

American Journal of International Law

*October 2000
Vol. 94 No. 4*



Published by

The American Society of International Law

AMERICAN JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

VOL. 94

October 2000

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Numerous multilateral environmental agreements have been concluded since 1970. Many establish a new kind of institutional arrangement that includes a conference of the parties, subsidiary bodies, and a secretariat. This article explores the often-innovative powers of these bodies to develop the normative content of their agreements, monitor parties' compliance with the agreements, and act on the external plane. It also analyzes the legal character of these bodies, shows how they differ from traditional intergovernmental organizations, and demonstrates that they have developed new methods for international governance within legal regimes.	
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