



Global league tables reveal environmental 'premier league champions' and those left in the play-offs

New research into the ratification of six key Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) shows that some of the key players on the international stage are stalling on their environmental commitments, whilst a number of poorer and less developed countries have made significant advances in recent years.

Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future, a multi-stakeholder organisation working on sustainable development policy, has produced a series of Global League Tables, ranking countries according to their commitment to each MEA.

The six MEAs in question are the Bio-Safety Protocol, the Kyoto Protocol, the Rotterdam Convention on the International Trade of Hazardous Chemicals, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Agreement on the Protection and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks.¹ The Global League Tables have been released as Environment Ministers from around the world meet for the UN Environment Programme's annual Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum from 24th – 26th February in Bali, to discuss how to advance progress on global environmental issues.

The Global League Tables put the European Union as a region in first place – the vast majority of EU member states reside in the Premier League, with Italy and Ireland in Division 1 and only Estonia and Malta lower down in Division 2. Two countries currently in negotiation for EU Membership, Croatia and Turkey, both show only mediocre performance in Division 3. Asia as a region also scores highly, with major emerging economies India and China sitting in the Premiership and Division 1 respectively. Some notable 'anomalies' include Iran and Oman - both countries are in the Premiership even though most countries in the middle eastern region are in Division 3, 4 and the Sunday League.

The United States sits among the worst performing countries in Division Four and the Sunday League, sharing a platform with developing countries generally characterised by political and civil unrest and poor governance – including Zimbabwe, Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan. Russia also has a poor record, occupying a position in Division Three alongside Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Chad and Zambia. The United States and Russia, both Permanent Members of the UN Security Council and also among the G8 most industrialised nations have a disproportionately poor record in the context of their advanced development. Many states occupying the lower leagues are partly hindered in their ratification by governance and resource constraints borne of their developing

¹ This agreement is an additional provision of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea- its full title is 'Agreement for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention relating to the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks'.

Stakeholder Forum

for a sustainable future

3 Bloomsbury Place • London • WC1A 2QL

www.stakeholderforum.org



country status. The US and Russia do not face such challenges, and so their non-ratification can be seen as more politically and ideologically influenced.

Though for many countries there is much room for improvement in their international environmental record, the scores released today offer a stark contrast to the Global League Tables released by Stakeholder Forum in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. In 2002, no single country scored maximum points. In 2010, there are 46 countries that meet this benchmark, demonstrating a clear strengthening of governmental commitments to binding international law relating to the environment. It also sends a strong message for action to countries including Russia and the United States who have failed to improve their ranking since 2002.

The need for international co-operation on environmental issues, including the importance of adherence to binding international law, has been emphasised by the recent decision taken by the UN General Assembly to hold a high level conference on sustainable development in 2012 - an 'Earth Summit', twenty years on from the landmark UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992. The Rio Earth Summit in 1992 was instrumental in advancing the principle of environmental multilateralism, and was the birth-place of a number of binding international treaties and conventions – including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UN CBD). With the aspiration of a Rio+20 Earth Summit in 2012 to advance international co-operation and multilateralism, these Global League Tables are a reminder that many countries must advance their performance and further demonstrate commitment to international environmental law.

Felix Dodds, Executive Director of Stakeholder Forum said:

'It is very pleasing to see the top performance of the EU and many countries in Asia, including India and China. It is however disappointing that the USA and Russia, two of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, have not demonstrated more leadership in environmental multilateralism'

Notes

- The Global League Tables are presented along with background information, data and analysis in Stakeholder Forum's publication: Global Environmental League Tables: A global ranking of countries' commitments to Multilateral Environmental Agreements available at http://www.stakeholderforum.org/sf/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=136:league-tables&catid=5:media-and-communications-&Itemid=29
- Scoring for the MEA League Table is based on a country's commitment to each convention. A country is awarded one point for signing a treaty and two further points for ratifying a treaty into national legislative law. Countries are penalized one point if they have not signed a treaty.

For more information please contact Hannah Stoddart at Stakeholder Forum:

Email: hstoddart@stakeholderforum.org Tel: +44 (0)207 5806912/ +44 (0)7866 660510