

## Attack of the NGOs

Created in 1973 by the UN General Assembly, the UNEP is the catalyst through which the global environmental agenda is implemented. Virtually all of the international environmental programs and policy changes that have occurred globally in the past three decades are the result of UNEP efforts. But the UNEP doesn't operate on its own. Influencing it and helping to write policy are thousands of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These are private groups which seek to implement a specific



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political agenda. Through the UN infrastructure, particularly through the UNEP, they have great power. The phrase “non-governmental organization” came into use with the establishment of the United Nations Organization in 1945 with provisions in Article 71 of Chapter 10 of the United Nations Charter. The term describes a consultative role for organizations that are neither government nor member states of the UN.

NGOs are not just any private group hoping to influence policy. True NGOs are officially sanctioned by the United Nations. Such status was created by UN Resolution 1296 in 1948, giving NGOs official “Consultative” status to the UN. That means they can not only sit in on international meetings, but can actively participate in creating policy, right alongside government representatives.

There are numerous classifications of NGO’s. The two most common are “Operational” and “Advocacy.” Operational NGOs are involved with designing and implementing specific projects, such as feeding the hungry or organizing relief projects. These groups can be religious or secular. They can be community-based, national, or international. The International Red Cross falls under the category of an operational NGO.

Advocacy NGOs are promoting a specific political agenda. They lobby government bodies, use the news media, and organize activist-oriented events, all designed to raise awareness and apply pressure to promote their causes which include environmental issues, human rights, poverty, education, children, drinking water, and population control — to name a few. Amnesty International is the largest human-rights advocacy NGO in the world. Organized globally, it has more than 1.8 million members, supporters, and subscribers in over 150 countries.

Today these NGOs have power nearly equal to member nations when it comes to writing UN policy. Just as civil service bureaucrats provide the infrastructure for government operation, so to do NGOs provide such infrastructure for the UN. In fact, most UN policy is first debated and then written by the NGOs and presented to national government officials at international meetings for approval and ratification. It is through this process that the individual political agendas of the NGO groups enter the international political arena.

The policies sometimes come in the form of international treaties or simply as policy guidelines. Once the documents are presented to and accepted by representatives of member states and world leaders, obscure political agendas of private organizations suddenly become international policy, and are then adopted as national and local laws by UN member states. Through this very system, Sustainable Development has grown from a collection of ideas and wish lists of a wide variety of private organizations to become the most widely implemented tool in the UN’s quest for global governance.

The three most powerful organizations influencing UNEP policy are three international NGOs. They are the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the International Union for Conservation and Nature (IUCN). These three groups provide the philosophy, objectives, and methodology for the international environmental agenda through a series of official reports and studies such as World Conservation Strategy, published in 1980 by all three groups; Global Biodiversity Strategy, published in 1992; and Global Biodiversity Assessment, published in 1996.

These groups not only influence UNEP’s agenda, they also influence a staggering array of international and national NGOs around the world. Jay Hair, former head of the National Wildlife Federation, one of the United States’ largest environmental organizations, was also the president of the IUCN. Hair later turned up as co-chairman of the President’s Council on Sustainable Development.



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The WWF maintains a network of national chapters around the world, which influence, if not dominate, NGO activities at the national level. It is at the national level where NGOs agitate and lobby national governments to implement the policies that the IUCN, WWF, and WRI get written into the documents that are advanced by the UNEP. In this manner, the world grows ever closer to global governance.

Other than treaties, how does UNEP policy become U.S. policy? Specifically, the IUCN has an incredible mix of U.S. government agencies along with major U.S. NGOs as members. Federal agencies include the Department of State, Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Park Service (NPS) the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Fish and Wildlife Service. These agencies send representatives to all meetings of the UNEP.

Also attending those meetings as active members are NGO representatives. These include activist groups such as the Environmental Defense Fund, National Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Federation, Zero Population Growth, Planned Parenthood, the Sierra Club, the National Education Association, and hundreds more. These groups all have specific political agendas they desire to become law. Through their official contact with government agencies working side-by-side with the UNEP, their political wish lists become official government policy.

How can this be, you ask? How can private organizations control policy and share equal power to elected officials? Here's how it works:

When the dust settled over the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, five major documents were forced into international policy that will change forever how national policy is made. More importantly, the Rio Summit produced the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). UNCED outlined a new procedure for shaping policy. The procedure has no name, nor is it dictatorial. It is perhaps best described as "controlled consensus" or "affirmative acquiescence."

Put in simple street language, the procedure really amounts to a collection of NGOs, bureaucrats, and government officials, all working together toward a predetermined outcome. They have met together in meetings, written policy statements based on international agreements that they helped to create, and now they are about to impose laws and regulations that will have dire effects on people's lives and national economies. Yet, with barely a twinge of conscience they move forward with the policy, saying nothing. No one objects. It's understood. Everyone goes along. For this is a barbaric procedure that insures their desired outcome without the ugliness of bloodshed, or even debate. It is the procedure used to advance the radical, global environmental agenda.

The UNCED procedure utilizes four elements of power: international government (UN), national governments, non-governmental organizations, and philanthropic institutions.

The NGOs are the key to the process. They create policy ideas from their own private agendas. The policy idea is then adopted by one or more UN organizations for consideration at a regional conference. Each conference is preceded by an NGO forum designed specifically to bring NGO activists into the debate. There they are fully briefed on the policy and then trained to prepare papers and lobby and influence the official delegates of the conference. In this way, the NGOs control the debate and assure the policy is adopted.

The ultimate goal of the conference is to produce a "Convention," which is a legally-drawn policy statement on specific issues. Once the "Convention" is adopted by the delegates, it is sent to the national governments for official ratification. Once that is done, the new policy becomes international law.



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Then the real work begins. Compliance must be assured. Again, the NGOs come into the picture. They are responsible for pressuring Congress to write national laws in order to comply with the treaty. One trick used to assure compliance is to write into the laws the concept of third-party lawsuits.

NGOs now regularly sue the government and private citizens to force policy. They have their legal fees and even damage awards paid to them out of the government treasury. Through a coordinated process, hundreds of NGOs are at work in Congress, in every state government and in every local community, advancing some component of the global environmental agenda.

However, the U.S. Constitution's 10th Amendment bars the federal government from writing laws that dictate local policy. To bypass this roadblock, NGOs encourage Congress to include special grants to help states and communities fund the new policy, should they want to "voluntarily" comply.

Should a community or state refuse to participate "voluntarily," local chapters of the NGOs are trained to go into action. They begin to pressure city councils or county commissioners to accept the grants and implement the policy. Should they meet resistance, they begin to issue news releases telling the community their elected officials are losing millions of dollars for the community. The pressure continues until the grant is finally taken and the policy becomes local law. This practice has resulted in the NGOs gaining incredible power on the local level. Today, a great number of communities are actually run by NGO members as city and county governments are staffed by NGO members. They serve on local unelected boards and regional councils that the NGOs helped create. Local representative government is slowly relinquishing its power to the NGOs.

Americans must begin to understand that the debate over environmental issues has very little to do with clean water and air and much more to do with the establishment of power. NGOs are gaining it, and locally elected officials are losing it, as the structure of American government changes to accommodate the private agendas of those NGOs.



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