



Durham
University

Centre for Sustainable
Development Law and Policy

Inspiring the extraordinary

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – 29th Conference of the Parties

Baku, Azerbaijan, 11-23 November 2024

Durham University Delegation Report



COP29
Baku
Azerbaijan

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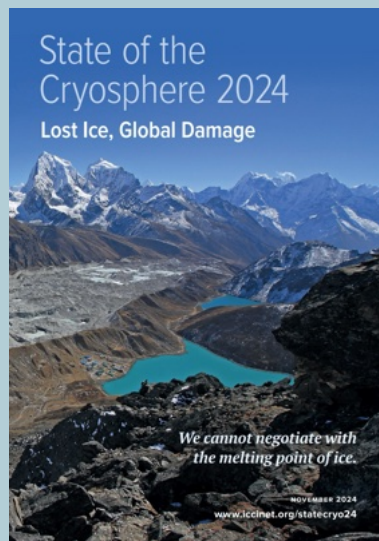
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Title page picture credit: Boat school in Bangladesh – Abir Abdullah, Climate Visuals.

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Foreword

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement set the goal for the international community to combat climate change, with a legally endorsed goal to limit the global mean temperature increase to well below...above pre-industrial levels at the end of the century

Under Article 7 of the UNFCCC, Conferences of the Parties (COPs) have a concrete mandate. They are legally obliged to keep the implementation of the Convention under regular review. The same applies to the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA), as the Paris Agreement is one of the “related legal instruments” adopted by the State parties. Countries are called to periodically examine their obligations and the institutional arrangements to combat climate change. This is important to note: COPs are not just about policy-making, “soft” law and striking a “new deal”, they are the international community’s forum to review existing legal obligations and progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions to save the planet for future generations. Article 7 provides that Parties assess their progress:

“[...] on the basis of all information made available [...] the implementation of the Convention by the Parties, the overall effects of the measures taken pursuant to the Convention, in particular environmental, economic and social effects as well as their cumulative impacts and the extent to which progress towards the objective of the Convention is being achieved.”

This year, the 29th conference (COP29) was required to assess progress and the effects of measures taken, and to consider the scientific evidence that has been aptly provided in various recent reports, including the 2024 UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Gap Report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment Report 6 (AR6), and the so-called NDC Synthesis Report released in October 2024. The latter report summarises the effects that all nationally determined contributions (NDCs) of State parties would have on our current climate trajectory, assuming that these pledges would be fully implemented.

The UNFCCC Secretariat provides this update each year ahead of COP, precisely to enable countries to fulfil their mandate under Article 7 in light of the science. Parties must take cognizance of these reports and scientific facts cannot be replaced with political viewpoints.

These scientific reports conclude that we are currently not making the necessary progress to limit warming to well below 2 °C and ideally to only 1.5 °C towards the end of this century. Instead, current NDCs will mean that total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions will be:

“(a) In 2025, 54.0 per cent higher than in 1990 (34.4 Gt CO₂ eq), 11.3 per cent higher than in 2010 (47.6 Gt CO₂ eq) and approximately the same as in 2019 (52.9 Gt CO₂ eq). [...]

(b) In 2030, 49.8 per cent higher than in 1990, 8.3 per cent higher than in 2010 and 2.6 per cent lower than in 2019.”

The IPCC stated in the contribution of Working Group III to the AR6 that in scenarios of limiting warming to 1.5°C (with over 50 per cent likelihood by 2100) with no or limited overshoot over the course of the century, GHG emissions must be reduced by 43 (34–60) per cent by 2030 relative to the 2019 level. There is still a possibility that global emissions will peak before 2030. However, the NDC Synthesis Report is clear that the absolute difference in the level of emissions by 2030, according to the latest NDCs, and these IPCC scenarios, is “sizeable”, i.e. around 40 per cent.

The scientific data underscores how important the yearly review of Parties obligations is, to determine the implementation gap and the emissions gap, and to adopt decisions that could enhance ambition and spur action.

The ability to resolve issues on critical agenda items depends on the political will of all Parties but also on the diplomatic leadership of the respective COP Presidency.

