of underprivileged people who depend heavily on such assets. Rather, such decisions, when made in the political arena, usually promote the activities and wealth of businesses and may even have adverse impacts on poor people in terms of their basic access and user rights.

Although the book is in great shape with regard to its informative, structural and analytical features, I have some criticisms about the way some citations are made and about the lack of clarification of certain specific issues. From the introduction to the conclusion, several endnotes are not substantiated with references. This lack of substantiation raises questions as to whether they are relevant as endnotes or whether they ought to be reintegrated into the main text, due to the quality of the information that they bear. For example, in chapter 1, endnotes 1 and 2 could actually be reintegrated into the main text, as well as endnotes 46 through to 49 of chapter 5. If, however, they are just comments of the authors of this chapter, adding 'personal comments' to these notes seems necessary. On the other hand, if these endnotes are comments of key resource persons or if they were extracted from another book or a published article, adding the name of the resource person who made the comments or providing the proper references of the book or article where these notes were extracted is also necessary.

On the basis of the critical analysis of the case studies covered in the book, it is a significant contribution in the field of sustainable development and I would recommend it to all development practitioners, including civil society organizations, funding bodies, scholars in environmental sustainability and policy makers.

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A World Environment Organization: Solution or Threat for Effective International Environmental Governance?, edited by *Frank Biermann* and *Steffen Bauer*, published by Ashgate, 2005, 280pp, £47.50, hardback.

The debate on a World Environment Organization (WEO) started some 30 years ago. It has been conducted by diplomats, politicians, political scientists, international lawyers and journalists in a scattered manner in fora such as diplomatic and academic conferences, peer-reviewed journals and newspapers. However, it seems that so far, no comprehensive book has been published on this issue. The book *A World Environment Organization: Solution or Threat for Effective International Environmental Governance?*, edited by Frank Biermann and Steffen Bauer, is thus long overdue. Moreover, it comes in a timely manner, as the sixtieth session of the General Assembly has decided to consider means to strengthen further and promote coherence in international environmental governance.

The book is divided into five parts (Introduction; Global Environmental Governance: Assessing the Need for Reform; The Case for a WEO; The Case against a WEO; and Conclusions) and complemented with an index. The introduction by Bauer and Biermann gives a short overview of the debate on a WEO. This provides an interesting description of the evolution and interactions of the discussions on a WEO between the academic and the governmental policy debates. It then presents three basic models of such an organization: up-grading the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to a specialized UN agency; establishing a more centralized architecture; and establishing a hierarchical intergovernmental organization. It summarizes the main arguments in favour and against a WEO and concludes that so far, while there is no consensus in favour of a WEO in sight, the debate is not likely to disappear.

After this introduction, the book analyses the general state of global environmental governance as an informative backdrop to the entire UN reform debate. The contribution 'The United Nations' Record on Environmental Governance: An Assessment' by Lorraine Elliott gives a very helpful general overview of recent developments and of some of the challenges of international environmental governance. She gives specific attention to the following three dimensions of global governance: the institutional competence and the permanent state of reform; effective multilateral cooperation and participatory diplomacy; and normative reform. She concludes that '[d]espite many well-intentioned attempts at institutional reform, there is still no authoritative and well-resourced UN agency with overall policy and operational responsibility for environment and sustainable development' (at 50) and that '[e]nvironmental diplomacy remains characterized by an unwillingness on the part of many member states to moderate particularistic national interest concerns for the common good' and 'by mutual suspicion between developed and developing countries' (at 50) and that, thus, 'more realistic expectations of the UN, and therefore of any world environment organization, might be required'. Joyeeta Gupta analyses in her contribution 'Global Environmental Governance: Challenges for the South from a Theoretical Perspective' the implications of a changing global environmental governance structure for the South. She differentiates between 'managed globalization', which refers to

the attempts of States to control the processes of globalization, and 'spontaneous globalization', where unmanaged developments create new rules (at 59). After assessing the feasibility of different governance options from different schools of thought, she identifies eight sets of cumulative hypotheses about how developing countries would negotiate on issues that are first signalled by Western countries, such as the establishment of a WEO, and eight trends that are visible in the global arena. Gupta concludes that unless developing countries proactively develop and prioritize effective negotiating strategies, a projection of existing trends would indicate a further marginalization of developing country concerns in the international governance arena (at 78–79).

Parts II and III contain three contributions making the case for and against a WEO. First, Steve Charnovitz's chapter stresses that while governments were willing to develop a world trading system with a powerful, rule-based organization and an effective dispute-settlement mechanism, they have not paid much attention to the need for effective global environmental governance. Drawing from the experience of the World Trade Organization (WTO), he argues that there is a need for an organization as strong as the trade regime in order to ensure greater coherence and better cooperation, to lower transaction costs and to enable political competition between organizations with equal standing. He reviews the change in focus from environment issues at the 1972 Stockholm UN Conference on the Human Environment to the focus on development issues at the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Environment, indicating that the environment has lost out in this evolution (at 100–101), and underlines the need for a WEO to give environment issues more attention and priority. Frank Biermann, in his contribution, makes the case to upgrade UNEP to a specialized UN agency, arguing that this would enhance coordination, improve assistance for developing and implementing environmental policies in developing countries, improve financial and technology transfer to the South, and provide for a strengthened institutional environment for negotiating new conventions. While Biermann indicates that the creation of such an organization would not require the legal acquiescence of all nations, it is nevertheless not easy to understand why an organization without universal membership would have the legitimacy to provide overarching environmental policy guidance, including to multilateral environmental agreements whose membership might be broader than that of a WEO. Like Charnovitz, Biermann also argues against the creation of a World Organization for Sustainable Development, and stresses that, while clustering existing environmental conventions could significantly increase the coordination deficits of the current system, clustering can only be a first step forward in a larger reform effort (at 137–139). John Kirton's chapter concludes this part by indicating that, in the light of the growing globalized ecological challenge and the current system characterized by incomplete incrementalism, ineffective and impotent institutions and a growing gap with deepening institutionalized economic globalization, the creation of a WEO outside the UN system would best meet the interests of major industrialized powers. Building on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)–Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) model as the 'world's first and only integrated full free trade and environmental agreement and institution' (at 160), he makes the case for a G8-centric WEO.

