

THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: United States Participation, Signature, and Pending Ratification

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Abstract

This paper studies United States participation in the process of adopting the United Nations Biodiversity Convention. It traces the origin and development of the convention's adoption and discusses United States participation in the negotiation process. Examining reasons for the Bush Administration's decision not to sign the Convention, the paper analyzes the changing U.S. position under the Clinton Administration and addresses the U.S. Senate Committee action and debates on the treaty. Finally, exploring the obstacles to and likelihood of U.S. ratification of the Biodiversity Convention, the paper concludes that while obstacles remain, United States ratification is a possibility. Ratification, it is argued, is largely dependent on the Clinton Administration placing the issue at the top of its environmental policy agenda.

Key Words: United States, Biodiversity Convention, Participation, Ratification