www.fao.org/sd/dim\\_pe1/pe1\\_041002\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/dim_pe1/pe1_041002_en.htm)**

This paper reasserts that a gender perspective is relevant with regard to the Rio Conventions. It places the conventions in their historical context and their administrative and financial framework, describes the main gender issues relevant to the conventions, and gives a comparative overview of the level of gender mainstreaming in the various international instruments of the Rio Conventions. The paper concludes with a review of key convention implementation issues in relation to gender.



### **Global Environmental Governance Project**

**[www.yale.edu/gegdialogue/default.htm](http://www.yale.edu/gegdialogue/default.htm)**

The GEG Project is a far-reaching conversation carried forward by multi-stakeholder workshops, known as "Dialogues". In the early stages of the Project, the "Dialogues" focused largely on the establishment of a global environmental organization. Now, the discussions have shifted to promote and advance the creation of a Global Environmental Mechanism (GEM) with a functional approach to governance.



**SDC. 2003**

### **Independent Evaluation of SDC's Bilateral Engagement in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) Process**

**Final Synthesis Report. Evaluation 2003/1. 79 p. [www.deza.ch/ressources/deza\\_product\\_e\\_620.pdf](http://www.deza.ch/ressources/deza_product_e_620.pdf)**

In this report, the authors take stock of SDC's experience with Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Its contributions to the PRSP process in partner countries, as well as the effects these experiences have on the SDC programme, are analysed. The report helps to create a better understanding of the significance of the PRSP process for bilateral international cooperation, and shows how it can be better put to use in implementation and coordination processes among multilateral partners.



**OECD/DAC. 2002**

### **Integrating the Conventions into Development Co-operation**

**The DAC Guidelines. 103 p. [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/49/2/1960098.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/49/2/1960098.pdf)**

Comprehensive sourcebook for policy makers and staff of both development cooperation organisations and their counterparts in partner countries, with an executive summary, a "Busy reader's guide" and "Conventions Tip-Sheets". It clarifies the linkages between the Rio Conventions and sustainable development by discussing complementarities, synergies and tradeoffs, and provides insights on how to respond to global environmental threats.

**Anantha K. Duraiappah and Pumulo Roddy. 2005**

### Integrating the Environment into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers:

*A methodology for evaluating a country's perception of its performance. IISD. 17 p.*

[www.iisd.org/pdf/2005/economics\\_integrating\\_environment.pdf](http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2005/economics_integrating_environment.pdf)

Acknowledging the critical links between the environment and poverty means that environmental concerns must be integrated explicitly in PRSPs. The authors present a questionnaire that is structured for soliciting preferences from different stakeholders involved in the PRSP process. In doing so, they move away from the traditional definition of environmental issues like land use, water and air to an ecosystem approach using ecosystem services, which may differ from country to country. This makes it possible to identify the specific critical links between the environment and poverty for a given country. Based on these critical links, ways can then be found to reduce poverty and improve human well-being.



**Deutsches Umweltbundesamt / Federal Environmental Agency. 2004**

### Integration of Biodiversity Concerns in Climate Change Mitigation Activities

*A Toolkit. 65 p. www.umweltbundesamt.org/fpdf-1/2793.pdf*

Practical guide on how to design climate mitigation projects or activities so that they also benefit biodiversity. The first part provides an overview of possible climate change mitigation activities, especially in the LULUCF and energy sector, and their possible impacts on biodiversity. The second part analyses selected instruments suited for integrating biodiversity aspects into climate change mitigation activities. The third part contains an outline of how to apply these instruments, as well as a series of decision trees and checklists illustrating relevant biodiversity aspects for each type of activity.



### International Environmental Agreements – Database Website

[www.uoregon.edu/~iea/](http://www.uoregon.edu/~iea/)

This site is important as an overview and a source for statistical data. The database has recorded all Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) since 1875.



