

## THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL LEGAL POLICY ON GREEN ECONOMY

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### ABSTRACT;

*This research examines the urgency of international legal policy in promoting sustainable development and the transition to a green economy, given global challenges such as climate change and environmental degradation that require a collective response. The aim is to analyze the effectiveness of international legal instruments, such as the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, in creating a regulatory framework that supports a green economy. This research uses a normative juridical method with analysis of international legal documents and case studies to evaluate the implementation of these policies. The results show that international legal policies have played an important role in setting global standards for sustainable development, but their implementation still faces challenges such as inconsistencies in national regulations and lack of effective enforcement mechanisms. In conclusion, while the international legal framework has provided a solid foundation, it requires policy harmonization, institutional capacity building and stronger political commitment from member states. Suggestions include strengthening monitoring mechanisms, improving technology transfer and funding, and integrating green economy principles into national development policies.*

**Keywords:** International Law; Sustainable Development; Green Economy; Paris Agreement; SDGs

### INTRODUCTION

Increasingly complex global developments, especially in environmental and economic issues, have led to the birth of various international legal policies to address the challenges of sustainable development and the transition to a green economy. Climate change, environmental degradation and economic inequality are pressing issues that require collective solutions from the international community (United Nations, 2015). International legal policies, such as the 2015 Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are designed to create a regulatory framework that supports sustainable development. However, the effectiveness of the implementation of these policies remains questionable, especially in the context of disparities between developed and developing countries (Bodansky, 2016).

The main problem is inconsistency in the implementation of international legal policies at the national level. Although many countries have ratified international agreements, their implementation is often not in line with global commitments (Viñuales, 2018). For example, a report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2021) shows that global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, despite commitments to reduce emissions through the Paris Agreement. This indicates a gap between international policy and practice on the ground. Previous research has discussed many aspects of international law in the environmental and economic context. For example, Sands and Peel (2018) in their book *Principles of International Environmental Law* outline the principles of international environmental law and challenges in its implementation. Meanwhile, research by Biermann et al. (2017) in the journal *Global Environmental Politics* highlights the importance of stronger enforcement mechanisms to ensure countries' compliance with international commitments. However, there are still few studies that specifically examine the impact of international legal policies on sustainable development and green economy holistically.

Data from the World Bank (2020) shows that global investment in renewable energy has increased significantly, reaching \$300 billion in 2019. However, the distribution of this investment is uneven, with developing countries still struggling to access green finance and technologies. This highlights the need for more inclusive and equitable international legal policies to support the transition to a green economy around the world. A report from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2021) states that only 17% of the SDGs targets are on track to be achieved by 2030. This shows that while the international legal framework is in place, implementation is still far from expectations. Challenges such as lack of coordination between countries, limited resources and political power imbalances are the main inhibiting factors (Najam, 2020).

In addition to implementation challenges, data from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA, 2022) shows that global renewable energy capacity has reached 3,146 GW in 2021, with solar and wind energy being the largest contributors. However, the distribution of this capacity is uneven, with 80% in developed countries, while developing countries still lag behind in terms of access and investment (IRENA, 2022). This indicates the need for more equitable international legal policies to ensure equitable distribution of green economy benefits.

A report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021) states that global financial flows for climate finance reached \$632 billion in 2020. However, only 20% of this amount was allocated to developing countries, which are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (OECD, 2021). This data reinforces the argument that international legal policies need to take into account the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. On the other hand, research by the Climate Policy Initiative (CPI, 2021) reveals that global investment in clean energy is far from the target needed to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. It is estimated that investments of 4-5 trillion per year are needed until 2030, while current realization only reaches 500 billion per year (CPI, 2021). This gap points to the need for international legal policy reforms to attract more private and public investment in the green economy sector.

Data from the Global Carbon Project (2022) shows that global carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions reached a record high in 2021, at around 36.3 billion tons. Countries such as China, the United States and the European Union are the biggest contributors, while small and developing countries suffer the most from the impact (Global Carbon Project, 2022). This fact emphasizes the importance of international legal policies that are binding and have strong enforcement mechanisms.

Finally, a report from the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2022) highlights that the transition to a green economy could create 395 million new jobs globally by 2030. However, without supportive international legal policies, this transition risks creating social and economic inequalities, especially in countries dependent on fossil industries (WEF, 2022). This research is therefore relevant to identify strategic measures to strengthen international legal frameworks that support a just and inclusive transition.

