

- **North- South Negotiations over environmental issues** , especially the climate justice debate, has polarized the world with sharp divisions between developing and developed country positions.
- , A growing number of governments in the developing world have also begun to espouse the position that the North owes the South an 'ecological debt' (Roberts and Parks).
- They provide evidences to support the facts that north owes to the south and the idea that there is an `unequal exchange in an unequal world`.

- Roberts and Parks (2010) recently, taking structuralist position have demonstrated that in many cases Southern worldviews and causal beliefs cannot be dismissed as a false construct or an erroneous mental model. They recognize that poor nations interact with rich nations on the basis of 'ecologically unequal exchange'.

- Structuralist theories [ie world system theory] provide useful contribution in this debate providing empirical evidences to support the ecological debt idea and also to indicate how structural factors impede environmental negotiation, and how by giving adequate attention to these factors would help creating facilities for co-operation.

- They argue at greater length that the structural obstacles that developing countries face have significantly influenced their **worldviews, causal beliefs, and principled beliefs, which have in turn shaped their perceived self-interests, policy positions, and negotiating tactics.**
- The emphasis of world-systems theory on historicism and structuralism also helps explain why many peripheral and semi-peripheral nations are currently locked into ecologically unsustainable patterns (Roberts and Grimes, 1999; Roberts et al., 2003; Giljum (2004

# Importance of the debate over environmental issues

Currently, in international environmental law, as well as in different forums of the global agencies, there is considerable discussion about North-South conflicts, or conflicts between wealthier, economically developed nations and poorer, economically developing countries.

- Many developed nations (North) have more stringent environmental standards , and they create pressures on the developing countries to follow the standards that they set.
- They expect the third world countries to raise their national standards to these more stringent levels.

- The North expects the South to learn from the North's mistakes and avoid the environmental and economic consequences of unsustainable development;
- Many developing countries (South), however, contend that this requirement is unfair.
- The developing world often uses two main arguments to justify its opposition to this upward harmonization of environmental standards.

- First, much of the developed world's wealth was derived from the cheap and unsustainable extraction of natural resources.
- Although the North may now favor greater environmental protection, the South is quick to point out the tremendous wealth derived from unregulated development.
- Developing countries argue that it is hypocritical for the North to deny less affluent countries the same development opportunities.



- Second, there is widespread suspicion among developing countries that environmental standards are being used by the North to keep the South at a competitive disadvantage.
- These suspicions have led some to label global environmental protection efforts as “eco-imperialism.”
- A final argument often raised by less developed countries (LDCs) is that if the developed nations wish to enforce stringent standards upon the LDCs, the developed nations have a corresponding duty to transfer enabling technology and to offer financial assistance at concessionary rates.
- This argument often surfaces in debates surrounding technology transfers

- So, regardless of how one may characterize the North-South debate over environmental standards,
- there is little doubt that economic growth in the developing world is currently the main issue in the so-called unsustainable world economy.

# Unsustainability

- The way, the developing world's forests are rapidly disappearing, the way high-yield, single crop agriculture, the farmlands of the developing world are being transformed into desert ,
- The way the industrial and municipal discharge has made the waters of the developing world undrinkable for humans and unlivable for aquatic life;
- From both an economic and political perspective, it is not difficult to understand why these problems of unsustainability have been so acute in the developing world.

- Many developing nations are saddled with considerable foreign debt, and often short-term natural resource exploitation is the only way to service this debt;
- Nations that are struggling economically are willing to lower environmental and health standards to attract investment.
- This lowers the production costs of their resource-based exports. Not surprisingly, businesses often respond by relocating operations to these nations.

- Most developing nations also lack the political stability and democratic traditions that allow citizens to influence government policy;
- The government and corporations of the developed world have a powerful financial incentive to export hazardous or polluting industries to third world pollution havens.
- The resulting health and environmental problems then become the burden of the Third World host country.