Academic involvement plays an important, albeit more indirect, role in this process. Sharing scientific knowledge, legal expertise and economic analysis directly with governments, non-governmental stakeholders, and academic colleagues, emphasises the continued importance and scrutiny that is placed on the UNFCCC processes. Like no other international legal regime, the UNFCCC is open to NGO involvement. This openness contributes to transparency, public participation and empowerment for climate action. NGOs can support Parties in finding solutions based on academic research and innovation.

Durham University is proud to lead UNFCCC official side events and pavilion events since becoming an observer at COP26 in Glasgow. Since obtaining observer status, our engagement with the negotiations has influenced our research, built new partnerships and enriched our teaching.

This year's involvement of students, from undergraduate and postgraduate levels, has proven how they have not only become integral to our work at the Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy, but also how students' voices and projects around COPs and teaching on climate change strengthen the prospect – and our hope – that change is possible.

Our students won prestigious awards in the YOUTH COP competition and the CSDLP has become an official member of the YOUNGO constituency. We live-streamed Durham University's UNFCCC side event, and organised specific student sessions to offer our students in Durham very close insights into the negotiations and the events in Baku. More events will follow throughout 2025.

Every COP counts and our preparations for COP30 based on the outcomes of COP29 have already started. COP29 adopted the Baku Climate United Pact. It includes a decision on a new collective quantified goal on climate finance of at least USD 300 billion per year by 2035 for developing country Parties for climate action. On mitigation, the continuation of the Sharm el-Sheikh mitigation and implementation work programme is comparably short without reference to science and urgency or to the outcome of the global stocktake that was agreed at COP28 in Dubai in 2023.

On adaptation, Parties launched the Baku Adaptation Road Map with the aim of advancing progress in line with Article 7 paragraph 1 of the Paris Agreement. The decision welcomes that the IPCC agreed on a distinct product revising and updating its 1994 IPCC Technical Guidelines, for Assessing Climate Change Impacts and Adaptations. This revision will be considered in conjunction with the contribution of Working Group II in the IPCC's seventh assessment cycle.

On Article 6, a decision on cooperative approaches, as referred to in Article 6 paragraph 2 of the Paris Agreement and guidance on the mechanisms established by Article 6 paragraph 4 were adopted. The Supervisory Body adopted methodological standards. Parties have already indicated that they will be using Article 6 instruments to meet their NDCs. Applying the agreed rules based on the latest available scientific evidence and legal analysis will be critical to ensure that real and additional emissions reductions can be achieved.

New NDCs must be submitted in February 2025 and the next review of how obligations have been implemented will take place in Belém, Brazil, at COP30 – a unique chance to reconnect with the Brazilian roots, where the UNFCCC was opened for signature at the Earth Summit 1992 in Rio De Janeiro.



Professor Petra Minnerop
Director of the Centre for
Sustainable Development Law
and Policy | Head of Durham
University's COP Steering Group

Preparations for COP29

The preparations for our participation at COPs start with the pre-COP meetings of Durham University's COP Steering Group here at the Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy. The group reflects on the previous engagements, agrees on the selection criteria for the delegation, and discusses logistical matters.

UNFCCC Official Side Event Application

Among these preparations is the submission of the application to host an official side event to the UNFCCC Side Events and Exhibits Online Registration System (SEORS). The concept note was submitted in July 2024 with a proposed list of speakers comprising government representatives, academic and non-academic experts, representing the CSDLP's partnerships globally. The application was approved by the UNFCCC Secretariat for Durham University to host the official UNFCCC Side Event, "Just Transition – a Fairness Discourse for Enhancing Adaptation and Improving Social Resilience" — more on this on page 17 of this report.

YOUNGO Membership as an accredited NGO

Aiming to enhance student engagement, Durham University joined YOUNGO as an accredited NGO in September 2024. This engagement will enrich the Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy's mission of intergenerational preparedness; it ensures that the voices of youth and our students can be heard. This is a critical step forward to empowering our youth and will encourage student engagement with the processes around climate change law and policy at the international level.



