

Climate Law & Governance Specialisation Course, 8 December 2019: Addressing the Capacity Crevasse

11 December 2019

Robust law and governance innovations crucial to implement the Paris Agreement and tackle climate change on an international level. However, there is a large gap in global legal capacity, education, and expertise to achieve the necessary ambition.

Over 160 of 188 countries emphasised the need for legal and governance reform to deliver their intended Nationally Determined Contributions (iNDCs) to global response to climate change, when they adopted the Paris Agreement. A recent study sampling NDCs from all regions of the world shows that 24 of 28 call for capacity building, and 25 had plans for new climate change law or policy frameworks. With over 1500 climate laws worldwide at different levels, hundreds of which have been introduced recently, it is crucial to empower law and governance leaders with the skills and knowledge to develop and implement climate law.

However, judicial institutes, bar association continuing legal education, law schools and conversion programmes offer minimal climate change training, culminating in a scarcity of climate law practitioners. While the UK bar association lists over 3400 criminal lawyers, only 22 are listed as practising climate law. Bar associations in many countries, including Spain, the UK, Canada and Australia, lack committees dedicated to climate law or governance. This has precipitated an imminent legal 'capacity chasm', a deep gap in availability of professionals effectively trained in climate law and governance to deliver on their national and local commitments in a way that is tailored to country languages and legal systems.

The Climate Law and Governance Initiative (CLGI) is stepping forward to increase the capacity of legal practitioners, judges, students and others, worldwide. With the generosity and dedication of a consortium of over 120 global partners including La Fundación para la Investigación sobre el Derecho y la Empresa (FIDE) in Madrid, they are working alongside the UNFCCC COP25 to comprehensively address this crevasse person-by-person, if need be.

On Sunday 8 December 2019, over 170 candidates registered from over 20 countries for an in-person and online 2019 Climate Law and Governance Specialisation Course at La Fundación para la Investigación sobre el Derecho y la Empresa (FIDE), in Madrid, Spain. Instructors and learners from Chile, Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Peru, Morocco, Bangladesh South Africa, Norway, the United States, the United Kingdom, Liberia, Sweden, Canada, Colombia, Australia, Japan, India and other countries took part, with nearly 80 new specialists receiving their certification at the day's end.

The course, held alongside the UNFCCC CoP 25, was coordinated by CLGI in collaboration with partners including FIDE, the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law (CISDL) and Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM). General counsel, prosecutors, advisers, researchers, board members, graduate students and climate programme coordinators were among the nearly 80 successful participants who earned an international accreditation for completing the course. Taught by renowned legal experts, the course gives candidates the tools to deepen their understanding of the legal and institutional mechanisms available to implement their NDCs and the Paris Agreement, and enhance their awareness of crucial legal and governance challenges and opportunities.

As a central theme for the course, Prof. Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger, Executive Secretary of the CLGI, highlighted the important role of offering 'a real opportunity to address the capacity chasm between current legal educational frameworks and the legal skills required to meaningfully

implement the Paris Agreement and NDCs across all sectors.’ Adv. Ayman Cherkaoui, CISDL Lead Council and Coordinator of the Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection emphasized that ‘capacity building on law and governance is instrumental to inspire and enable inclusive, impactful and ambitious global and local climate action. Courses such as this one can be leveraged for long term capacity building and knowledge sharing, leaving no one behind.’

Ms. Carmen Hermida Díaz, Director General at FIDE, reflected on the success of the event: “I believe that the Climate Law and Governance Specialization Course held last Sunday, December 8 at Fide was an opportunity for all participants to deepen their knowledge of the legal and institutional mechanisms included in the Paris Agreement. The diversity of professional profiles and nationalities of the participants, together with the capacity building as a methodology applied throughout the course, have allowed us to establish very enriching dialogues. Fide thanks the Climate Law and Governance Initiative for organizing this course and for having Fide as a partner in it. We would also like to thank the speakers and moderators of the course for the work done and extend our congratulations to the participants for obtaining the course certificate.”

The Madrid specialisation course represented the largest response yet, with 176 interested registrants. In spite of a last-minute move from Santiago to Madrid, the full course was successfully completed by 71 participants in-person and online, who vastly increased their capacity to implement the Paris agreement and bolster their national responses to climate mitigation and adaptation. The number of registrants demonstrates the demand and need for this training, and the partners of the CLGI consortium shall continue their efforts. It is their hope that the momentum generated will continue to be fostered in the coming years, rippling out to other professions such as medicine, engineering and business management, among others.

Quotes from course participants:

“I thought it was excellent- already looking forward to the next one!”

“This was a great opportunity to learn from the best and meet some interesting people from around the world.”

“I found it very helpful to understand and clarify the law on climate change.”

Key media contacts at COP25:

Prof. Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger, Executive Secretary, CLGI

Email: mccs2@cam.ac.uk

Phone: [+44 7833 433410](tel:+447833433410)

Dr. Alexandra Harrington, Lead Counsel, CLGI

Email: arharrington@gmail.com

Phone: [+1 \(518\) 330-2201](tel:+15183302201)

Climate Law & Governance Initiative Secretariat
c/o CEENRG, University of Cambridge
The David Attenborough Building, Pembroke Street
Cambridge CB2 3QZ, United Kingdom

c/o CISDL, McGill University Faculty of Law
Chancellor Day Hall

3655 Peel Street
Montreal, QC H3A 1A9, Canada

c/o CDA, University of Chile
Pío Nono N°1 Providencia
Santiago de Chile, Chile

climatelawgovernance@cisdl.org
www.climatelawgovernance.org

@CLGInitiative
#CLGD2019