- The outcomes of this process are consistent and predictable:
- -Developing nations obtain limited economic gain and suffer substantial environmental damage, while the investor (often the corporations and shareholders of the developed world) obtains substantial economic gain and suffers limited or no environmental damage.
- Examples of this phenomenon are readily found — the extraction of oil in Ecuador, the destruction of native forests in Southeast Asia, and the placement of unsafe chemical factories in India.

- ***Developing Countries and the Control of Plant Genetic Resources:***
- -The control and exploitation of plant genetic resources have emerged as a new area of tension in North-South environmental relations;
- The northern countries, which are poor in biodiversity but technologically rich, have traditionally exploited the plant genetic resources and community knowledge of the unindustrialized southern countries to develop new drugs and to genetically engineer seeds and crops.

- Over the years, laboratories and agricultural companies have developed special high-growth seeds.
- These are of great economic value to farmers because they result in increased yields.
- In an effort to retain the economic benefits resulting from the use of these high growth seeds, many laboratories and agricultural companies have attempted to secure patent protection.
- With patent protection, anyone desiring to use or sell these high-yield seeds would need to purchase such rights from the party holding the patent.
- Patent protection for seed varieties privatizes formerly free-flowing plant genetic resources.



- The issue of seeds has been divisive enough to give rise to seed wars.
- In one case, Indian farmers rioted to shut down a Cargill seed plant that exploited the traditional knowledge of the farming communities, sold back to them their own genetically “improved” seeds at exorbitant prices.

- The privatization of biotechnology and genetic resources has raised a number of difficult issues.
- [effect of such privatization on biodiversity and global ecology; decline in crop diversity and an accompanying decline in soil vitality and regeneration; make crops more susceptible to pest infestation and so on]
- While this has strengthened the patent protection , giving greater control over natural resources to the first world countries, made southern position more vulnerable to pattern of exchange based on inequality.

- The debate over biotechnology and genetic patents was the central reason for the United States' initial refusal to sign the Biodiversity convention at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. Former President Bush believed that the convention did not provide adequate international patent and copyright safeguards for American biotechnology.

- However, with the decision of President Clinton to sign the Biodiversity Convention represents an important shift in the United States' position on biotechnology.
- It indicates an increased willingness to balance national economic interest with the needs of developing countries and the global consensus to preserve biodiversity.

- The change in the United States' position was in large part due to pressure created by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS).
- In 1993, UCS released a report in which it called on the United States to bring the regulatory approval process for genetically engineered crops to a temporary halt.
- This position was based partly on economic equity grounds and partly on a concern for the ecological risks of allowing such genetic patents.

- The Union of Concerned Scientists was founded in 1969 by faculty and students of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, located in Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- A non-profit , advocacy group based in USA
- Its members include private citizens as well scientists ;
- One of the co-founders was physicist and Nobel laureate Dr. Henry Kendall, who served for many years as chairman of the board of UCS.
- In 1977, the UCS sponsored a "Scientists' Declaration on the Nuclear Arms Race" calling for an end to nuclear weapons tests and deployments in the United States and Soviet Union.<sup>[4]</sup> In response to the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), the UCS sponsored a petition entitled "An Appeal to Ban Space Weapon.

- Why does inequality matter?

- Over the last 20 years, s
- specific causal channels through which inequality can influence the prospects for international cooperation on global climate change are highlighted:



- How Inequality has a dampening effect on cooperation by polarizing policy preferences and making it difficult for countries to arrive at a socially shared understanding of what is 'fair.
- How global inequality influences international climate negotiations.
- how specific causal mechanisms through which inequality—in opportunity, political power and distributional outcomes— influences global negotiations over environmental issues.

- Global inequality contributes to conditions of generalized mistrust, which in turn makes developing countries having strong preferences for ‘cheap’ economic development and weak preferences for stringent environmental policies—more inclined to pursue self-damaging policies.