The concept note submitted this year to the UNFCCC Side Events and Exhibits Online Registration System.

Our students at the 2024 SAUD YOUTH COP Mock Negotiations

Our teams consisted of interdisciplinary and inter-university undergraduate and postgraduate students who have been chosen for this international competition due to their

dedication and commitment to the fields of climate change, sustainability, biodiversity, renewable energy, and just transitions. They were not only selected among hundreds of candidates from the five continents to participate in the mock negotiations but also had an outstanding performance during the two days of negotiation activities. Our students **Carmen Yu Hui Tan** (law) and **Oliver Pugh** (Physics) won the negotiation skills award, and **Sophia Waseem Khan** (Natural Sciences) won the best speaker award. Due to her achievement, Sophia was given the opportunity to attend the Conference of the YOUTH as a panellist. She was also selected as the Durham University undergraduate student delegate to attend the COP29.

Meet the teams.



Sophia Waseem Khan
BSc Natural Sciences, Durham University.
Student Ambassador for the Durham CSDLP.
Member of the COP Steering Group and the SDG Group, and COP28 virtual delegate.
Laidlaw Research and Leadership Scholar.
Intern at the University of Oxford, Department of Politics and International Relations.



Vaibhav Pramode Nair
BSc Sustainability and Environmental Management, University of Leeds.
COP28 Delegate for the University of Leeds.
Laidlaw Research and Leadership Scholar.
Youth Leader for Conscious Planet.
Leadership-in-Action project, Mexico City, supporting IRRI Mexico.



Carmen Tan Yu Hui
LLB (Hons), Durham Law School.
Research Assistant at the Durham CSDLP.
Decolonising the curriculum, Durham Law School.
Working experience with the European Union.
Legal Intern at the Federal Court of Malaysia.
Senior Advisor at the Malaysian Youth Association for Diplomacy and Policy.



Oliver Pugh
BSc Physics, Durham University.
Hatfield College Scholar 2023-24 – Physics.
Laidlaw Research and Leadership Scholar.
Leadership-in-Action project, Timothy Smith Network Boston, Massachusetts. Supporting underprivileged and underrepresented high school students and providing education for tech industry.



Ghulam Mustafa Kamran
LLB (Hons), LL.M (International Law), PhD Student, Durham Law School.
Research Assistant at the Durham CSDLP.
Member of the COP Steering Group, the SDG Group, and the JustNOW initiative.
COP28 student delegate for Durham University.
RWLW postgraduate scholar.



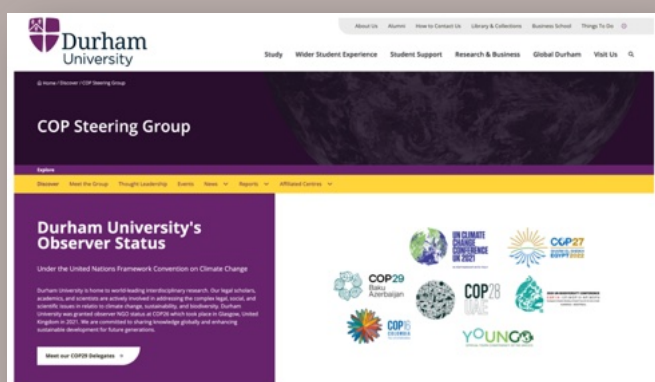
Pedro Dias da Costa Rocha
Postgraduate *Lato Sensu* (Digital Law and Data Protection), Brazilian Law School. Postgraduate *Lato Sensu* (Contract Law and International Trade Law) University of São Paulo.
LLB (Hons), Centro Universitario de Bauru.
Lawyer and partner at Amara, Lucatto e Rocha Advogados. Volunteer and director of Patrulha Mirim in Itápolis, São Paulo, Brazil.

