



INSTITUTE FOR PLANETARY SYNTHESIS

IPS GENEVA

Chemin de l'Etang 37
CH- 1219 CHATELAINE/GE
SWITZERLAND

Tel./Fax 41 022 - 733.88.76
E-mail IPSTBox@ipsgeneva.com
Web site: www.ipsgeneva.com

Strengthening the Means of Implementation of A/RES/733/333

Introduction

UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/733/333 (733/333), if implemented, would strengthen the foundation for the rule of environmental law. This is desperately needed at a time when lives, livelihoods, whole economies and societies are being devastated due to our clashes with the laws of Nature.

The resolution encourages a wide range of actors in its “Substantive recommendations” to cooperate and to foster coherence between Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).

This is an almost impossible challenge to meet given that not one of the actors mentioned under “Substantive recommendations” has a comprehensive overview; each one is just a part of the approximately 250 MEA, each with its one governing body, secretariat, technical and technological experts and combination of Member States that have ratified them. Much more is needed to make this a viable undertaking.

Here are three mutually reinforcing actions that provide all actors mentioned with some necessary tools:

1. Strengthening UNEP’s computer portal, InforMEA;
2. Involving people worldwide in the implementation of environmental law by creating a High-Level Day to promote Action for the implementation of Environmental Law to commemorate the adoption of MonteVideo 5.
3. Introducing Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) that would be directed at a nation’s activities in favour of the environment and that would mention also the initiatives undertaken by their people.

These actions help to power all those mentioned under 733/333’s “Substantive recommendations” as well as the views expressed by UN Member States during the first preparatory committee meeting (prepcom) dedicated to the formulation of a Ministerial Declaration which would be the outcome of UNEA 5.

Three Proposals to Strengthen the Implementation of 733/333.

1. Provide a tool that can help to build coherence between the MEAs.

UNEP’s Computer Portal, InforMEA, is financed annually by the EU. It contains all MEAs and much other relevant material. But it does not facilitate the direct identification of both the points of communication and the inconsistencies between the numerous legal instruments, which could bridge the gaps between them.

Here are two actions that might make significant difference:

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- ***Add the principles of international environmental law*** and relevant work of the International Law Commission (ILC). The principles of law are the fertile ground from which all law springs. They form a connective element and at the same time promote insight into the fundamentals of international law. The principles of international environmental law can enable non-professionals to play an active role in the implementation of environmental law at all levels.
 - ***Organize a Hackathon to help bridge the gaps between the MEAs*** without loss of their individuality. A Hackathon is a sprint-like event whereby often brilliant, inventive software developers and other IT professionals, dedicated to creating innovation in their field, meet to together develop new forms of software. If such a Hackathon were to succeed, then InforMEA would become a powerful tool to help close the gaps between the MEAs; and be made more user-friendly.
2. Inspire the largest possible number of governments, Specialized Agencies and people from every possible background to become involved in the implementation of environmental law at all levels to support the full implementation of environmental law at the international level. This can be initiated by UNEP as follows:
- Proclaim a “***High-level Day of Action for the Environment***”, with as subtitle: “***A Healthy Environment is a Human Right,***” commemorating the adoption of ***Montevideo 5***.
 - Celebrate this High-Level Day at each UNEA by bestowing the title of “***UN Champion of Environmental Law***” on one national government, one specialized agency, as well as one person from each of the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS), guaranteeing that all can participate from children to the elderly, including Indigenous People, women, scientists, business people, industrialists, local authorities, farmers, etc. There are numerous ways in which the UN has in the past reached out to people worldwide, including the most marginalized. The awards would go to those who found effective ways of enforcing the principles of environmental law (or environmental laws themselves) from local to global levels, while fostering unity, synergy, and cooperation and accelerating the implementation of the SDGs. In this way, the implementation of international law would be reinforced by actions from local to global levels. The approximately 20 winning actions would be entered into InforMEA, thereby ensuring both that environmental law from local to national levels would be added, as well as means of their implementation. Beside developing the scope of InforMEA, this would make it more enticing for use by people in general, including in preparing to enter the global competition. It would also add to the incentive of governments at all levels to take action.
3. ***Encouraging Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), during UNEA***, focussing on actions taken to promote environmental health and including actions taken by their people. Here national awards can be bestowed on their own “***Champions for the Environment***”. The VNRs and as many promising actions taken by their people as governments would like can be mentioned under the sections for National Reports that are available on InfoMEA, many of which are still empty.

No one is safe when the equilibrium of the Earth System is disturbed. For this is our common home. But we can still benefit maximally from our rich diversity, as members of governments, specialized agencies and civil society by working together synergistically, united in a single purpose: the well-being of all people and Nature.

WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER!