International environmental law (0)
Population Growth: Expanding Las Vegas

- 1973 - A small settlement
- 2000 - The landscape is now dramatically modified

Images courtesy USGS
Environmental problems

Global
- Climate change, including global warming
- Stratospheric ozone depletion
- Species extinction and loss of biodiversity
- Hazardous chemicals and wastes

Regional:
- Lack of access to fresh water
- Air pollution-transboundary dimension
- Forestry
Environmental problems

Protection of environmental elements:

• Atmosphere: climate change, ozone depletion, transboundary air pollution
• Biodiversity: loss of biodiversity, land resources, deforestation
• Fresh water resources
• Oceans and seas

Human technology and industrial innovation:

• Biotechnology
• Toxic chemicals
• Hazardous and radioactive wastes
• Agricultural practices
From Fields to Greenhouses: Almeria, Spain

1974: Mixed land use, including land for urban and agricultural use.

2004: Greenhouses blanket the plain from the shoreline to the base of the mountain.
Dramatic Changes in the Arctic: Imagine an Ice-free Arctic

Freshwater: Aral Sea

- The world’s fourth largest lake before 1960.
- 1973-2004: More than 60 per cent of the lake has disappeared.
Freshwater: Aral Sea

From this...

..to this.
Xayaburi (Mekong), Laos, Camboya, Vietnam

Itaipú, (Paraná), Brasil, Paraguay

Rogún (Vakhsh), Tayikistán, Kirguistán

Kariba (Zambeze), Zambia y Zimbabwe

Gran Renacimiento Etíope (GERD), (Nilo), Etiopía, Egipto, Sudán

Ataturk (Eufrates), Turquía, Siria, Irak

National Geographic: https://www.nationalgeographic.org/article/hydroelectric-energy-power-running-water/?utm_source=BibblioRCM_Row
Water Technology: https://www.water-technology.net/projects/ataurk-dam-anatolia-turkey/
EOI: https://www.eoi.es/blogs/fabiopinto/2012/01/18/project-management-itaipu-dam/
Causes of unsustainable development

Population growth

- Growth of the 2.5 billion in 1950; 7 billion today; forecast of 9,000 in 2050
- Incorporation of 74 million people each year
- 98% of current births in developing countries
- 80% of the current population lives in developing countries

Technology: intensive use of resources + waste

Economic growth: Expansion in developing countries, globalization & “welf distribution”
Environmental problems

Internationalization of environmental issues:

- Transborder pollution (acid rain)
- Exportation of pollution (sources/risk)
- Globalization of the economic system

Specific issues:

- Different environmental interest/priorities among regions/countries
- Uncertainty of scientific/technological data
- Who decides the interest to be protected?
Environmental problems
Features of International environmental law

- Functional
- Preventive approach
- Multidimensional
- Soft law
International Environmental Law Evolution

- **1945**: Until 1945 (“pre-history”)
- **1945–1972**: Law of the sea
- **1972**: Stockholm Summit: UN Conference on the Human Environment
- **1992**: Rio Summit: UN Conference on Environment and Development
- **2002**: Summit Johannesbur g World Summit on Sustainable Developmen t
- **2012**: Rio Summit: World Summit on Sustainable Development
- **2015**: UN General Assembly: Transformin g our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Developmen t
Sustainable Development

Preserve natural resources

Fighting pollution

Strengthening the capacity of countries to contribute to solving global and local environmental problems

Sustainable development: Increase the capacity of countries to plan and implement policies and actions of environmentally sustainable development
Sustainable development
Sustainable development

SD normative character: meta-principle

SD as a conceptual matrix: Gabcikovo Nagymaros case

SD as a principle with normative character (Juge Weeramantry’s dissident opinion in Gabcikovo Nagymaros case)

SD as an objective: Pulp Mills case

SD as an legal obligation of means

- It calls on States, IO and other actors to promote international and intergenerational equity.
- It calls on States and social actors to integrate environmental and social concerns in economic activities