“Participating in Youth COP 2024 was particularly insightful. Witnessing the interdisciplinary collaboration between nations from both the Global North and South was eye-opening. It reinforced the need for holistic solutions that address the energy crisis and biodiversity concerns while ensuring justice and equity. The dynamic exchange of ideas demonstrated that tackling climate challenges requires more than technical expertise; it demands global cooperation and an understanding of diverse socioeconomic realities. This experience deepened my belief that only through inclusive and equitable approaches can we achieve sustainable progress on these urgent global issues. Fundamentally, the rich debate underscored above all else that global problems require global solutions.

Oliver Pugh

BSc Physics Durham University

A New Design for Our Webpage



The CSDLP Team redesigned Durham University's COP Steering Group webpages to consolidate all the COP-related efforts over the last few years.

Please visit the COP Steering Group web page using the QR Code.



COP29 Durham University Delegation



Professor Petra Minnerop

Professor of International Law, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy, Chair of Durham University's UN SDG Group, and Head of the Durham COP Steering Group.

Professor Laura Marsilliani

Professor of Economics, Co-Director of the Centre for Environmental and Energy Economics (CE3), the Faculty of Business Lead in the Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy, and a Fellow of the Durham Energy Institute.

Professor Chris Stokes

Professor in the Department of Geography, climate scientist focusing on the response of glaciers to climate change and the impacts on sea level.

Professor Habib Rahman

Professor of Economics at Durham University. His research interests are at the crossroads of Development Economics and Applied Macroeconomics.

Ghulam Mustafa Kamran

Postgraduate Research Associate at the Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy, PhD Candidate at Durham Law School, Student Lead for COP Steering Group, and YOUNGO Focal Point.

Sophia Waseem Khan

Final year undergraduate student in Natural Sciences at Durham University, Laidlaw Scholar, and student ambassador for the Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy.



Marketing Strategy and Objectives

- To raise Durham University's research profile and demonstrate our holistic and interdisciplinary approach to sustainable development, spanning climate change-related legal and economic issues, and scientific advancements.
- To support and enhance increased awareness of Durham's research centres including the [Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy](#), [Durham Energy Institute](#), [Institute of Hazard Risk and Resilience](#), and [Centre for Environmental and Energy Economics](#).
- Demonstrate [Durham's world-leading approach](#) to promoting and cooperating with the advancement of knowledge around climate change law and policy, sustainable development, and biodiversity to a mainstream audience at the wider community level.

Our team of research assistants at CSLDP, including Ghulam Mustafa Kamran, Mansi Dwivedi, Simeng Wang, and Carmen Yu Hui Tan, and the [JusTNOW](#) Project Manager Dr Owen Boyle, actively managed our social media accounts and webpages. Please visit our social media accounts via the links on page 35.

COP29 in Chronological Order



COY19 – the 19th Conference of the Youth

(7– 9 November)



Following her winning performance at the SUAD Youth COP, Sophia Waseem Khan represented Durham University at COY19. The Conference of Youth takes place just before the COP and is organised by YOUNGO, the official youth constituency of the UNFCCC. With its focus on capacity building, connecting young changemakers and inspiring youth leaders, the conference aims to empower and give voices to young people, enabling them to shape intergovernmental climate change policies. Sophia engaged with fellow youth leaders and discussed the Youth COP outcomes and aspirations for COP29.



“Both COY19 and COP29 were incredible, multi-layered, eye-opening experiences, from meeting passionate and inspiring youth to observing negotiations, this experience has given me a much deeper understanding of the obstacles and complexity of climate negotiations and policy shaping. Though the final declarations from COP29 are disappointing, we must not give up hope and continue to give our all in creating a better world.

Sophia Waseem Khan
Natural Sciences Durham University

Youth Voices Tackling Ocean, Biodiversity and Energy Challenges for a Sustainable Future

(11 November)

Sophia Waseem Khan joined the Youth COP Participants in opening the Ocean Pavilion in the Blue Zone at COP 29 through this panel discussion. Sophia was invited to speak on biodiversity, the ocean, and energy challenges.



During this special occasion, panellists highlighted the importance of youth involvement in climate action. This panel was proposed by a consortium of universities and focuses on empowering students to shape global sustainability policies. Through an engaging debate, students and senior climate advisors explored the pathways young leaders envision for ocean conservation, biodiversity, and the energy transition. This inspiring session offered a unique opportunity to witness youth-led innovation and collaboration at the forefront of climate policy.



