The emerging landscape of environmental actors and processes in the context of globalization and decentralization

Panel on “Transition in environmental governance in Asia: Policy implications at local and international level”

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Outline

- **The state-centered environmental policy-making**
  - Centralized environmental institutions
  - Environmental protection through regulation
  - The inter-state approach to environmental protection

- **Globalization and environmental actors and processes**
  - Process and environmental impact of globalization
  - Globalization and environmental actors
  - Globalization and environmental policy processes

- **Decentralization and environmental actors and processes**
  - Process and environmental impact of decentralization
  - Decentralization and environmental actors
  - Decentralization and environmental policy processes

- **Managing the emerging web of environmental actors and processes**
  - Emerging environmental policy processes and instruments of environmental governance
  - Mechanisms for policy coordination and enforcement
Examine three issues:

1) The shift from central governmental institutions centered environmental policy making to a plurality of environmental actors

2) the processes driving the change in the role of environmental actors and interactions among these actors

3) how the plurality of actors is affecting decision-making and implementation of environmental policies
State-centered environmental policy-making (1)

- Centralized environmental institutions
  - Modern environmental governance systems in Asia have been formed on the basis of centralised policy making and institution building (public property of state central institutions and responsibility over decision-making, exploitation and management of natural resources).
  - This was an extension of the “developmental state” model of development, combined with a range of country and sub-region-specific factors.
  - In the case of natural resource-rich Southeast Asian countries, centralized environmental governance systems emanated from the following process:
    - Traditional community property/open access system
    - Colonization/centralization
    - Decolonization/decentralization
    - Nation-building/centralization

- Environmental line ministries/agencies, regional/provincial offices
Environmental protection through regulation: A feature of state-centered policy-making

As of the 1990s, most countries had already put in place some short of vision document and framework laws on the environment.

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<th>Environmental Framework Laws of Selected Countries</th>
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<td>Bangladesh</td>
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State-centered environmental policy-making (3)

- *In traditional environmental governance systems, central governmental agencies set a broad objective, plan for specific targets, frame policies to attain those targets, select specific policy instruments, establish institutional mechanisms to implement them, adopt appropriate approaches for involvement and empowerment of stakeholders, prescribing rights and responsibilities of stakeholders etc.* (adapted from UNDP/ESCAP 2002).
State-centered environmental policy-making (4)

- The inter-state approach to environmental protection (regimes)
  - Intergovernmental agreements addressed transboundary environmental problems such as international water courses, haze pollution, straddling resources, hazardous waste

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<th>Selected regional and sub-regional environmental agreements in Asia</th>
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<td>ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, 2002</td>
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<td>South Asian Seas Action Plan, 1995</td>
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<td>Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin, 1995</td>
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<td>Convention to Ban the Importation into the Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific, 1995</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region, 1986</td>
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<td>ASEAN Agreement on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, 1985</td>
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Globalization and Environmental Actors and Processes

- Process of globalization in Asia
  - Market-driven process with no commensurate political and environmental governance mechanism: two track approach to economy and ecology
  - "subregional economic zones"- highly economically integrated and geographically contiguous areas separated by political boundaries
Globalization and Environmental Actors and Processes

- Globalization and environmental actors
  - Globalization and the changing role of the state: from the center of growth and policy to an enabling actor
  - International corporations: source of environmental damage and part of solution
  - NGOs and local communities: increased awareness, empowerment >>> mechanism of informal regulation
  - Regional environmental institutions for transboundary problems
Globalization and Environmental Actors and Processes

- **Globalization and environmental policy processes**
  - Expanding the international reach of national policy enforcement
    - The limits of domestic regulation: national regulation need to go hand in hand with the transnational dimension of economic activities that impact on the environment >>> e.g. new forms of cooperative arrangements between importing and exporting countries to control illegal trade in forest products
  - Community-led informal regulation
    - Alternative to regulatory failure
  - Multi-stakeholder processes
    - Non-state actors (civil society, business, NGOs) become part of the process of issue identification and agenda setting.
Decentralization and Environmental Actors and Processes

- Various forms of decentralization:
  - Political decentralization
  - Administrative decentralization

Legal foundation for decentralization in Asia

- Korea 1990: Law on Local Autonomy (Revision)
- Philippines 1991: Local Government Code
- India 1992: 73rd Amendment to the Constitution
- Vietnam 1998: Decree 29/CP on the Regulation of Democracy in Communes (Grass-roots Democracy Decree)
- Indonesia 1999: Regional Administration (Act No 22); 1999: Fiscal Balance Between the Central Government and Regions (Act No. 25)
- Nepal 1999: Local Self Governance Act
Decentralization and Environmental Actors and Processes

- Decentralization and environmental actors

- Allocation of power from central government to local government bodies; traditional leaders; community groups; resource users groups; non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
Decentralization and Environmental Actors and Processes

- Decentralization and environmental policy process
  - Local authorities entitled with environmental decision making (pollution control, resource management, foreign investment approval etc.)
  - Community/users-based resource management
    - New policy processes depend on the type of decentralization and resulting power balance
Globalization, decentralization and the central state

Socio-Political Factors → Decrease in the State Power → Decentralization

Economic Factors → Decrease in the State Power → Globalization
Multiple-level structure

Processes of globalization and decentralization leading to a shift from a state-centered structure of environmental governance to a multiple-level and multiple-actor structure of governance.
Managing the Emerging Web of Environmental Actors and Processes

- Emerging environmental policy processes and instruments: Joint initiatives, partnership initiatives

- Traditional instruments of governance that are centered on state sovereignty are complemented by new types of policy initiatives that are multi-stakeholder in their approach, bringing together different environmental actors with complementary forms of input.
**Multi-stakeholder initiatives**: Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment: a regional initiative led by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, with support from the Government of Japan, Kitakyushu city and Institute for Global Environmental Strategies.
Managing the Emerging Web of Environmental Actors and Processes

- The issue:
  - The pace of development of this emerging web of actors and processes is well beyond the process of reform in mechanisms of policy coordination and monitoring from a centralised one to a multiple-dimensional one.

- Policy coordination and enforcement
  Elements for consideration in formulating a more coherent system of environmental governance would include:
  - Subsidiarity
    - Regional – National
    - National – Provincial
  - Responsibility for coordination
    - National Apex bodies
    - UN regional commission
    - Possibly a new regional environmental body