## **PROBLEM**

Based on the above discussion, there are two problem statements in this article:

1. How effective are international legal policies, such as the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in promoting sustainable development and the transition to a green economy?
2. What are the main challenges in implementing international law policies at the national level, particularly in the context of the gap between developed and developing countries?

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research uses a normative juridical approach combined with qualitative research methods. The normative juridical approach focuses on analyzing international legal norms, principles and regulations related to sustainable development and green economy (Sands & Peel, 2018). The research design is descriptive-analytical, aiming to describe and analyze the effectiveness of international legal policies in promoting sustainable development and green economy (Bodansky, 2016). The research population includes international legal instruments such as the Paris Agreement and SDGs, as well as national policies from selected countries. The sample was drawn using purposive sampling technique, by selecting countries that have significant progress or challenges in implementing green economy policies (Creswell, 2014).

Data were collected through analysis of international legal documents, case studies, and secondary data from journals, books, and reports of international organizations such as the UN and the World Bank (UNEP, 2021; World Bank, 2020). The data were processed and analyzed using content analysis, comparative analysis, and thematic analysis to identify patterns and challenges in policy implementation (Bryman, 2016). The research results are presented in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, and case study summaries to provide a comprehensive picture of the role of international legal policies in supporting sustainable development and green economy (Yin, 2018).

## **DISCUSSION**

### **1. Effectiveness of International Legal Policy in Promoting Sustainable Development and Green Economy**

International legal policies, such as the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), have created a global regulatory framework aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting the transition to a green economy. According to a report by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 2022), 193 countries have ratified the Paris Agreement, demonstrating strong global commitment. However, the effectiveness of this policy is still questionable as global emissions continue to rise. Data from the Global Carbon Atlas (2022) shows that global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reached 36.8 billion tons in 2022, up 1.5% from the previous year.

Despite the strong global commitment reflected in the ratification of international agreements such as the Paris Agreement, the challenge lies in translating these commitments into meaningful action. The rising global emissions indicate that while countries have made pledges, the implementation of these pledges remains inconsistent and insufficient. Many countries face competing economic priorities that make it difficult to transition to a low-carbon economy quickly. Additionally, the lack of robust enforcement mechanisms within international legal frameworks, as well as the challenge of ensuring accountability for emission reductions, further hinders progress. A more integrated approach involving both developed and developing countries, along with financial and technological support for the latter, will be essential to achieving the ambitious climate goals set by the Paris Agreement and SDGs. Without such measures, the target of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C may remain out of reach.