Scan the QR code
to watch the video

Photos from www.instagram.com/suadyouthcop/

State of the Cryosphere Report 2024: Lost Ice, Global Damage

(12 November)

Professor Chris Stokes from Durham University joined more than 50 leading cryosphere scientists who published the State of the Cryosphere Report 2024 at COP29. This report is published annually and timed to coincide with the start of COP. It is coordinated by the International Cryosphere Climate Initiative (ICCI), which is a network of senior policy experts and researchers working with governments and organisations to influence climate policy at an international level. At the Cryosphere Pavilion, a small number of expert reviewers, including Professor Stokes, delivered a media briefing outlining key findings from the report.



Scan the QR code to watch the media briefing



Scan the QR code to download the report

Recent and Future Loss of Glaciers in the Greater Caucasus

(12 November)

Professor Chris Stokes presented his research at the International Cryosphere Climate Initiative's 'Cryosphere Pavilion' at COP29. The Greater Caucasus region, a mountain range that stretches from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea, contains over 2,000 glaciers. Glaciers in the Caucasus have reduced in area by 23% since 2000, with several glaciers disappearing. Crucially, projections show that the region is highly sensitive to global mean temperature increases between +1.5°C and +3°C, with the former likely to preserve around 40% of glacier mass, but with the latter leading to near-complete deglaciation. This presentation was particularly poignant given that COP29 was held in Azerbaijan, which has lost over 75% of its glacier area in the last two decades.

Speakers included Professor Stokes representing Durham University, Professor Regine Hock of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and Kakha Mdivani from the government of Georgia.



Scan the QR code to watch the video

Framework for Assisting Developing Economies in Implementing Nationally Determined Contributions (FADE-IN)

(12 November)

Professor Habib Rahman led a team of renowned academics from Durham University UK, Curtin University Australia, and Asian Disaster Preparedness Center Thailand to develop a policy report. The FADE-IN is designed in line with developed countries' priorities under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), including transparency of countries' commitments, market-based mechanisms and provision of support. It is drafted and refined through a literature review, bilateral and multi-lateral policy analyses, and workshop consultations both at national and regional levels across 24 developing countries, encompassing diverse regions such as Africa, South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East and the Pacific. The lessons learned and recommendations provided in this report can guide future initiatives to mitigate climate change and enhance resilience in developing countries through the development and implementation of NFCs.



Scan the QR code to download the report



Professor Chris Stokes and Professor Habib Rahman at Cryosphere Pavilion at COP29.



Professor Habib Rahman presented the policy report at the Australian Pavillion at COP29.

ECO₂ Smart Schools COP29 Climate Conference

(13th & 14th of November)

Since 2021, school children from around the world have taken part in the annual ECO₂ Smart Schools Climate Conference. The event allows children to learn more about climate change and energy transition and inspires them to create art and poetry to demonstrate what they have learned. This two-day virtual conference had three sessions this year, one with secondary schools and two with primary schools. This effort is a collaboration between a local educational charity (Outdoor and Sustainability Education Specialists: OASES), Durham County Council and Durham University, including the Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy and Durham Energy Institute. This is the third consecutive year that this event has been delivered. This year there were 83 participating schools from 14 countries.



Professor Petra Minnerop spoke at a session to share her legal research with secondary school children on the 13th of November, and Professor Chris Stokes joined the conference to share his scientific research live from COP29 in two sessions with primary school children on the 13th and 14th of November.



“This was a fantastic opportunity for school-children to learn about climate change and the actions that are needed to mitigate some of the worst effects. It was so encouraging to see the passion of this next generation and also find out what they were doing in their schools to combat climate change.