**UN Millenium Project. 2005**

### Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals

*74 p. www.unmilleniumproject.org/reports/index.htm*

This important report – also known as the “Sachs-Report” – brings together the core recommendations of the UN Millennium Project. By outlining practical investment strategies and approaches to financing them, the report presents an operational framework which, according to the authors, will allow even the poorest countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Like the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the “Sachs Report” has been criticised for not having adequately considered the linkage between poverty reduction and environmental changes, as well as for not having tackled the problem of the fragmented and weak global governance architecture in the current reform agenda for the Millennium + 5 Summit.



**UNDP. 2005**

### Linking the National Poverty Reduction Strategy to the MDGs

*A Case Study of Ethiopia. 19 p. www.undp.org/mdg/goodpractices/Ethiopia-casestudy.pdf*

Part of a series sharing good practices from countries successfully promoting the MDGs, this case is intended to help determine whether an assessment of needs to achieve the MDGs could help to strengthen national poverty reduction strategies, and, if so, how other countries might adapt the Ethiopian experience to their national contexts. The case study also focuses on how the UN Country Team, donors and the Government of Ethiopia increased collaboration and laid the necessary foundation for a poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) oriented to MDG-outcomes.



**UNDP. 2005**

### Monitoring Country Progress Towards MDG7: Ensuring Environmental Sustainability:

*A Practice Note. 31 p. www.undp.org/fssd/docs/monprogmdg7.doc*

Global progress towards Millennium Development Goal 7 rests essentially upon making progress on the ground at the country level. A review of more than 60 country progress reports shows that capacity for monitoring, analysing, and reporting on progress towards environmental sustainability is low. The practical note sets forth 10 principles to enhance and assist country-level monitoring and reporting on environmental sustainability. It also outlines a suggested five-pronged operational approach to country monitoring and reporting on reaching MDG7.





**DEZA/seco. 2005**

### Multilaterale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit – Strategie der Schweiz

*Eine DEZA – seco Leitlinie. 31 p. (in German, English version forthcoming)*

[www.deza.ch/ressources/deza\\_product\\_de\\_2002.pdf](http://www.deza.ch/ressources/deza_product_de_2002.pdf)

With a view to coherence both towards the inside and towards the outside, the SDC and seco have designed a Swiss multilateral cooperation strategy. Based on the previous SDC Multilateral Strategy, it takes account of the most recent developments and ongoing discussions.



**D. Messner and P. Wolff. 2005**

### The Millennium Development Goals – Thinking beyond the Sachs Report

*German Development Institute, DIE Briefing Paper 5/2005. 4 p.*

[www.die-gdi.de/die\\_homepage.nsf/FSepub?OpenFrameset?](http://www.die-gdi.de/die_homepage.nsf/FSepub?OpenFrameset?)

Although they appreciate the “Sachs Report” as an innovative contribution, the authors of this briefing paper suggest pathways for international development policy that go beyond. One of these suggestions advocates a gradual rather than a sharp rise in official development assistance, linked with clear incentives and conditionalities for good governance in development countries as well as bilateral and multilateral development organisations; another calls for a division of tasks among donor countries.



**UNA Canada**

### Monitoring The UN: The UN and Sustainable Development – Multilateral Environmental Conventions

[www.unac.org/en/link\\_learn/monitoring/susdev\\_unep\\_mec\\_bg.asp](http://www.unac.org/en/link_learn/monitoring/susdev_unep_mec_bg.asp)

A good overview on the Multilateral Environmental Conventions, with a useful glossary.



### Yearbook of International Co-operation on Environment and Development: 2003/2004.

*The Fridtjof Nansen Institute. Earthscan, London. 352 p. [www.greenyearbook.org](http://www.greenyearbook.org)*

A comprehensive reference book on conventions, agreements and international institutions and organisations addressing environmental issues. This Yearbook explores the status of international collaboration and describes the main obstacles to effective international solutions, as well as how to overcome them. An analytical section presents current issues and key themes; descriptive sections provide systematic and updated information about substantive rules, decision-making procedures and institutional capacities of the major global and regional conventions, international organisations and civil society groups that address environmental and development issues.

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