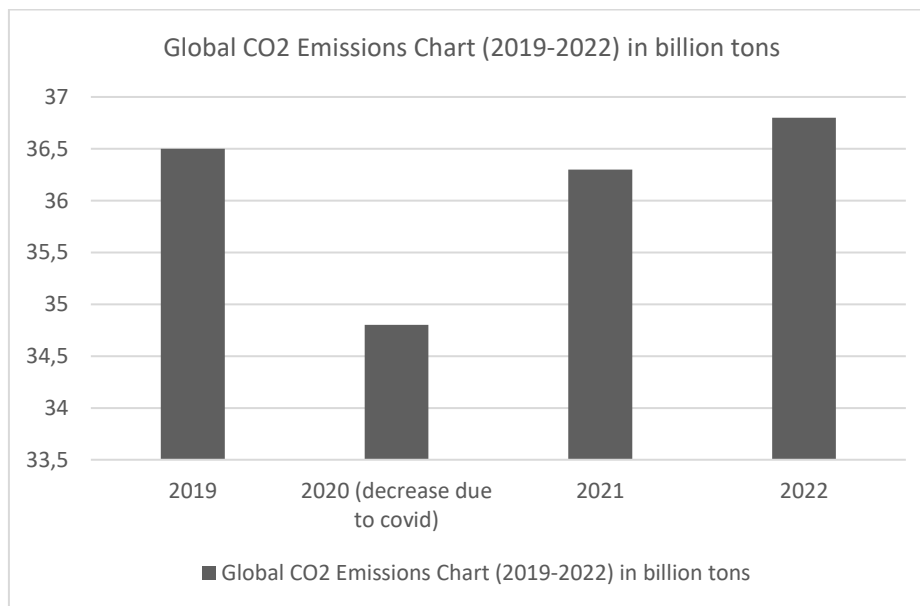


Figure 1. Data Source: Global Carbon Atlas, 2022

On the other hand, international legal policies have successfully encouraged increased investment in renewable energy. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA, 2022), global investment in renewable energy reached \$755 billion in 2021, a 27% increase from the previous year. However, the distribution of this investment is uneven, with 80% concentrated in developed countries such as the United States, the European Union and China. This shows that while international policies have created positive momentum, their implementation still faces challenges of inequality between developed and developing countries. International legal policies have also facilitated the transfer of green technologies from developed to developing countries. For example, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) has allocated 10 billion for renewable energy projects in developing countries (GCF, 2022). However, a report by the Climate Policy Initiative (CPI, 2022) states that these funds are far from sufficient to meet the investment needs of 4-5 trillion per year required to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

In addition to investment in renewable energy, international legal policies have also encouraged green technology innovation. According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO, 2022), patents related to renewable energy technologies have increased by 12% per year since 2015, with China, the United States, and Germany leading the way. However, technology transfer to developing countries is still hampered by regulatory barriers and high costs. This points to the need for more inclusive international policies to ensure equitable access to green technologies. On the other hand, international legal policies have also triggered behavioral changes in the private sector. For example, multinational companies such as Apple and Google have committed to using 100% renewable energy in their operations (RE100, 2022). However, a report by the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP, 2022) shows that only 20% of global companies have emissions targets in line with the Paris Agreement. This indicates the need for stricter regulation to ensure active participation of the private sector in achieving sustainable development goals.

Another challenge is the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms in international policies. While the Paris Agreement has transparency and reporting mechanisms, there are no binding sanctions for countries that do not fulfill their

commitments (Rajamani, 2021). This makes it difficult for many countries, especially developing countries, to meet their emission reduction targets due to limited resources and institutional capacity. To improve the effectiveness of international legal policies, reforms in funding and enforcement mechanisms are needed. For example, by strengthening the role of the Green Climate Fund and developing incentive mechanisms for countries that achieve their emissions targets (Streck, 2020). In addition, harmonizing national policies with international commitments is also key to ensuring more effective implementation.

Finally, international legal policies have also encouraged collaboration between countries through regional initiatives. For example, the European Green Deal launched by the European Union in 2019 aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 (European Commission, 2022). This initiative has served as a model for other regions, such as the ASEAN Green Recovery Strategy, which was launched in 2021. However, the success of these regional initiatives still depends on political commitment and financial support from member states.

## 2. Challenges of International Law Policy Implementation at the National Level

The implementation of international legal policies at the national level faces various challenges, especially in the context of the gap between developed and developing countries. One of the main challenges is the inconsistency between international policies and national regulations. For example, although India has ratified the Paris Agreement, the country still relies on coal to meet 70% of its energy needs (IEA, 2022). This shows the gap between international commitments and practices on the ground. The implementation of international legal policies at the national level faces various challenges, especially in the context of the gap between developed and developing countries.

