

Preface

In June 1997, five years after the Rio Conference, the United Nations General Assembly will hold a high-level review conference, the aim of which is to examine the progress meanwhile made in the field of international environmental protection and development. Certainly, there are some small positive outcomes of the efforts undertaken by States in the post Rio-process. However, the State participants to this special session of the General Assembly also will have to take notice of the fact that as yet they have not been able to effectively address the broad range of severe global environmental problems. Therefore, government officials as well as scholars doing research in this field must consider all possibilities for strengthening the system of international environmental law aiming at sustainable development. Institution-building may prove to be a most promising means in this respect.

This is why from 20 to 22 March 1996 an international workshop on "Institution-Building in International Environmental Law" was held in Heidelberg at the invitation of the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law. Its purpose was to analyse and discuss the potential of institution-building in respect of international environmental law-making and enforcing such law by means of "compliance control" and "compliance assistance". The Workshop brought together scholars, diplomats, public servants and others experienced in international environmental and developmental relations.

The present issue of the *Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht* comprises the reports given by the speakers during the Workshop, three additional written contributions dedicated to this event, as well as a short report summarising the discussions which formed the core of the Workshop.

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