



Law and Environment in Small States

Conference, 5 & 6 September 2017

Queen Mary University of London

Mile End Road

Background – Law and Environment in Small States

Small States face the same environmental problems that the rest of the world does – eg, climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, soil degradation, deforestation, desertification, changes in the fresh water supply, changes in oceans, and fisheries losses. However, as small States, they have fewer resources to combat this order secure resilience from such changes. Further, some of the impacts on small States are disproportionately large. For example, sea level rise and ocean acidification from climate change affect the very existence and survival of small island states; desertification and water supplies affect the survival of small desert states.

International and domestic laws can play a big role in preventing, monitoring, mitigating and adapting to such changes. But small States also face significant challenges in their capacity to develop relevant national and international law, as well as to implement and enforce it. Some of these challenges are due to skills capacity and levels of development; much is budgetary; and international political power is particularly relevant. As such, these challenges are relevant no matter the topic under consideration. But the challenges faced in dealing with environmental issues – of degradation, restoration and protection, both local and global – are particularly difficult to address for small States. So many environmental issues are described as ‘wicked’ problems, with multiple, complex, multi-layered causes and thus solutions required. Most are unable to be addressed by a small state alone.

This conference is the first of a series to be held by the Centre for Small States at QMUL to address these issues of environment and law. A variety of perspectives is included, all with a view to concrete change and advancement in law and fact, including speakers from small states.

Future activities planned by the Centre on this theme include a book launch on climate change mitigation and adaptation in small states (Springer, 2018), and a conference on Environmental Dispute Resolution and Small States, Sept 2018. As part of the Centre’s commitment to improvement in the real world, both conferences plan to be accompanied by a practical training session designed to benefit those from small states. In September 2017 this will be on teaching environmental law; in Sept 2018 it will be on environmental adjudication for lawyers, judges, officials and academics from small States.

Conference Programme - Law and Environment in Small States

DAY ONE: September 5, 2017

9am Coffee & Registration

9.30am Conference Opening – Catherine Iorns (Victoria University of Wellington, NZ)

9.45am **Opening Keynote: Elizabeth Maruma Mrema (Director, Law Division, UN Environment)**

10.30am I. Climate Change and Small States

Chair: tbc

1. **Kirsten Davies** (Macquarie Law School; IPBES Asia-Pacific): ‘The Warming War: Climate Change Threatening the Security of the Planet and the Sovereignty of Nations’

2. **Pascale Bird** (tbc) (Legal Resource Initiative): ‘Assistance for Small States in International Environmental Negotiations’

3. **Simon Hillier** (VUW, NZ): ‘Small States and International Climate Negotiations’

12.30pm Lunch

1.30pm II. Environmental Law Making and Small States

Chair: tbc

1. **Alberto Costi** (VUW, NZ): ‘International Law gaps and remedies for small states’

2. **Damilola S Olawuyi** (HKBU, Qatar), ‘Legal innovations for climate resilient infrastructure in Arab states’

3. **Kate Schuetze**, (Pacific Researcher & Policy Advisor, Amnesty International): ‘Human Rights and Environment in Small Pacific States’

3:30pm Afternoon tea break

4pm Day 1 Closing Keynote: Gita Gill (Northumbria): ‘Courting Justice in the Anthropocene’

4.40pm Close

Conference Dinner

DAY TWO: September 6, 2017

9.00am Coffee & Registration

9.15am Welcome & House Keeping

9.30am III. Environmental Protection in Small States

Chair: tbc

1. **Denise Antolini** (Hawai'i): 'Protecting Endangered Species in Small States – a case study'
2. **Jochen Sohnle** (Professeur de droit public, Université de Lorraine, & Président de la Société française pour le droit de l'environnement (SFDE), section Est): 'Environmental Law in French overseas territories'
3. **Sue Farran** (Northumbria): 'Regulating the environment in pluralist small Pacific states'

11.30am Closing Keynote: Catherine Iorns (VUW, New Zealand)

12noon Close

1-5pm Workshop on Environmental Law and Teaching

- Call for papers
- seminar format
- timing for the sessions below will depend on numbers of speakers and the split of topics

1pm-2:30/3pm: Papers on the conference theme (1.5-2hrs)

[2:30/3pm: Afternoon tea]

3/3:30-4:30/5 Workshop on Environmental Law Teaching (1.5-2hrs)

[Optional casual drinks/dinner afterwards]