- Southern suspicion of northern behaviour and its inability to constrain northern opportunism also promotes risk-averse behaviour and defensive negotiating strategies.
- Drawing on social inequality literature and international relations theory, some argue that inequality dampens cooperative efforts;

- Reinforce 'structuralist' worldviews :
- > causal beliefs about the pattern of exchanges that polarize policy preferences; promote particularistic notions of fairness [ecological debt] ; generating divergent and unstable expectations about future behaviour; eroding conditions of mutual trust and creating incentives for zero-sum and negative-sum behaviour.
- In effect, inequality undermines the establishment of mutually acceptable 'rules of the game' which could mitigate these obstacles[Bradley C Parks and J Timmons Roberts, 2008)

# Adversarial relations between North-South over climate change issues

- Since the early 1990s, virtually all developing countries have refused to adopt greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments in the name of fairness.
- In fact, the very suggestion that poorer nations limit their industrial growth has led to a hostile negotiating environment.

- Some social theorists [Park and Robert 2008) argue that the stalemate in north-south climate negotiations is unlikely to be resolved in the absence of aggressive efforts to address issues of inequality and Justice.
- Inequality and justice have been central issues at every major environmental conference since the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden: Nairobi in 1982, Rio in 1992, Rio *in* New York and Johannesburg in 2002, and subsequently in the post 2012.

- At negotiations leading up to the 1992 Earth Summit, southern countries feared limits on their efforts to grow economically and care for the basic needs of their people, but powerful industrialized countries such as the United States (US) refused to curtail their own excesses unless poor nations did the same.
- The Byrd-Hagel Resolution was widely denounced by leaders in the developing world.

- In the context of climate change negotiations, all states came under intense pressure to ‘do something’, and 132 countries eventually did sign the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).



- Southern policy-makers and activists were quick to point out that the average US citizen dumps as much greenhouse gas into the atmosphere as five Chinese or seventeen Indians, and that developing countries are immeasurably more vulnerable to rising tides, tropical storms, droughts and flooding than rich nations (Roberts and Parks 2007; Agarwal et al 2001).

- Over the
- past 20 years, scholars have argued that outcomes in international environmental
- politics are shaped by **material self-interest, bargaining power** and the ability to strong-arm weaker states through more coercive forms of power (Sprinz and Vaahtoranta 1994; Victor 2001).

- Others have emphasized the importance of exogenous shocks and crises, salient solutions, a scientific burden of proof, environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), postmaterialist values, epistemic communities, transnational activist networks, corporate nonstate actors, intergovernmental organizations and political leadership (Young 1994; Wapner 1995; Haas 1990; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Levy and Kolk 2002; Meyer et al 1997).

- There are three broad types of inequality that figure prominently in climate change negotiation (Park and Robert 2008): climate-related inequality, inequality in international environmental politics and inequality in international economic regimes.

- Issue areas,
- > such as trade, investment, debt, intellectual property rights, biodiversity and desertification.
- In many of these international regimes, developing countries feel as though their concerns regarding fair processes and outcomes have been marginalized.

- A casual observer might think that the best way to resolve the issue of responsibility for climate change would be to give all humans equal atmospheric rights and assign responsibility to individuals based on how much 'environmental space' they use.
- This is a basic rule of civil justice : those who created a mess should be responsible for cleaning up their fair share. But in international politics things are not so simple.

- With only four per cent of the world's population, the US is responsible for over 20 per cent of all global emissions.
- That can be compared to 136 developing countries that together are only responsible for 24 per cent of global emissions (Roberts and Parks 2007)
- Overall, the richest 20 per cent of the world's population is responsible for over 60 per cent of its current emissions of greenhouse gasses.

- These vast disparities have shaped different proposals for cleaning up the atmosphere.
- The Kyoto Protocol, as it was negotiated in 1997, was based on : the notion that countries should reduce their emissions incrementally from a baseline year (1990).
- Under this approach, the goal is to have strong economic growth with as few carbon emissions as possible (Baumert 2002).
- Both of these proposals have the modest effect of departing incrementally from the current status quo without radical requirements on powerful countries.



