

Introduction to Global Governance

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Key concepts, actors, mechanisms, and challenges

1. What Is Global Governance?

Aspect	Description
Definition	The set of institutions, rules, norms, and processes that manage collective issues crossing national borders.
Scope	Economic stability, security, environment, health, human rights, technology, and more.
Goal	Coordinate actions of sovereign states and other actors to achieve outcomes that no single country can attain alone.
Not a World Government	Unlike a single sovereign authority, global governance is networked , multilevel , and partially decentralized .

2. Main Actors

Category	Typical Actors	Role in Governance
States	UN member states, regional blocs (EU, ASEAN)	Negotiating treaties, providing funding, implementing agreements.
International Organizations (IOs)	United Nations (UN), World Bank, IMF, WTO, WHO	Norm-setting, monitoring, capacity-building, dispute resolution.
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Médecins Sans Frontières	Advocacy, expertise, service delivery, watchdog functions.
Multinational Corporations (MNCs)	Apple, Shell, Amazon	Investment, technology transfer, lobbying, self-regulation (e.g., CSR standards).
Epistemic Communities	Climate scientists, public health experts	Produce knowledge that shapes policy agendas and standards.

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Category	Typical Actors	Role in Governance
Transnational Networks	Cybersecurity coalitions, humanitarian coalitions	Rapid coordination across borders, often informal.
Supranational Bodies	European Commission, African Union Commission	Possess decision-making authority that can bind member states.

3. Core Institutions & Regimes

Regime	Principal Institution(s)	Main Instruments
Peace & Security	UN Security Council, NATO, African Union Peace & Security Council	Resolutions, peacekeeping mandates, sanctions.
Trade & Investment	WTO, World Bank, regional trade agreements (e.g., NAFTA/USMCA)	Tariff schedules, dispute settlement panels, investment codes.
Finance	International Monetary Fund (IMF), Financial Stability Board (FSB)	Conditional loans, macroprudential standards.
Environment	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	Paris Agreement, scientific assessments, carbon markets.
Health	World Health Organization (WHO), Global Fund	International Health Regulations, disease surveillance networks.
Human Rights	UN Human Rights Council, International Criminal Court (ICC)	Conventions (e.g., ICCPR), tribunals, monitoring mechanisms.
Technology & Cyber	International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Internet Governance Forum (IGF)	Spectrum allocation, multi-stakeholder policy dialogues.

4. Governance Mechanisms

1. **Treaties & Conventions** – Legally binding agreements (e.g., Kyoto Protocol).
2. **Soft Law** – Non-binding declarations, guidelines, and standards (e.g., UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights).

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3. **Regulatory Networks** – Coordination among agencies (e.g., Basel III banking standards).
4. **Monitoring & Reporting** – Periodic reviews, peer assessments (e.g., Universal Periodic Review at UN Human Rights Council).
5. **Dispute Settlement** – Courts and tribunals (e.g., WTO Dispute Settlement Body,