spread of infectious diseases, and the impact of regulation on modern technologies related to nutrition and health. The group feels that the policies of governments and other agencies are often enthusiastic but not practical, thus wasting funds and labor hours on ill-conceived initiatives that ultimately cost lives. In the area of trade, IPN espouses the benefits of freedom to trade; trade is considered fundamental to eliminating poverty and gaining economic freedom. The organization also, however, sees as dangerous the linking of environmental and labor regulations with trade rules. IPN bases its vision of sustainable development on achieving both environmental and human well-being through eliminating poverty and promoting progress.

**Significance for Climate Change**

IPN released a report in 2004 saying “climate change is a myth” and that warnings of environmental disaster due to climate change are “fatally flawed.” The activities of the organization are focused on resisting attempts to stave off global warming at the expense of economic interests.

_Victoria Price_

**See also:** American Enterprise Institute; Catastrophist-cornucopian debate; Cato Institute; Competitive Enterprise Institute; Heartland Institute; Heritage Foundation; Institute for Trade, Standards, and Sustainable Development; Nongovernmental organizations; Skeptics.

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**International Union for Conservation of Nature**

- **Categories:** Organizations and agencies; environmentalism, conservation, and ecosystems
- **Date:** Established October, 1948, as International Union for the Protection of Nature; name changed to International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in 1956
- **Web address:** [http://www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)

- **Mission**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), formerly the World Conservation Union, is a hybrid organization of states, state agencies, and nongovernmental organizations that facilitates and encourages the conservation and equitable use of nature and natural resources. It was founded in 1948 and has gone by several names in its history (recently reverting from the World Conservation Union to its former title, the International Union for Conservation of Nature). Its Secretariat is headquartered in Gland, Switzerland, but it has a staff of one thousand experts in sixty nations which coordinates several theme-based programs that focus on issues such as forests, gender, and business and biodiversity. Under the IUCN are six Commissions, the most prominent being the Species Survival Commission, which updates the Red List of threatened species; the Commission on Environmental Law, which has facilitated negotiations on several conservation treaties; and the World Commission on Protected Areas. The IUCN is supported by over eleven thousand volunteer scientists in over 160 nations.

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- **Significance for Climate Change**

The IUCN position on climate change is that nations should reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent below 1990 levels by 2050; use ecosystem-based management to mitigate and adapt to warming; and prioritize efforts on behalf of vulnerable peoples and ecosystems. Its research and communications emphasize linkages between conservation, energy use, globalization, and climate change. Internally, much of this work is coordinated by its Climate Change Initiative.

In its role as an expert adviser, the IUCN has advised members to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity, and other agreements on climate change mitigation, adaptation, and impacts, _inter alia_. It has alerted parties to the UNFCCC that if global average temperature were to rise 2° Celsius or more above preindustrial levels, massive extinctions and profound ecosystem changes would result. As a complement to its Red Lists, the IUCN has calculated the number of species that are currently of favorable conservation status that would be en-
dangered by global warming (for example, 51 percent of currently unthreatened corals could be endangered by climate change).

The IUCN is one of the most prominent international organizations drawing attention to the linkages between warming, conservation, and human well-being. It assesses and promotes natural resource management practices that would aid mitigation and adaptation to global warming. For example, it advocates inclusion of REDD (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) in forthcoming climate agreements.

In conjunction with other organizations, the IUCN has worked to mainstream issues that have been sidelined by the dominant discussion, such as the role of indigenous peoples in climate policy and the relationship between gender and natural resource use.

Adam B. Smith

See also: Conservation and preservation; Environmental law; Environmental movement; International agreements and cooperation.

International waters

- **Category:** Laws, treaties, and protocols

*International waters are less regulated than national waters, allowing environmentally damaging activities to occur. In addition, as global warming continues, changes in shorelines and the melting of the Arctic ice cap may create international complications.*

- **Key concepts**
  - exclusive economic zone: a zone extending about 320 kilometers from a nation’s shore in which all economic rights are granted to that nation
  - freedom of the seas: the principle that outside of water adjoining nations’ shorelines, all nations have the right of free passage and use of the ocean’s resources
  - territorial waters: areas within bodies of water that are within a nation’s borders and subject to all laws and regulations of that nation

*United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea: an international agreement outlining the rights of nations regarding territorial waters, economic zones, and rights of passage*

- **Background**
  
  Nearly three-fourths of the world’s surface is covered by water. Each terrestrial or oceanic ecosystem has developed depending upon the availability of a certain type and quantity of water. Major bodies of water and the atmosphere work together to form a circular system. The atmosphere affects glaciers, ice caps, rivers, lakes, seas, and oceans, while simultaneously these bodies of water affect the atmosphere. Changes in one directly result in changes in the other. Because international waters lie outside national boundaries, caring for them is often a low priority.

- **Pre-Twentieth Century History**
  
  With the Portuguese and Spanish explorations of the fifteenth century, Europeans began to have aspirations for global dominance. New claims over the ocean were put forward, first by Portugal and Spain, which were quickly followed by the British and Dutch. In the early seventeenth century, to reduce conflict, Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius put forward the freedom of the seas theory, that all oceans and adjoining seas could be used by everyone for any purpose. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, this principle was accepted by all European nations, with the provision that each nation controlled the first 4.8 kilometers of water adjacent to its shoreline. In certain strategic straits, all vessels were allowed to travel. This was the norm for the next two hundred years. The assumption during this period was that the oceans were so vast that nothing people could do would cause any harm to them.

- **Changes in the Twentieth Century**
  
  By the dawn of the twentieth century, it was becoming clear that not all the ocean’s resources were inexhaustible. Not wanting to lose resources, in 1945 the United States claimed the entire continental shelf and all the water above it. Because of this, other countries extended their territorial claims to 19.3 kilometers off their coasts. The United Na-
Date: February 16, 2010

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Publication information is:

*Encyclopedia of Global Warming*
Edited by Steven I. Dutch
3 volumes, 1,211 pages including index
Publication date: December, 2009 (© 2010)
List price: $395.00

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