There is a growing recognition of the increasingly significant and influential role played by non-state actors (Non-Governmental Organizations – NGOs, business, the scientific networks, individuals, media, etc) in global governance for sustainable development. The non-state actors contribute to the shaping of the sustainable development agenda, perform governance functions by establishing new norms and institutions, protest and mediate and influence regime formation and implementation.

Academic literature has neglected the role of market and civil society actors in making/defining global public policy. The dominance of the state-centric paradigm has meant that the influence of non-state actors have often been minimized or ignored in the study of international environmental politics. Then, after years of neglect, significant interdisciplinary research is currently being undertaken aiming to advance our empirical knowledge and theoretical tools for better understanding the role of the market and civil society actors in global governance for sustainable development and the implications of non-state forms of governance.

RGSA seeks to examine how non-state actors might question and contribute to global governance for sustainable development, as well as the long-term implication of the emergence of such non-state authority and governance. Particular attention will be given to non-state actors coming from developing countries and emerging economies.

The discussion on the participation of non-state actors in the global biodiversity governance is the object of four articles of this special issue. The article 1 by Dias and Costa (Program of Graduate Studies in Science and Technology Policy, State University of Campinas - UNICAMP, São Paulo, Brazil) investigates the contribution of North American pharmaceutical company prospecting to advance environmental conservation and indigenous rights in the Peruvian Amazon. In the second article, Diaz (Institut Hydro-Québec en Environnement, Développement et Société, Université Laval, Québec, Canada), describes the participation of Latin American NGOs in the process of implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in the Andean Zone.
Rezende and Ribeiro’s article 3 (Laboratory of World Political Analysis - LABMUNDO, School of Management and Public Administration of the Federal University of the State of Bahia, Brazil) shows the participation of civil society actors in the traditional knowledge management in Brazil. In the fourth article of this special issue, Bled (l’Institut d’études politiques de Bordeaux-France) elaborates a database of business participation to CBD negotiations.

The second part of this edition examines the roles of business and international development organizations in global governance for sustainable development. In article 5, Osland et al. (College of Business, San Jose State University, California, USA) provides an appropriate conceptual framework of sustainability management in the Latin American context.

In the sixth article, Kolleck (Graduate School of Politics, Muenster and Environmental Policy Research Center, Free University of Berlin, Germany) shows how business networks influence the discourse on sustainable development.

Guedes and Faria’s article 7 (Brazilian School of Public and Business Administration – EBAPE, Getulio Vargas Foundation –FGV, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) examines the prominent role of Global Development Organizations (GDO), such as the World Bank and the United Nations, in the process of legitimation and diffusion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) discourses and practices in emerging economies like Brazil.

The third part of this special issue investigates the roles of environmental movements and fora in the global governance for sustainable development. In article 8, Milani (Laboratory of World Political Analysis - LABMUNDO, School of Management and Public Administration of the Federal University of the State of Bahia, Brazil) discusses the tensions among contemporary environmental issues, ethics and international politics in Latin America and examines the issues brought into the political agenda by Latin American environmental movements.

Vitale, Spécie and Mendes’ article 9 (Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning – CEBRAP) discuss the Brazilian, Indian and South African non-state actors’ participation in the deliberation on environmental issues, either in the formulation of each country’s foreign policy or in the United Nations environmental conferences on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
and Biodiversity (CBD). Finally, in article 10, Tambulasi (Department of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Malawi, Africa) deal with the participation of African civil society actors in global governance for sustainable development.

I hope that this special issue of RGSA helps the discussion about the role of non-state actors in global governance for sustainable development in order to contribute to fulfill the gap evidenced in the academic literature on this important and contemporary theme.

Have a nice reading!

José Célio Silveira Andrade
Editor