The Global Policy Environment

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By

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Related resources:
See the Training Path Policy Learning Programme 2009 for other related resources. Download the Programme Summary for background information and the Overview of the Programme Modules and Sessions for a complete list of resources developed for the Policy Learning Programme 2009. FAO Policy Learning Website: http://www.fao.org/tc/tca/policy-learning/en/

About EASYPol
The EASYPol home page is available at: www.fao.org/easypol
EASYPol is a multilingual repository of freely downloadable resources for policy making in agriculture, rural development and food security. The resources are the results of research and field work by policy experts at FAO. The site is maintained by FAO’s Policy Assistance Support Service, Policy and Programme Development Support Division, FAO.
Objectives

Users will understand

- the global policy making processes and the role of the many elements influencing it
- the challenges and opportunities for individual countries of integration in the global context
- the implications of the global policy environment for national decision making
Purpose

- Sensitize on the complexities of the global policy making and on recent trends
- Set up a simple framework of global policy making
- Provide some hints for countries’ strategic positioning in the global policy making process
Questions

- Why do we need global policies?
- How are/can issues be translated into policies?
- Who or what influences the policy objectives and agenda?
- What is at stake today in the international arena?
- Where are decisions made?
- How do decisions at the global level influence national policy frameworks?
Policy making: a complex and chaotic process

- Actors
- Issues
- Institutions
- Outputs
- Knowledge

- Defining issues
- Suggesting actions
- Achieving consensus
- Implementing & Enforcing
- M&E

- Political
- Technological
- Advocacy
- Economic
- Natural

- Capacity building
- Financing

POLICY CYCLE
A framework for the analysis of global policy process

Internal elements

Actors
- States
- Alliances (G6, G8, G77)
- Business sector
- Civil Society

Institutions
- Bretton Woods Institutions
- UN System
- WTO

Policy Issues
- Environmental
- Social
- Economic
- Environmental

Outputs
- Agreements
- Conferences
- Summits
- Programmes
- Plan of actions

Cross cutting factors
- Knowledge
- Advocacy
- Information
- Financing
- Capacity Building

Exogenous elements

Political events
Ecological events
Economic events
The number of INGOs has increased from 427 in 1940 to 2,296 in 1970 and over 280,000 in 2006 according to the Union of International Associations but over one million according to informal sources.

Increasing role in public-private partnerships for project and programme financing
- Gates Foundation = $30bn
- Berkshire Hathaway chief executive Warren Buffett donation to Gates Foundation = $30bn
- ODA 2006 = $103bn
- But also in areas so far considered of public domain, e.g. food standards

Nation-state influence in global decision making is shrinking:
- Because of ODA cuts: 2006 = $103bn
- Reduced support for multilateral funding agencies like the UN
- At the advantage of international non-governmental organizations but also of subnational levels
A plethora of institutions and implications for global governance:
- Transaction costs
- Duplication
- Coordination
- Harmonization
- Coherence
A substantial continuity in global priority though with an evolving approach due to:

- the changing political, economic and institutional context
- the changing discourse and norms brought into the global negotiations by the “new” actors

- Formalization of the global priority objectives into The Millenium Development Goals, which become the reference framework for policy making at the global level and for all the development partners.

- The issue is whether the policy agenda matches with the political agenda.
One of the problems involved in taking legal action against violations of international conventions is that even if governments sign and ratify international laws, they are not obliged to pass national laws to implement them, and often they do not do so.
Cross-cutting functions

- To achieve consensus, legitimacy, harmonization, ownership, accountability, coherence and consistency.
- Example, budget support, “... partner countries have committed themselves, inter alia, to set clear development priorities and undertake policy and institutional reforms; to increase results and be more accountable to their constituencies; to promote macroeconomic stability, including economic liberalization and a more equitable distribution of income and wealth.”
Exogenous factors

Political events
- End of cold war
- Gulf War 1 & 2
- September 11

Natural and human disasters
- Oil crisis in the 70s
- Chernobyl fallout in 1989
- Tsunami 2004
- Droughts 2007

Economic events
- Debt crisis of DCs in the 80s -> Structural Adjustment Programmes
- Financial crisis in Asia in the 90s
- Food crisis 2008
- World Financial crisis 2009
Preliminary conclusions

1. Isolation and self-reliance is not an option in a globalizing world.

2. Effectiveness of the new global policy framework and governance needs to be strengthened, particularly at the country level.

3. Global negotiations influence national policy decision making and priorities through conventions, agreements, and treaties, and their compliance mechanisms.

4. Policies at the national level must be based on a thorough assessment of the threats and opportunities of the global policies in order to take appropriate policy action.

5. Developing countries are often a weak partner in the global policy making and can hardly influence processes and decisions. DCs need to understand how to strengthen their influence in the global debate, to avoid distorting effects of global policy agenda on national development priorities in terms of resource allocation (human and financial) and to take advantage of the opportunities.
Preliminary conclusions

**Strengths**
- Increased participation in decision centers (WTO)
- Most of the countries have already embarked on reforms in line with the Washington Consensus principles (liberalisation, privatisation and decentralisation).

**Weaknesses**
- Unbalanced access to information and knowledge
- Limited capacities in negotiation on specific issues
- Lack of financial resources

**Opportunities**
- Improved management of macroeconomic and budgetary policies
- Increased attractiveness of foreign investments
- Transfer of knowledge and capacities and reduction of the technological divide
- Higher transparency and accountability with increasing participation of stakeholders resulting in increased ownership and consensus

**Threats**
- Decline of Nation-State influence in public goods policies (e.g., food standards)
- Diversion of the best capacities of the country to global issues
- Possible increase of transaction costs due to the plethora of actors and institutions
- Decreasing influence of sectoral ministries (particularly MoA)
- Marginalization of non-profitable disadvantaged areas and people