

106th American Society of International Law Annual Meeting Confronting Complexity

ROUNDTABLE PROPOSAL BY THE
INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW INTEREST GROUP

by Don Anton

Greening the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD): An Agenda for International Environmental Law

Starting in 1972, with only one exception, the international community has convened a major global conference every decade at the highest level to address seemingly intractable international environmental problems. These problems continue to persist because of uncertainty and a tangled web of underlying drivers: economic, social, technological. In June 2012, world leaders will gather in Rio de Janeiro with the objective of securing a “renewed political commitment for sustainable development” and “addressing new and emerging issues”. In order to meet this objective the U.N. General Assembly has established two major “themes” for the Conference: (i) the “institutional framework for sustainable development”, and (ii) and the “green economy in the context of sustainable development.” On the face of things, it is uncertain how international environmental law fits into this agenda. It seems certain, though, that any effective effort at solutions must include regulation and that international law must be a necessary component of that complex regulatory effort.

All of this indicates that it is an important moment to explore and locate openings for international environmental law in the UNCSD and, perhaps more importantly, its outcomes. This roundtable is designed to discuss the roles for international environmental law in the decade’s primer global meeting on the environment. In particular, the discussion will consider how best international law can be tied to the objective and themes of UNCSD in addressing the complexities of continuing international environmental problems. Accordingly, discussants will examine opportunities for international environmental law in new and emerging issues, institutions and governance, and the green economy.

Proposed Moderator: Don Anton (The Australian National University College of Law)

Proposed Roundtable Participants:

- Dinah Shelton (George Washington University Law School)
- Elizabeth Burleson (Pace University Law School)
- Donald Kaniaru (Director, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, UNEP)
- Maria Ivanova (Director, of the Global Environmental Governance Project at the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy)
- Daniel Bodansky (University of Arizona Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law)
- Bahrat Desai (Jawaharlal Nehru University School of International Studies)
- Catherine Redgwell (University College London)
- Antonio H. Benjamin (Supreme Court of Justice of Brazil)