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## Introduction

Barry B. Boyer  
*University at Buffalo School of Law*

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## INTRODUCTION

DEAN BARRY B. BOYER  
UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO SCHOOL OF LAW

The inaugural issue of the *Buffalo Journal of International Law* appears at a time when legal work of all kinds is becoming increasingly global. As political and economic barriers have fallen, the legal systems of all countries are facing unusual challenges. In many nations, social change is forcing wholesale revision of the legal system, and those nations are naturally turning to other countries for models of legal doctrines and institutions. At the same time, widespread redrawing of political boundaries has displaced large numbers of people, and rekindled ancient ethnic conflicts, creating a more urgent need for laws to safeguard human ribs. And, perhaps most powerful of all, the markets for goods and services increasingly reach across national boundaries. In some measure, we are all international lawyers now.

This first issue of the *Buffalo Journal of International Law* focuses on one aspect of the globalization of law: the evolution of multinational legal structures to govern the relationship between nature and human society. In the emerging world economy, nature is often exposed to stress as development wipes out habitats and species, destroying biological diversity. Free international trade can be both part of the problem and part of the solution to the biodiversity dilemma. The demands created by distant markets may undermine local autonomy and stewardship of the natural world, disrupt sustainable cultures, and force the harvesting and export of raw materials to meet debt payments. But trade can also open the doors to international transfers of goods, services, know-how, and institutions that help to preserve and restore the environment as well. The evolving system of international trade and environmental law will play a large part in determining whether problems or solutions prevail in modern society's troubled relations with the natural world.

The student editors of the *Buffalo Journal of International Law* have selected a worthy theme for their inaugural issue and have set a high standard for their predecessors to follow. They deserve our congratulations and our best wishes for the future of this promising enterprise.

