

The Winnipeg Principles, WTO and sustainable development: proposed policies for reconciling trade and the environment

- [228] There is a widespread belief that the WTO has made virtually no concessions to environmentalists about their concerns arising from free trade and the process of globalization. There are concerns that these processes may undermine prospects for sustainable development. Following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the IISD (International Institute for Sustainable Development) was established to advocate policies to support sustainable development within Canada and globally. In 1994, it proposed the Winnipeg Principles as a means for reconciling international trade and development so as to achieve sustainable development. These seven principles are outlined in this article and assessed. Although the IISD had hoped through these principles to influence the work programme of the Environment and Trade Committee of the WTO, it seems to have little effect. Probably if these principles had been seriously considered by WTO, the serious social conflicts which emerged globally at the beginning of this century would have been avoided, and we would be in a better position to understand the complex links between trade, environment and sustainable development and adopt relevant policies. (15 references)

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Sustainable Development 9(4): 204-212

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Big science, small impacts—in the South? The influence of global environmental assessments on expert communities in India

- [229] To help decision-makers cope with the uncertainty of global environmental change, transnational networks of experts have offered numerous assessments of the state of knowledge, often advertised as consensus of international science. Substantial social science research has already analyzed the effects of such global environmental assessments on industrialized countries; this study explores their influence in India as a pivotal developing country. It appears that although global environmental assessments did not remain without any influence in India, their effect is still small. These limitations could be addressed, it is argued, by increasing the usefulness and legitimacy of global environmental assessments in the South through stronger consideration of the socio-economic context of developing countries and other Southern concerns and interests, by raising the participation of Southern experts, by enhancing research capacities in and communication links to, the South, and by ensuring that global environmental assessments are organized as self-adaptive processes, such as IPCC, and not as one-shot effort, such as the Global Biodiversity Assessment. (66 references)

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