Konrad von Moltke's contribution rejects the idea of a WEO and presents his alternative proposal to strengthen international environmental governance by clustering the numerous international environmental agreements. Tools of such clustering include organizing meetings of conferences of parties and subsidiary bodies of different multilateral environmental agreements simultaneously and/or always in the same location, to co-locate convention secretariats and enhance cooperation between them, to join institutions and dispute settlement, and to coordinate further financing, implementation review, communication and capacity building. Through this, the challenges of institutional overlaps, fragmentation and assuring coherence and efficiency could be effectively addressed. He argues that well-designed clusters would be more efficient and more effective than a single centralized high-level organization. He then makes the case for establishing a conservation cluster, a global atmosphere cluster, a hazardous substance cluster and a marine environment cluster. In their chapter, Sebastian Oberthür and Thomas Gehring base their arguments against a WEO on institutional theory, thereby distinguishing between 'regimes' and 'organizations' (at 209–211). Indicating that the creation of a WEO would absorb significant political efforts and resources, they challenge the assumption that a WEO would ensure gains in efficiency and effectiveness. They argue that scarce resources should rather be invested in the current institutional structure to ensure effective policies and action on the ground, rather than distracting it with experiments with organizational reform. Finally, Adil Najam argues in his contribution that 'organizational tinkering' is distracting attention away from the ultimate causes of the governance crises. Najam states that the significant achievements of UNEP should be recognized and UNEP's capacity should be further strengthened through realistic reforms. He adds that, while the

necessary coordination could be accomplished by a strengthened UNEP, centralization is not desirable.

In their conclusions to this volume, Biermann and Bauer maintain that the different views expressed show emerging points of agreement, namely the support for strengthening UNEP and the acceptance that major revolutionary change is neither feasible nor desirable. Moreover, they indicate that the different contributions illustrate a need for further clarification of concepts and terminology, that the institutional relationship between environmental protection and sustainable development requires additional research, and that governments' willingness to strengthen international environmental cooperation indicates that the idea of a WEO is not entirely unrealistic. Finally, they hold that social sciences have so far largely neglected the study of intergovernmental organizations and the effects they may have in world politics, and that this neglect results in misleading conclusions about the state of global environmental governance and the possible effectiveness of global environmental governance.

As outlined above, the book looks at the more moderate reform proposals for strengthening environmental governance and their critics. However, it does so more from an academic perspective and does not include the perspective of policy makers and diplomats involved in the environmental and institutional negotiations within the UN system. The book's starting point is that because the existing governance architecture fails to manage and halt global ecological deterioration, environmental governance requires significant improvements (at 2). The possibility that it is not the weak environmental governance architecture, but simply other priority setting and the lack of commitment and political will for an effective international environmental regime that may be the real reason for the failure to halt environmental destruction is hinted at in some contributions, but it is not further investigated. Moreover, it would be interesting to have further analyses of the argument of why a WEO would be the best means to enhance synergies, coherence and effectiveness. It is also astonishing to note that developing countries are seen as having homogenous interests on this issue. In this context, it would be worth investigating how much this is indeed the case and whether smaller and poorer developing countries' interests would, in reality, differ from what the larger developing countries during international negotiations often seem to impose as the 'G77 position'. Finally, many of the contributions assume that the issue of international environmental policy involves a classical North–South conflict. This does not reflect the fact that during international environmental negotiations, typically three blocks can be distinguished: the 'European' block, favouring a strong and effective international regime, the group around the USA and Australia, favouring a hierarchy topped by the international trade regime, and developing countries, which try to subordinate environment issues under development priorities. Nevertheless, this book gives a rich and very helpful overview of the current debate and the main arguments concerning the idea of a WEO. It will therefore be useful and enriching, not only for those interested in international environmental governance from an academic perspective, but also for practitioners who are directly involved in the policy debate and negotiations of a future international environmental regime.

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Analysing Strategic Environmental Assessment: Towards Better Decision Making, edited by *Pietro Caratti*, *Holger Dalkmann* and *Rodrigo Jiliberto*, published by Edward Elgar, 2004, 208pp, £59.95, hardback.

This volume is published in the Fondazione ENI Enrico Mattei (FEEM) Series on economics and the environment. Readers who receive the announcements of research papers that are circulated in the FEEM network might be rather surprised by this publication, as it does not contain the classical features of economic literature, such as figures with utility and demand curves. On the other hand, it is undeniably an 'economics' book, as its focus concerns the effective application of environmental assessment as a policy tool.

According to Dalal-Clayton and Sadler (Dalal-Clayton and Sadler, *Strategic Environmental Assessment: A Sourcebook and Reference Guide to International Practice* (Earthscan, 2005), at 9) the term 'Strategic Environmental Assessment' (SEA) was first used in a report to the European Commission in 1989. Since that time, a number of definitions of SEA have been circulating in the literature. Whilst forms of SEA have been practised in a limited number of jurisdictions for a few decades, SEA really only left the textbooks for a large group of European countries when the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC was adopted in 2001. Furthermore, in May 2003, the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment was adopted by a number of Member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Region. This Protocol will enter into force when 16 States have ratified it. In principle, this could happen rather