

Le Prestre G. Philippe (ed.). 2002. Governing Global Biodiversity: The Evolution and Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Ashagate Publishing Company. Brookfield, Vt. xx + 428 pp. Hardcover Price: US\$ 79.95.

The world has a moral obligation to preserve and conserve the biological diversity of the ecological systems. This moral imperative is so great ethically and economically and as such it behooves the human race to ensure that biodiversity exists in abundance and in perpetuity. By considering biodiversity as a global resource and putting in place local, regional, national and global efforts to chart biodiversity, describe the world's species' the present generation has a chance to bequeath to future generations, a world rich in natural resources as well as cultural resources. There is a general agreement amongst scientists that there are three basic reasons for protecting the world's natural resources. There is no question that human exponential population increase poses tremendous threat to the global bio-diversity. In the emerging countries of the world, the dependence on natural resources has led to rapid decline in the number and quality of natural resources and in some countries; there are species that are now listed as endangered or extinct. Human population expansion and activities have led to the destruction of the habitats that support life on earth, as we know it. The diminishing tropical forest, the expansion of deserts, decline in primate diversity and tropical forests are all signs of loss in biodiversity.

The second reason for protecting biodiversity is that the human race can benefit enormously by continuing to explore the pharmaceutical uses of biodiversity. For example, the periwinkle plant has been demonstrated to be significant in efforts to tackle childhood leukemia. Biodiversity is indeed important in the equilibrium of ecological systems.

Thirdly, ecological systems are linked in some very significant ways which allow the natural resources to continue to flourish and provide humans with resources and enable the waste generated through human activities to be converted into useful substances/elements. In short, human existence depends on the abundance of biodiversity. The book—Governing Global Biodiversity is an excellent addition to the literature on the subject of biodiversity for it provides the reader with substantive information on the set of key international agreements (in the tables) that relate to species and ecosystem protection and conservation. The scope of the book is impressive although it deals exclusively with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). It details the international effort to coordinate activities and enhance cooperative endeavor to stem back the tide of the decline in biodiversity. As articulated on page 2: "this study presents various aspects of the implementation of the (CBD) and analyzes its potential normative and behavioral impacts, that is, its effectiveness."

The study presented in the book attempts to answer four important questions about CBD.

- 1) How has the CBD evolved since its adoption in 1992?
- 2) What obstacles and opportunities have arisen in the course of its implementation and how have they been handled?
- 3) To what extent have the implementation and evolution of the convention strengthened certain prerequisites to the effectiveness of an environmental agenda?
- 4) To what extent are the Convention, its implementation and its evolution changing relations among societies? Have they facilitated new norms and modified the distribution of power among relevant domestic and international stockholders? (p.2-3). The interrogation presented in this book provides the reader with two main objectives which are:
 - a. A perspective on the emergence and evolution of the convention. Many topics on the biodiversity regime are examined in order to accomplish this objective.
 - b. It reviews some of the challenges and issues germane to the management of biodiversity.

Overall, this book is well edited and the contributors must be commended for their excellent chapters. This reviewer recommends the book to environmentalist, scholars of sustainable development and scientists in general. It is a must read by graduate students interested in environmental conservation.

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