

# Gimme Shelter!: The Cry of International Environmentalism

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## Background

• United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was created in 1972



• Since then, two major conferences have been held, multiple agreements have been signed and another body was conceived (the Commission on Sustainable Development)

• Notwithstanding, little of substantial positive effect has occurred

• In 1997, a proposal was submitted to the UN General Assembly that called for the establishment of a “global umbrella organization for environmental issues, with the [UNEP] as a major pillar”<sup>1</sup>

• The proposal was not adopted, but the concept of a World Environment Organization (WEO) has become a contentious topic among political scientists

## Purpose

• To examine the failure of current international institutions in addressing environmental concerns

• To prescribe a WEO as a normative remedy

## Method

• Survey of the literature

• Literature includes

- academic articles from scholarly journals located through online databases
- books located through the Scott Library database
- media reports

• This paper heavily relied upon the work of three authors who have conducted extensive analysis on global environmentalism: Steffen Bauer, Frank Biermann and Steve Charnovitz

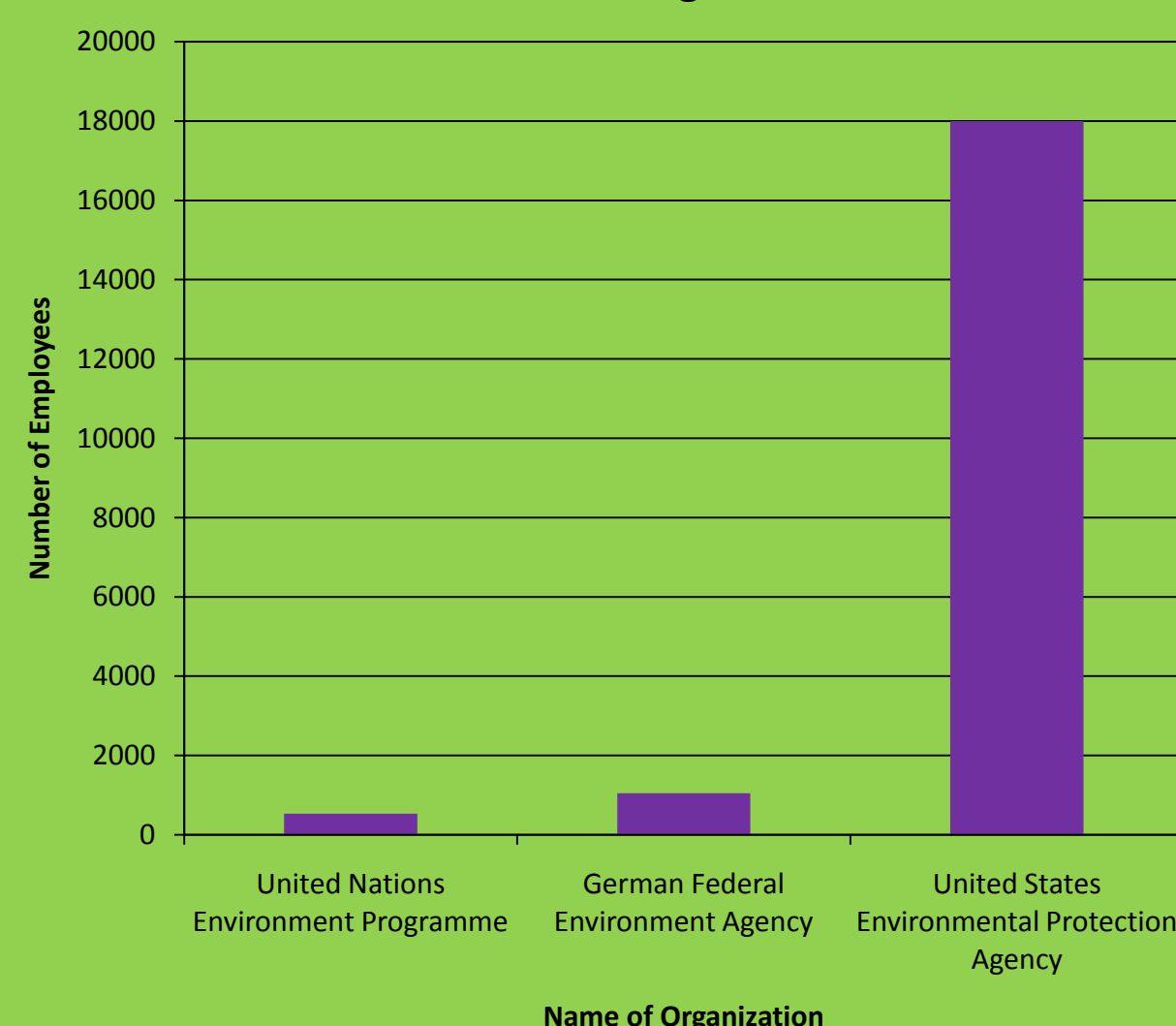
• Arguments were framed within the liberal-pluralist perspective of international relations

## Findings

A WEO is necessary because it would provide:

- 1) Organizational Centralization
  - Enhanced mandate
  - Bigger budget
  - More staff
  - Elimination of coordination deficit

Employee base of UNEP vs. those of two national environmental agencies<sup>2</sup>

