

## Climate Law & Governance Day 2019: Strengthening Legal Foundations for Climate Ambition & Compliance

Held on Friday, 6 December 2019 at Universidad Autónoma de Madrid Faculty of Law,  
alongside the UNFCCC COP25 in Madrid, Spain

### Outcomes Statement

#### Introducing Climate Law & Governance Day 2019

Law and governance innovation, worldwide, can provide a crucial tool for achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

The importance of legal reform cannot be understated: over 160 of 188 countries stressed plans for legal and institutional reform in their intended Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) when they ratified the Paris Agreement. Countries are increasingly integrating their climate change commitments into their national laws.<sup>1</sup> Currently, over 1,800 new climate laws and policies have been recorded worldwide, with over 100 new laws in the last few years since Paris.<sup>2</sup> Strengthening capacity for meaningful implementation of the treaty is of central importance, with 24 of 28 recently analysed NDCs referring to the need for new laws and institutions, and capacity to make them work on the ground.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, public interest in climate litigation is rising, with over 300 cases initiated worldwide.<sup>4</sup>

On Friday 6 December 2019, on Spain's historic National Constitution Day (Día de la Constitución), over 300 participants from across the world gathered at the Faculty of Law at Universidad Autónoma de Madrid for the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Climate Law & Governance Day (CLGD) symposium alongside the UNFCCC COP25, marking the event the biggest since the inaugural CLGD in Paris alongside COP21 in 2015. The event, accredited by the COP25 Presidency, was led by the Climate Law & Governance



*CLGD 2019 featured 14 expert panels and roundtables, and two high-level plenaries.*



*Ms. Nila Kamil (PhD Candidate, Transparency in Climate Change) speaks at an experts panel at CLGD on the effects of transparency in multiple-level climate governance.*

<sup>1</sup> Climate Change Laws of the World database, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment and Sabin Center for Climate Change Law. Available at [climate-laws.org](http://climate-laws.org).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Maeve McDermott and Valeria Zambianchi, 'Initial Report on the Importance of Legal and Institutional Reforms in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of the Paris Agreement' (Centre for International Sustainable Development Law, December 2019).

<sup>4</sup> Climate Change Laws of the World database, above n 1. Please note that some litigation, including litigation in the United States, is not covered by this database.

Initiative (CLGI) consortium of over 120 partners, and hosted by leading climate law experts from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, the University of Chile, the University of Cambridge and the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law (CISDL).

### What happened at CLGD 2019?

Across a full day of 14 intensive expert panel and roundtable sessions and high-level plenaries, judges, legal practitioners, academics, university deans, researchers, students and professors shared knowledge and charted key trends and insights on strengthening legal foundations for climate ambition and compliance, with a focus on legal innovations and solutions in three key areas:

- Advancing Paris Agreement Innovations – New Rules for Transparency, Markets & Non-Market Instruments, Finance, Loss & Damage, Compliance & Safeguards;
- Scaling-up National & Regional Climate Legal Frameworks for Action – Effective Climate Governance, Ecosystems-Based & Human Rights Responses, Human Mobility & Climate Justice Litigation;
- Local & Global Interlinkages & Engagement – Climate Change in Regimes on Oceans, Biodiversity, Ozone, Civil Aviation, Trade, Investment, Peace & Security.

***‘Law has a key role to play both in terms of implementing the current NDCs as well as unlocking, for 2020, areas of enhancement and ambition aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda, both for mitigation and adaptation. When it comes specifically to adaptation, coherence and cohesion in legal frameworks at the local, national, regional and international levels are of paramount importance for the national adaptation plans and to leave no one behind, in particular the most vulnerable.’***

– Adv. Ayman Cherkaoui, Lead Counsel, CISDL / Coordinator, Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection.



*Roundtable sessions at CLGD were highly participatory.*



*Ms. Tanvi Mani (UNFCCC Secretariat) offers comments during an expert panel on Advancing Ambition & Compliance on Climate Change through Law & Governance Innovations for Sustainable Investment & Resilient Oceans.*



*Prof. Christina Voigt (Professor, University of Oslo / PluriCourts) offers comments during a High-Level Plenary on Advancing the Urgent Implementation of the Paris Agreement through Legal Practice & Negotiations.*

***‘As the fight against climate change intensifies so is the need to have more lawyers trained in this field to prepare for the next frontier in the fight against climate change, which is climate justice’***  
– Dr. Douglas Leys, General Counsel, Green Climate Fund

The diverse array of sessions included experts panels exploring prospects for advancing climate action through legislation, developments in climate litigation, the relationship between the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, and links between the climate regime and oceans governance, international investment, and disclosure & dispute settlement mechanisms. Sessions also addressed the importance of transparency to climate governance, the potential for Paris Agreement objectives to be advanced through low carbon and energy efficient procurement, issues relating to energy transition and regulation, and prospects for a global climate constitution. Further, academics and legal experts explored country-specific issues relating to climate law and the implications of COP24 for future policy directions. The Day culminated in two high-level plenaries, focusing on advancing Paris Agreement implementation through legal practice and negotiation, and enhancing climate change responses through legal research and teaching.



Winners of the 2019 Climate Law & Governance Student Essay Competition received their awards.



Winners of the first ever Climate Law and Governance Global Leadership Awards were announced.

CLGD 2019 concluded with the announcement of the winners of the Global Climate Law and Governance Student Essay Competition, and the first-ever Climate Law and Governance Global Leadership Awards.

***‘Climate change is the justice challenge of our time. To hold warming within 1.5 degrees worldwide calls for scaled-up ambition and action, across all professions and sectors of our economy and our society, right now.’***

**– Prof Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger, Executive Secretary, CLGI / Leverhulme Visiting Professor (designate), University of Cambridge.**

### Highlighting CLGD Outcomes at COP25

In a special briefing on 10 December 2019 at the UNFCCC Pavilion, outcomes and findings from CLGD 2019 were shared with members of COP25 delegations, with welcoming remarks provided by Ms. Hafida Lahouiel, Head of the UNFCCC Secretariat Legal Office.

### Looking Ahead

The CLGI Secretariat sincerely thanks all partners, session hosts and CLGI Programme Committee Members for their contributions to making CLGD 2019 a success. With key issues for COP26 in Glasgow, UK, already emerging, the stage has been set for an enriching CLGD in 2020.



Ms. Hafida Lahouiel, Head of the UNFCCC Secretariat Legal Office, offers opening comments at a special briefing on the outcomes of CLGD 2019.

***‘It was a true honour to host Climate Law & Governance Day this year, and particularly special to hold this day on Spain's National Constitution Day. We look forward to collaborating with CLGI into next year and beyond.’***

**– Prof. Rosa M. Fernández Egea, Professor, La Universidad Autónoma de Madrid**