

Foreword

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Governance is the greatest challenge facing the international community. In fact, only if the nations of the world cooperate in establishing institutions and rules in support of the global common good will the phrase “international community” have practical meaning. Otherwise, sovereign nations will live, and very likely die, not in a community at all but in a Hobbesian jungle.

The overarching common goal can best be defined in the negative: avoiding catastrophe for the planet. Because of humankind’s mastery of technology, we now have the capacity to destroy ourselves. We can do so today and quickly, in a thermonuclear war; or we can do so tomorrow, more slowly but no less completely, through the ruination of our environment. This book addresses that danger and what it will take to avert it.

In their thoughtful, rigorous, comprehensive, and readable chapters, the scholars and practitioners assembled here discuss options and opportunities for better management of our ecological interdependence. The authors, all in the forefront of their fields, draw on several areas of scientific expertise, including international law, economics, biological sciences, and environmental policy; they also represent a variety of national perspectives spanning five continents. Yet they share a conviction that traditional national policy and international diplomacy are no longer sufficient, either in pace, scope or substance. Retarding and reversing the damage that we are already inflicting on our environment requires an unprecedented, coordinated, long-term effort involving ambitious, innovative, and flexible coalitions of state and non-state actors, especially non-governmental organizations that tap into the resources, knowledge, and activism of citizens.

Making the case for environmental governance is an intellectual challenge as well as a political one. Hence the opportunity — and the obligation — of leading institutions like the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies to contribute to the debate.

The Yale Center for the Study of Globalization is proud to have supported this venture. Those of us involved in the founding of the Center in 2001 have stressed that globalization is not a policy or an

option. It's not good or bad. It's not something to be for or against. It's a fact of life — something to be understood and managed. Yet globalization is, for better or worse, subject to human behavior. We can maximize the positive aspects of globalization, diminish the risks, and counter the threats. In that sense, we've often said, globalization is like the weather, which not only manifests the forces of nature but shows the effects of human profligacy and short-sightedness.

This book tackles head on that aspect of globalization — including what it has to say about the weather, how it's changing, and how we, the international community, can change the way it's changing.

Readers will have a chance to join the authors in better understanding the problem of global environmental degradation and thereby being part of the solution, which is global governance.