

The Berlin Conferences

on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change



Background Information, March 2005

The series of 'Berlin Conferences on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change' started in 2001, inaugurated by keynote addresses by Jürgen Trittin, Germany's environment minister, and Klaus Töpfer, the executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme. Since then, the Berlin Conferences, held each year in December, have become a regular meeting point for academics and practitioners alike. All conferences have a specific theme around which panel discussions and plenary meetings converge. The conferences target all social scientists working on the human dimensions of global environmental change, notwithstanding an emphasis on the theories, methods and research questions of political science. Special care is taken to keep the Berlin Conferences manageable and reasonably priced, with usually not more than 120 presenters, affordable conference fees, and special efforts to ensure participation of younger scholars and colleagues from developing countries. All Berlin Conferences have been endorsed by several core projects of the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change, and function simultaneously as annual conventions of the Environmental Policy and Global Change section of the German Political Science Association.

2001—'Global Environmental Change and the Nation State'

CONFERENCE CHAIR: FRANK BIERMANN

CONFERENCE MANAGERS: KLAUS DINGWERTH, RAINER BROHM ET AL.

The 2001 Berlin Conference, held 7-8 December, launched the now regular series of Berlin Conferences. The meeting focussed on the ways in which global environmental change and the emerging system of global governance has affected the role and sovereignty of the nation state. Participants discussed ways in which the nation state is today constrained through global institutions, and ways in which it has gained importance as the pioneer of new approaches, policies and technologies and as the key agent in the global diffusion of new ideas. The conference also featured case studies on national environmental policies that compared the 'vertical influence' of international institutions with the 'horizontal influence' of transnational diffusion.

The meeting brought together 166 researchers from 28 countries with different perspectives on global change and the nation state, including students of international relations and international law, environmental sociologists and economists, as well as experts on national environmental policy and comparative politics.

Keynote addresses were delivered by Klaus Töpfer, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme, and Jürgen Trittin, the German Federal Minister of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. Other plenary speakers included Martin Jänicke, Freie Universität Berlin; Sheila Jasanoff, Harvard University; Ronald B. Mitchell, Oregon University; Peter H. Sand, University of Munich and IDGEC Scientific Steering Committee; and Arild Underdal, University of Oslo and chair of the IHDP Scientific Committee.

The 2001 Berlin Conference was organised on behalf of the German Political Science Association by the joint Global Governance Project GLOGOV.ORG of the

Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Freie Universität Berlin and Oldenburg University. Core support was provided by the Heinrich Böll Foundation and Germany's Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Energy. The conference was also endorsed by the Federation of German Scientists and the German Association for the United Nations, Berlin-Brandenburg Chapter.

PUBLICATIONS:

Global Environmental Change and the Nation State: Proceedings of the 2001 Berlin Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change, ed. by F Biermann, R Brohm and K Dingwerth. Potsdam: Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, 2002.

Global Environmental Change and the Nation State. Special Issue of Global Environmental Politics 4: 1 (February 2004), ed. by F Biermann and K Dingwerth. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

2002—'Knowledge for the Sustainability Transition: The Challenge for Social Science'

CONFERENCE CHAIR: FRANK BIERMANN

CONFERENCE MANAGER: SABINE CAMPE

The 2002 Berlin Conference, held 6-7 December, focussed on the intellectual foundations of global environmental governance. Do we need new kinds of knowledge or new ways to generate knowledge for the sustainability transition? How does knowledge affect decision-making for sustainability, and how do societal systems influence the ways in which sustainability knowledge is generated? How can social and scientific institutions be designed, and possibly reformed, to generate better sustainability-relevant knowledge and increase its use for decision-makers?

About 220 scientists from 29 countries participated in the meeting, which included a total of 111 plenary and panel presentations. Keynote speakers included the chairs of four major research and assessment programmes—Rajendra Pachauri (IPCC),

Coleen Vogel (IHDP), Oran Young (IHDP/IDGEC) and John Schellnhuber (IGBP/GAIM).

The conference was organised on behalf of the German Political Science Association by the Global Governance Project GLOGOV.ORG.

PUBLICATIONS:

Knowledge for the Sustainability Transition: The Challenge for Social Science. Proceedings of the 2002 Berlin Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change, ed. by F Biermann, S Campe and K Jacob. The Global Governance Project: Amsterdam, Berlin, Potsdam and Oldenburg, 2004.