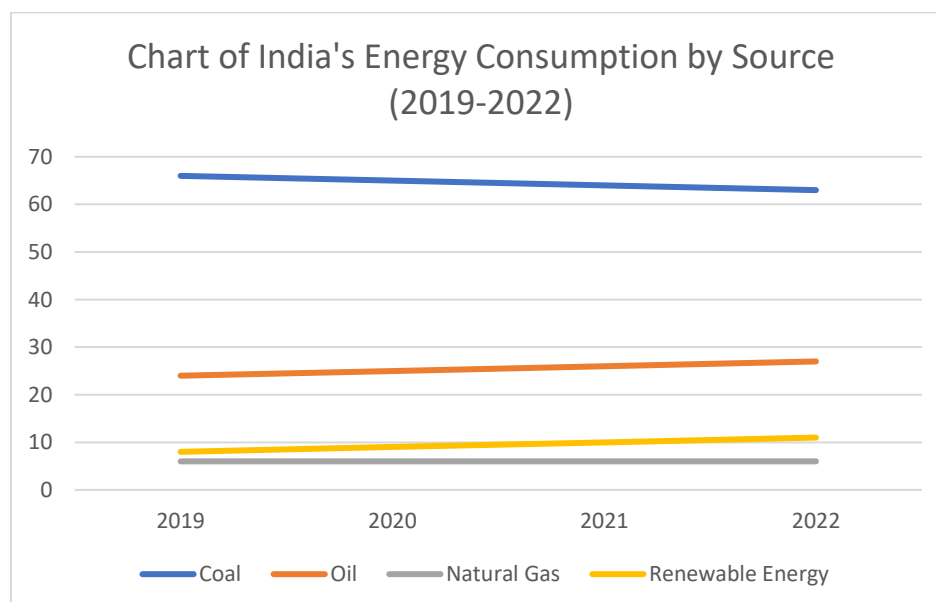


Figure 2. Data Source : International Energy Agency (IEA), 2022

In addition, political power imbalances also hamper the implementation of international policies. For example, lobbying from the fossil industry often hinders government efforts to implement renewable energy policies. A report from Influence

Map (2022) shows that fossil energy companies have spent \$1.4 billion on political lobbying in the United States and the European Union between 2015 and 2022. Some countries have shown success in implementing international policies. For example, Germany has succeeded in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 40% since 1990 through its Energiewende (Energy Transition) policy that encourages the use of renewable energy (BMW, 2022). This success is supported by a strong regulatory framework and high political commitment. In the other side to regulatory and capacity challenges, the implementation of international legal policies also faces social and cultural challenges. For example, in some developing countries, the transition to renewable energy is often faced with resistance from local communities that depend on the fossil industry for their livelihoods (IRENA, 2022). This points to the need for a more holistic approach, which not only focuses on technical aspects, but also on social and cultural aspects.

However the political uncertainty is also a major challenge to international policy implementation. For example, a change in leadership in the United States in 2017 led to a temporary withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, disrupting global momentum in emissions reduction efforts (BBC, 2022). Uncertainty like this can reduce other countries' confidence in international commitments and hinder collective progress. Political uncertainty, particularly changes in leadership and domestic policies, often leads to shifts in a country's stance on global agreements, which can destabilize international efforts to address climate change. The United States' temporary withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in 2017 under President Trump is a prime example of how political transitions can disrupt global momentum, creating doubts among other nations about the long-term reliability of international commitments. Such uncertainties may cause delays in policy implementation and erode trust between nations, particularly when major emitters like the U.S. alter their positions on climate action. This can also lead to a reluctance among countries to commit to long-term climate goals, as they may fear that future political changes could undermine their efforts. In order to overcome this challenge, international policies must be designed to be more resilient to political fluctuations, possibly by embedding stronger legal and economic incentives to ensure continuity and compliance, regardless of domestic political shifts.

To address implementation challenges, collaborative efforts between developed and developing countries are needed. For example, by enhancing technology transfer, institutional capacity and funding through mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund and Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) (UNFCCC, 2022). In addition, the role of international organizations such as the UN and World Bank is also important in facilitating dialogue and cooperation between countries. Finally, implementation challenges are also related to the lack of awareness and education about the importance of sustainable development. According to UNESCO (2022), only 40% of countries have education curricula that cover climate change and green economy topics. This points to the need for greater efforts in raising public awareness and building community capacity to support the transition to a green economy.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that international legal policies such as the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have provided an important regulatory framework in promoting sustainable development and the transition to a green economy. These policies have successfully triggered increased investment in renewable energy, green technology innovation, and private sector participation. However, their effectiveness is still hampered by challenges such as unequal distribution of investment

between developed and developing countries, lack of binding enforcement mechanisms, and institutional capacity gaps at the national level. Data shows that global CO2 emissions continue to rise, despite international commitments, indicating the need for more inclusive and equitable policy reforms.

On the other hand, the implementation of international legal policies at the national level faces various challenges, including regulatory inconsistencies, political uncertainty and socio-cultural resistance. Developing countries, in particular, struggle to fulfill international commitments due to limited resources and access to green technologies. However, some countries such as Germany have demonstrated success in implementing these policies through a strong regulatory framework and high political commitment. To strengthen the impact of international policies, collaborative efforts are needed that include improving technology transfer, funding, and institutional capacity, as well as harmonizing national policies with global commitments. Thus, international legal policy can become a more effective tool in achieving the goals of sustainable development and green economy.

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