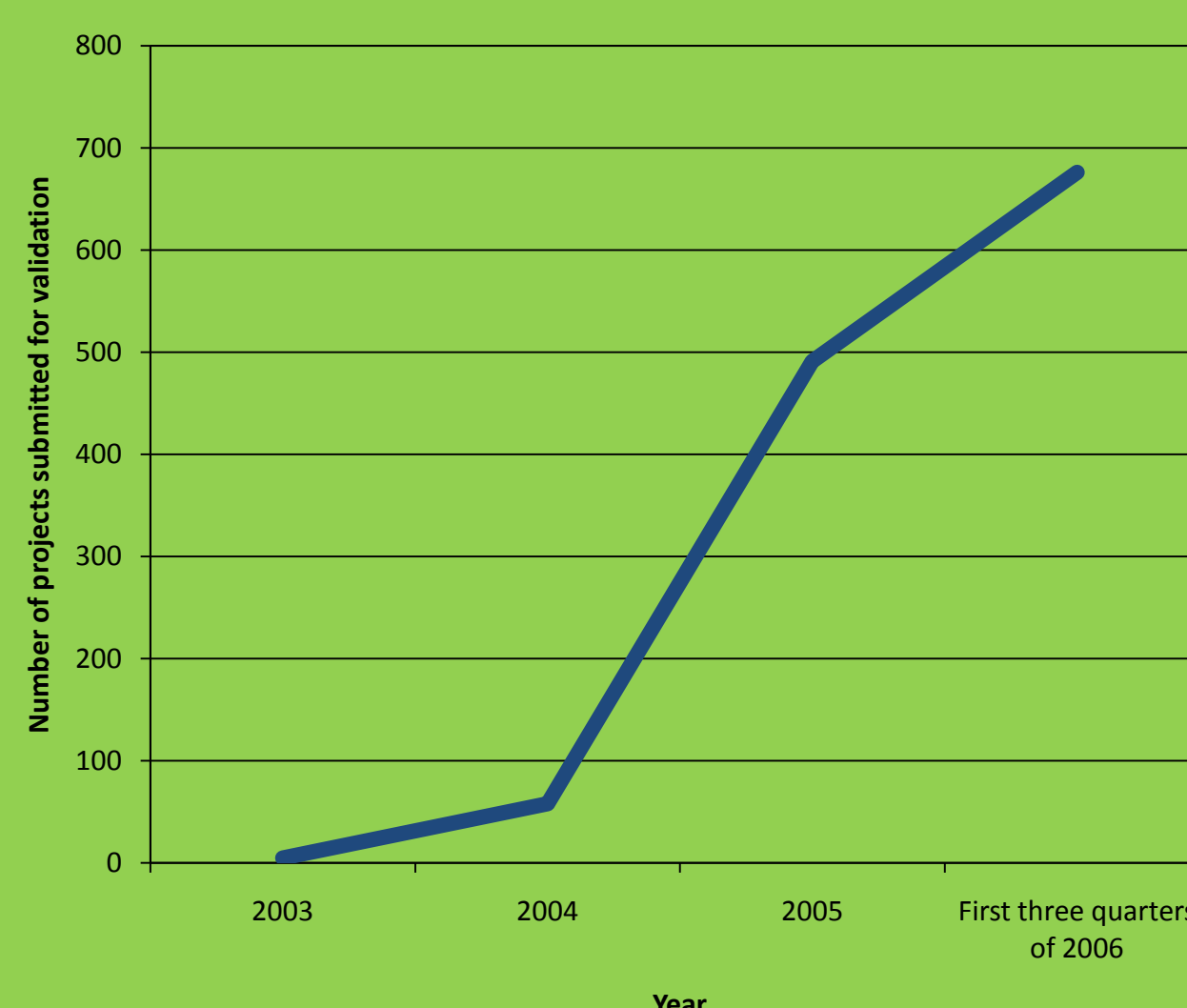


- 2) A Counterbalance to the World Trade Organization
  - Equal powers and capabilities
  - A WEO could garner more national and civil support for itself through a greater commitment to cooperation and inclusivity than the WTO

**TO CONSIDER**  
The WTO's rules are legally binding and it has the ability to enforce them on all environmental agreements

- 3) Greater Assistance to the Global South
  - North's moral obligation to South
  - Equal representation in decision-making
  - Encouragement of clean development mechanism

Measuring the Success of the Clean Development Mechanism<sup>3</sup>



## Limitations

This analysis is not designed to:

- Address some of the fundamental realist arguments for why a fully-functioning WEO is not possible
- Study specific inter-state or domestic environmental initiatives (other than those of Canada)
- Examine the role of environmental NGOs

## Conclusion

- A WEO, while not sufficient to end the current ecological crisis, is a necessity
- It could provide the organizational base from which all other causes could stem
- Its expansive mandate could command respect on the world stage
- WEO could have the resources to effectively plan, implement, oversee and redress
- Harmful effects of world commerce could be curbed
- Could lead to fairer relationship between Global North and South
- **The seeds of human preservation can be sown, but it must be done together, as united individuals and as united nations**



## References

- <sup>1</sup> Bauer, Steffen and Frank Biermann. 2005. Introduction to *A World Environment Organization. Solution or Threat to Effective International Environmental Governance?*, by Frank Biermann and Steffen Bauer. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.
- <sup>2</sup> German Advisory Council on Global Change. 2001. *New Structures for Global Environmental Policy*. London: Earthscan.
- <sup>3</sup> Ambrosi, Philippe and Frank Lecocq. 2007. “The Clean Development Mechanism: History, Status and Prospects.” *Review of Environmental Economics and Policy* 1 (Winter): 134-51.