- On the other side of the spectrum are two proposals that strongly favour developing countries:
- India, China and much of the developing world favour a per capita approach, in which each person on earth is given an equal right to the ability of the atmosphere to absorb carbon.
- Under the per capita proposal, countries whose per capita consumption of fossil fuels is significantly lower than the world average would be given significant room to grow and emit.
- Most per capita plans would allow them to trade their extra carbon emission credits for the capital they need for development

# About consequences of climate change

- The scientific community agrees that carbon emissions will create a warmer and wetter atmosphere, and, in turn, increase flooding, hurricanes, forest fires, winter storms, and drought in arid and semi-arid regions.
- Climatologists have observed a sharp upswing in the frequency, magnitude and intensity of hydro-meteorological disasters over the past two decade

- Whereas climate change is often described as ‘everybody’s problem’ or a ‘global public bad’, hydro-meteorological impacts are distributed socially across human populations (Kaul et al 1999).
- Some countries and communities will suffer most and earliest, and generally they are not those that caused the problem.

- According to the latest predictions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), rapidly expanding populations in Africa, Asia and Latin America are suffering disproportionately from more frequent and dangerous droughts, floods and storms (IPCC 2007).
- The World Bank reports that ‘[b]etween 1990 and 1998, 94 per cent of the world’s disasters and 97 per cent of all natural-disaster-related deaths occurred in developing countries’ (Mathur et al 2004)

- The arguments that countries that are disproportionately suffering from rising sea levels, devastating droughts and storms, lower agricultural yields and increased disease', can not be held responsible for cleaning up an environmental problem that the industrialized world created in the first place.

- The first important point is that, while northern governments are trying to convince the southern governments that they need to rein in their greenhouse gas emissions, most of them are not doing so in their own countries.
- Many industrialized countries have also decided that rather than making cuts at home, they would prefer to achieve their emission reduction commitments by funding activities in developing countries.

- Inequality in international environmental regimes
- Climate negotiations are deeply embedded in the broader context of north-south environmental relations.
- In 1972, at the first international conference on the environment in Stockholm, Sweden, it quickly became evident that no consensus would emerge between developed and developing countries on the issue of global environmental protection.

- Late-developers' feared restrictions on their economic
- growth, emphasized the north's profligate use of planetary resources, and pushed for a redistributive programme that would benefit them economically and hasten the transition towards industrialization.



- In future rounds of negotiations, on issues such as biodiversity, desertification and climate change, there were calls for increased financial compensation and more equitable representation (Sell 1996).
- Debate over the voting structure of the Global Environmental Facility, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars of environmental aid each year, became especially conflict-ridden.

Poor and middle-income countries protested 'donor dominance' and the lack of transparency in decision-making, whereas rich, industrialized countries insisted that only the 'incremental costs' of global environmental projects be financed (Keohane and Levy 1996)

- ‘[T]he “price” of multilateral rules’, ‘is that [Least Developed Countries–LDCs] must accept rules written by—and usually for—the more developed countries’ (Shadlen 2004, 6).
- Gruber (2000) argues that powerful states—particularly those with large markets—possess ‘go-it-alone power’ in that they can unilaterally eliminate the previous status quo and proceed gainfully with or without the participation of weaker parties

- Wade refers to a so-called ‘shrinking of development space’, and argues that ‘the rules being written into multilateral and bilateral agreements actively prevent developing countries from pursuing the kinds of industrial and technology policies adopted by the newly developed countries of East Asia and by the older developed countries when they were developing’ (2002).

- In the context of international trade agreements in particular, developing countries have been asked to take on obligations that have been clearly inimical to their development interests.
- Perhaps the most egregious example of this in recent times has been the WTO's intellectual property agreement, TRIPs
- [The Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights]. TRIPs will have the effect on poor countries of increasing the costs of and reducing access to essential medicines and this at a time when one of the worst health epidemics ever known by man— AIDS—ravages the developing world

- Other scholars of international political economy have highlighted the fact that the governance structures of international financial institutions, like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, prevent the institutions' main clients (developing countries) from having any significant voting power (Woods 1999; Wade 2003).