



# Climate Law & Governance Initiative (CLGI) 2023 – Highlights & Outcomes Statement

**Press Release with Interviews on Offer | UNFCCC CLGI COP 28**

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UNFCCC COP28 – Dubai, UAE

December 11, 2023

**Engaging in Global Stocktake through Legal Lenses**

**Leading Experts, Jurists and Leaders at COP28 Call for New Climate Law and Governance Education, Challenge International Courts and Law Associations, and Pioneer New Legal Solutions Research**

The UNFCCC 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) from 30 Nov – 12 Dec in Dubai, with a record 110,000+ registrants, has highlighted the emissions gap of 23 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e between our trajectory under current Nationally Determined Contributions levels required to achieve Paris Agreement objectives of limiting global average temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels.<sup>1</sup> With over 3.3 - 3.6 billion people living in highly climate vulnerable countries, and our Earth already 1.1 °C warmer, we are reaching irreversible tipping points.<sup>2</sup> Now, more than ever, rapid and effective action is needed for implement and compliance with the Paris Agreement.

The Climate Law and Governance Initiative, as a consortium of over 200 partners from international organisations, universities, law and governance institutes, governments, bar associations, judiciaries, civil society and practice have come together during COP28 to collectively implement the Paris Agreement by strengthening climate law and governance on all levels.

<sup>1</sup> UNFCCC Document FCCC/SB/2023/9, Synthesis report by the co-facilitators on the technical dialogue, <https://unfccc.int/documents/631600> (accessed on December 11, 2023)

<sup>2</sup> UNFCCC Document FCCC/SB/2023/9, Synthesis report by the co-facilitators on the technical dialogue, <https://unfccc.int/documents/631600> (accessed on December 11, 2023)

## CLIMATE LAW AND GOVERNANCE DAY 2023

On Tuesday, 5 December, more than 1,730 registrants from around the globe joined online and in-person at Middlesex University Dubai for Climate Law and Governance Day (CLGD) 2023, which was co-hosted by partners from the University of Cambridge, Middlesex University Dubai and the University of Dubai, together with the International Law Association, the International Bar Association, the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law, International Development Law Organisation, World Commission on Environmental Law and the International Union for Conservation of Nature. CLGD 2023 focused on **Engaging in Global Stocktake through Legal Lenses**, with the following four key themes:

- 1. Operationalising the Paris Agreement in International Law;**
- 2. Testing Legal and Governance Tools for High Ambition Implementation;**
- 3. Advancing Climate Resilience and Justice; and**
- 4. Net Zero Legal Frameworks to Enable Climate Neutral Investment and Finance.**

CLGD 2023 featured a grand opening, three high-level plenaries, and sixteen substantive experts sessions addressing a wide range of pressing climate law and governance challenges and solutions. To see the **Full Programme** for CLGD 2023, please click [here](#). CLGD 2023 culminated in a celebration of the new laureates of the **2023 Climate Law & Governance Global Leadership Awards** and the **2023 International Student Essay Competition** (for Laureates, see Annex I).

## OUTCOMES FROM CLGI 2023

During this remarkable programme of climate law and governance events bringing together more than 170 legal leaders and experts, and over 1,730 registrants, CLGI Partners shared progress from the last year towards Paris Agreement implementation, highlighting new tools and commitments for global cooperation such as:

- 1. Focusing on Teaching Climate Law & the Clean Energy Transition, at CLGD 2023, the CLG Legal Specialisation Course 2023 at the University of Dubai, and in the Global Alliance of Universities on Climate (GAUC) Pavilion in the COP28 Blue Zone, academic leaders called for the **creation of a Climate Law & Governance Education Commission to share curriculum and new tools in teaching climate change law and to support climate law education, and support new climate law teaching that is being launched worldwide.****
- 2. To foster Advancing Climate Competent Lawyering Across the Board and to support requests for Advisory Opinions submitted to the International Court of Justice, the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea, and the Inter-American Court on Human Rights, lawyers from the International Bar Association (IBA), the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB), Cornerstone Chambers, and more **called for the formation of five more bar committees on climate change by COP29, and Advocates for International Development launched a new SDGs Legal Initiative to support practitioners globally.****
- 3. To support Scaling Up Climate Technology and Nature-based Solutions through Law, at CLGD 2023, in the IUCN Pavilion with IUCN-WCEL and ITER Pavilion with ECG among other events, the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law (CISDL) and other**

leading partners **committed to new legal research and analysis on how regulations and law can incentivise new complex clean energy technologies and nature-based solutions.**

The global CLG community also committed to redouble efforts to:

4. Democratise education for global sustainability and justice by strengthening legal capacity through online courses and engagement. Partners from the University of Cambridge and leading international organisations celebrated release of a first four courses to 2,299 learners from 126+ countries, **committing to provide more online sustainable development law and policy scholarships for over 16,000 learners from 160+ countries by the next Global Stocktake in 2028.**
5. Continue growing the climate law and governance community worldwide tenfold from 600 to 6,000 legal and governance specialists by 2024, engaging qualified leaders in every legal system and converting ambition to obligation worldwide. **Partners celebrated the more than 1,600 climate law specialists currently signed on to the Climate Law Capacity Registry and called for growing this community to 6,000 by COP29.**

