MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

This book seeks to examine the genesis, development, and proliferation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) – built-in lawmaking mechanisms and processes of institutionalization – and their ad hoc treaty-based status and the issue of the legal personality of their secretariats. It provides legal understanding of the location of MEA secretariats within an existing international host institution, as well as discussion of the issues of relationship agreements and interpretation of the commonly used language that triggers such relationships. It places under scrutiny the standard MEA phrase “providing a secretariat,” delegation of authority by the host institution to the head of the convention secretariat, possible conflict areas, host country agreements, and the workings of relationship agreements. The book offers an authoritative account of the growing phenomenon in which an existing international institution provides a servicing base for an MEA that, in turn, triggers a chain of legal implications involving the secretariat, the host institution, and the host country.

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Multilateral Environmental Agreements

LEGAL STATUS OF THE SECRETARIATS

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Preface

This study is an off-shoot of the work (begun in 1998) by the author on the process of “institutionalization” in the field of international environmental law. This book seeks to take a closer view of the multilateral regulatory technique to address sector-specific environmental problème, as well as of the legal status of the secretariats that “service” the institutionalized intergovernmental process. The work was spread over a period of some nine years, during which the author visited various secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and held discussions with concerned dramatis personae in the field, both in person and through written communications.

The initial interest in the crucial aspect of legal status of the secretariats was triggered by interactions with Arnulf Müller-Helmbrecht, then Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), during my stay in Bonn. I was inspired by Ulf’s sheer passion, knowledge of the field, legal acumen, and firsthand account of the pitched battles he fought to extract “legal due” for the secretariat of the CMS. The resultant insight provided the initial basis for a closer look into the mystical area of the legal status of convention secretariats from my perches at various times in the cities of Bonn, Geneva, and Heidelberg.

I express my gratitude to Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung who generously made possible my stays in Bonn, Geneva, and Heidelberg. I enjoyed the discussion sessions on multilateral institutional issues on the
environment with Rudolf Dolzer at the Institute of International Law of the University of Bonn. They helped me to have an incisive understanding of the role of various actors, as well as the workings of regime-based institutions. I have had the benefit of staying in Heidelberg to work at the Max-Planck Institute of Public International Law. I thank Rudiger Wolfrum and Armin von Bogdandy for providing me with work facilities.

In the course of writing this book, I had the great pleasure of interacting with several heads and legal officers of convention secretariats, UNEP officials, and officials of other host institutions who generously shared their views and made available relevant documents. They include Barbara Ruis, Calestous Juma, Dan Ogolla, Daniel Navid, Elizabeth Mrema, Francesco Bandarin, Gerardo Gunera-Lazzaroni, Iwona Rummel-Bulska, Janos Pasztor, Jim Armstrong, John Donaldson, Katharina Kummer, Lyle Glowka, Marci Yeater, Martin Krebs, Michael Graber, Richard Kinley, and Robert Hepworth. I greatly appreciate the working space provided to me by the secretariats of the UNFCCC and CMS in Bonn and of the UNITAR at the International Environment House in Geneva.

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PREFACE

My scholarly quest in this field has been nurtured by regular interactions with some of my brightest students, who provided a stimulating springboard for classroom discussions and widening horizons through their research works under my supervision.

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