Knowledge for the Sustainability Transition: The Challenge for Social Science, ed. by F Biermann, S Campe and K Jacob. Heidelberg: Springer, forthcoming.

2003—'Governance for Industrial Transformation'

CONFERENCE CHAIR: KLAUS JACOB

CONFERENCE MANAGER: BIANCA BARTH

The 2003 Berlin Conference, held 5-6 December, focused on political strategies to limit the overuse of natural resources and emissions from industrial activities. Participants addressed the historical experiences with the management of industrial transformation, stimulation of environmental innovations and the emergence of markets for environmental technologies; methods and indicators for the forecast of future technological development; new strategies and instruments, such as the so-called '3rd generation policy instruments' and evolutionary approaches; and the interconnectedness of levels of policy-making and actors.

The meeting brought together 130 participants from 20 countries, with 57 papers presented. Keynote speakers included Rainer Baake, secretary of state of Germany's environment ministry; Pier Vellinga, chair of the IHDP-IT Scientific Steering Committee; Wolfram Mauser, chair of Germany's National Committee on Global Change Research; Frans Berkhout, University of Sussex and IHDP-IT Scientific Steering Committee; and Ashok Jaitly, The Energy and Resources Institute, New Delhi.

The conference was organised by the Environmental Policy Research Centre of the Freie Universität Berlin in co-operation with the SUSTIME project led by the University of Applied Sciences Lausitz, the Global Governance Project GLOGOV.ORG, and the German Association for Ecological Economic Research (VÖW), with financial support by the German Science Foundation and additional support from the IHDP core project 'Industrial Transformation' and its project office at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

PUBLICATIONS:

Governance for Industrial Transformation. Proceedings of the 2003 Berlin Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change, ed. by K Jacob, M Binder and A Wieczorek. Berlin: Environmental Policy Research Centre.

2004—'Greening of Policies: Interlinkages and Policy Integration'

CONFERENCE CHAIR: KLAUS JACOB

CONFERENCE MANAGER: DANIEL PENTZLIN

The 2004 Berlin Conference addressed the obstacles to integrated decision-making and successful strategies of policy integration, with an emphasis on interactions between regimes and policies on international and national levels. Core questions included: What types of institutions succeed in strengthening policy integration? In how far are integration efforts affected by economic and political globalisation, the shift from government to governance, or the transition from environmental protection to sustainable development? What methods allow for an ex ante evaluation of the economic, social and environmental effects of policies and programmes? To what extent do international regimes affect the capacities for a greening of policies at the national level, and vice versa? What mechanisms ensure the coherence of different international regimes?

The 2004 Berlin Conference featured more than 100 speakers from all continents and various disciplines in 30 panels and 11 keynote speeches, including by Richard Odingo, vice-chair, IPCC and University of Nairobi; Oran Young, chair, IDGEC Scientific Steering Committee and University of California at Santa Barbara; Frans Berkhout, chair, IHDP-IT Scientific Steering Committee and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam; and Nicholas Ashford, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA.

The conference was organised by the Environmental Policy Research Centre of the Freie Universität Berlin, in co-operation with the Global Governance Project GLOGOV.ORG, on behalf of the Environmental Policy and Global Change Section of the German Political Science Association.

Upcoming

2005—'International Organisations and Global Environmental Governance'

CONFERENCE CHAIR: FRANK BIERMANN

CONFERENCE CO-CHAIR: BERND SIEBENHÜNER

CONFERENCE MANAGER: ANNA SCHREYÖGG

The 2005 Berlin Conference will address the role of international organisations in global environmental governance, including the United Nations system, intergovernmental agencies outside the UN system, regional integration schemes such as the European Union (EU), and nongovernmental transnational actors. Papers will address the effects of international organisations in global environmental governance; the relevance and effects of organisational design; the interplay of international organisations within larger regimes; environmental policy integration within international organisations; and new theoretical concepts to understand organisational behaviour.

The 2005 Berlin Conference is organised by the Global Governance Project (GLOGOV.ORG) of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (Institute for Environmental Studies), the Freie Universität Berlin (Environmental Policy Research Centre), the University of Oldenburg and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. Additional support is provided by Volkswagen Foundation, Germany.

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