## **CLIMATE LAW AND GOVERNANCE SPECIALISATION COURSE**

To train a new generation of climate specialists worldwide capable of advancing climate law and governance and advocating for implementation, the Climate Law and Governance Initiative hosted a **Climate Law and Governance Specialisation Course**. More than 600 learners registered for this year's course, which was held on 7th Dec both online and in-person at the University of Dubai. The specialisation course, chaired by [Prof Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger](#) (Visiting Chair, Sustainable Development Law and Policy, Univ Cambridge / Exec Sec, Climate Law & Governance Initiative CLGI / Senior Director, Centre for International Sustainable Development Law CISDL) and [Dr Nasiruddeen Muhammad](#) (Asst Prof, Univ Dubai), focused on strengthening capacity for climate law and governance. The half-day course provided a foundational understanding of the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC and included sessions on Law, Governance & Climate Mitigation; Climate Law & Governance on Adaptation, Loss and Damage; and Climate Law & Governance on Finance, Compliance & Transparency. The course featured lectures by leading global professors and experts, including [Prof Sumudu Atapattu](#) (Lead Counsel, CISDL / Director, Global Legal Studies Center, Univ Wisconsin-Madison Law School); [Dr Markus Gehring](#) (Lead Counsel, CISDL / Associate Professor, Univ Cambridge); [Professor Harro van Asselt](#) (Hatton Professor of Law, Univ Cambridge); [Prof Michael Mehling](#) (Dep Director, MIT Centre Energy & Enviro Research / Prof, University of Strathclyde); [Maitre Ayman Cherkaoui](#) (Lead Counsel, CISDL / Director, Hassan II Intl Centre for Enviro Training); [Adv M. Hafijul Islam Khan](#) (Director, Centre for Climate Justice Bangladesh); [Prof Petra Minnerop](#) (Prof, Intl Law, Durham Univ); and [Dr Fabiano de Andrade Correa](#) (Senior Counsel, World Bank / Co-Chair, IUCN WCEL Climate Change Law Specialist Group / Lead Counsel, CISDL). Three breakout sessions, led by the experts, allowed participants to share country experiences and analyse climate law and policy approaches with colleagues from around the world. The 70 participants who attended in-person and the more than 150 online participants who successfully passed the post-course online assessment were awarded a climate law and governance certification and were invited to join the global [Climate Law Capacity Registry](#) which stems from the CLGI Glasgow COP26 Pledge to increase climate law and governance capacity from 600 to 6,000 specialists by UNFCCC COP29 2024.

## OFFICIAL SIDE-EVENT AT UNFCCC COP28

On December 11, 2023, Climate Law and Governance Initiative partners shared the outcomes of CLGD2022 during the Initiative's official side-event on *Global Stocktake through Legal Lenses: Implementing Outcomes via Climate Law & Policy Reform*, during UNFCCC COP28 in the Blue Zone. The side-event's interactive legal roundtables brought together leading experts from the Advocates for International Development; Centre for Human Rights and Climate Change Research; World Future Council and Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, University of Victoria, and the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law. The official recording of the side-event can be found [here](#).

The Climate Law and Governance Initiative would like to thank all the session chairs, speakers and volunteers whose extraordinary efforts and expertise made CLGI's COP28 such a success. CLGI would like to especially extend its deepest gratitude to [Middlesex University Dubai](#) and the [University of Dubai](#) for co-hosting this year's Climate Law and Governance Day and the Climate Law and Governance Specialisation Course.

### FOR MEDIA CONTACTS:

To arrange interviews at COP28 or for further details, please contact:

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**FOR INTERVIEWS AT COP28**, Climate Law & Governance Initiative Executive Secretary, Chairs and Hosts:

- [Professor Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger](#), Visiting Chair, Sustainable Development Law and Policy, University of Cambridge / Exec Sec, Climate Law & Governance Initiative CLGI / Senior Director, Centre for International Sustainable Development Law CISDL. E: [mccs2@cam.ac.uk](mailto:mccs2@cam.ac.uk)
- [Professor Dr Christina Voigt](#), Professor of Law at the University of Oslo, Chair of the Climate Change Specialist Group of the IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law, and Co-Chair of the Paris Agreement's Implementation and Compliance Committee. E: [voigt@jus.uio.no](mailto:voigt@jus.uio.no)
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### ANNEX I – FOR NEWS STORIES, THE EXPERTS SAY . . .

- [Professor Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger](#), CLGI Executive Secretary and Visiting Chair in Sustainable Development Law & Policy at the University of Cambridge, "As we complete the first Global

Stocktake in Dubai, we must consider what lies beyond the horizon toward 2028, and in our efforts, redouble all capacity to advance the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. These are not just aspirational frameworks; they are commitments, backed by binding obligations, and blueprints for action. Strengthening climate and sustainable development law capacity worldwide is a cornerstone for achieving these ambitious goals. By enhancing our legal expertise and innovating legal solutions, we can advance full potential of our treaty promises, paving the pathway for a sustainable future for all.”

- [Maitre Ayman Cherkaoui](#), CLGI Chair and Director of the Hassan II International Centre for Environmental Training, “The implementation of the Paris Agreement benefits significantly from the development of networks of climate-competent lawyers. These groups and networks play an important role in turning the Agreement's goals into practical legal measures. Encouraging cooperation and the exchange of ideas, we must work closely with legal professionals towards innovating sustainable, climate-friendly solutions. This collective effort is a step towards a more sustainable future, helping to address the challenges of climate change in a way that is mindful of the needs of current and future generations.”

## **ANNEX II – CLGI IS HONOURED TO ANNOUNCE THE LAUREATES OF THE 2023 CLIMATE LAW & GOVERNANCE AWARDS**

Each COP, Judges from the CLGI Programme Committee recognize the leading efforts of climate law and governance practitioners and scholars, and this year’s 2023 Climate Law & Governance Global Leadership Awards celebrated the outstanding contributions of:

- **Climate General Counsel:** [Adv Michael Strauss](#), General Counsel, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and [Adv Thomas Clark](#), General Counsel, Asian Development Bank, for rapidly innovating legal instruments to mobilise financial flows toward a just transition.
- **Climate Negotiators:** [Adv Franz Xaver Perrez](#), Head of the Directorate of International Law at the Federal Office of Foreign Affairs, Government of Switzerland for championing an inclusive and informed negotiating environment and [Ms Marie-Claire Graf](#), [Ms Heeta Lakhani](#), [Ms Sophie Daud](#), [Ms Veena Balakrishnan](#) and the [Youth Negotiators Academy](#), and training and building capacity of youth negotiators worldwide.
- **Climate Law Practitioners:** [Adv Prof Margaretha Wewerinke-Singh](#), Blue Ocean Law and University of Amsterdam and [Adv Prof Payam Akhavan](#), Massey College, for taking the voices of current and future generations to international courts and tribunals.
- **Climate Law Faculty Leaders:** [Prof Dr Mohamed Safi](#) and [Dr Ahmed Khalifa](#), Ain Shams University for world-class education, research and impact in climate law and governance, with thanks for their hospitality and engagement in co-hosting CLGD 2022 and the CLG Specialisation Course during CoP27 in Egypt
- **Climate Law Civil Society and Legal Community Leaders:** [Solomon Yeo](#), [Jule Schnakenberg](#), [Vishal Prasad](#) and the [Pacific Island Students Fighting Climate Change](#) for cultivating stubborn optimism among the international community for climate litigation and [Prof Saleemul Huq](#), in memoriam, for a lifetime of dedication to climate justice and the needs of highly vulnerable countries.

The 2023 Climate Law & Governance Student Essay Competition featured submissions from students across the world, with warmest of congratulations to the laureates:

- Platinum Awards: **Aditi Jha** (Middlesex University Dubai, UAE), **Camille Martini** (Laval University (Canada) & Aix-Marseille University (France)), **Tasmim Binte Sarwar** (Bangladesh University of Professionals, Bangladesh) won Platinum for outstanding essays on “Food Security and Sustainable Development – Policy Evaluation”, “How Can Investor-State Dispute Settlement Better Integrate the Climate Change Regime?”, and “Towards the Establishment of an International Environmental Court: Revisiting the Need for International Judicial Governance”
- Gold Awards: **Injy Johnstone** (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand & University of Oxford, UK), **Luca Tenreira** (European University Institute, France), and **Mustafa Al Masri** (Islamic University in Lebanon, Lebanon) won Gold for excellent essays on “Unilateral Declarations under the Paris Agreement: Prospects and Potential”, “The Application of the Paris Agreement to Companies Under Their Duty of Care”, and “The Legal Challenges of Energy Transition in Petroleum-Producing Developing Countries: Legislative Stability as a Model”
- Silver Awards: **Fernando Díaz González & Raúl Martínez Cofré** (University of Valparaiso, Chile), **Manvendra Singh** (University of Rajasthan, India), and **Sandra P. Ángel Moreno** (Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg, Germany) won Silver for inspiring essays on “The Reconfiguration of Global Climate Change Governance: The Role of the UNFCCC and its Influence on the Latin American and Caribbean Region”, “Charting a Sustainable Path to Climate Justice - Ensuring Equity in Climate Change Litigation”, and “Echoing voices: Amazonia Indigenous Women Challenging Global Environmental Politics”

Bronze Judges Commendations were also awarded to:

- Adeniyi Akindele (University of Tlemcen, Algeria)
- Biraj Dhungana (Tribhuvan University, Nepal)
- Emily Hutchins (University of Miami, USA)
- Ignacio Vásquez Torreblanca (University of Valparaiso, Chile)
- Md Azmatullah Sadiq and Sabeel Ahmed (University of Delhi, India)
- Obada Al Wardat (University of Jordan, Jordan)
- Pedro Sampaio Minassa and Guilherme Weiss Niedermayer (Lisbon Law School and Univ of Sao Paulo, Portugal & Brazil)
- Zmaray Baher (Middlesex University Dubai, UAE)