Professor Chris Stokes
Durham University

Ice Sheet Dynamics and Future Sea Level Rise at +1.5 °C

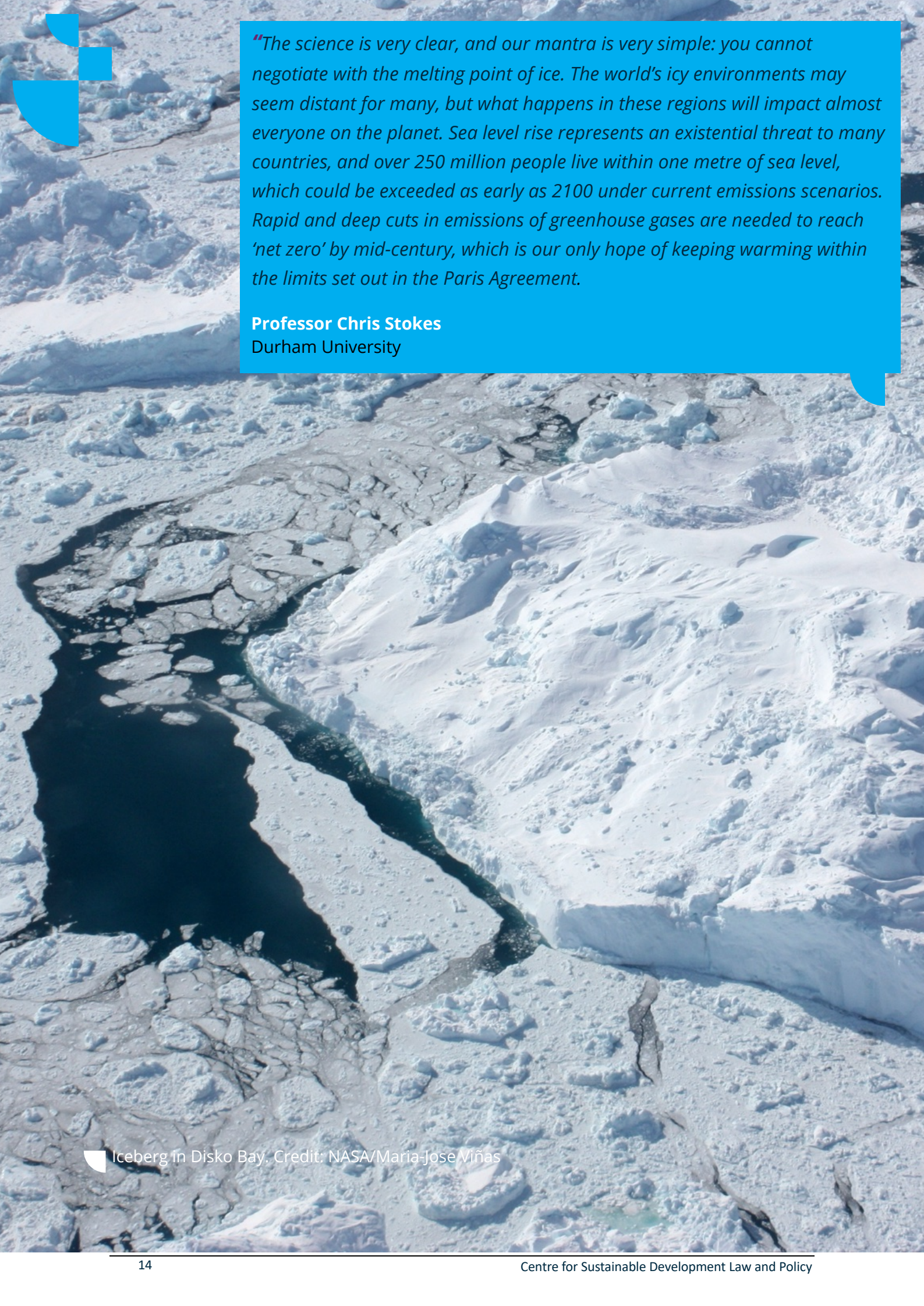
(13 November)

Professor Chris Stokes gave an insightful and impactful talk at a side event on ‘Ice Sheet Dynamics and Future Sea Level Rises at +1.5°C’, hosted by the International Cryosphere Climate Initiative (ICCI). Professor Stokes presented the realities faced across the globe due to sea level rises caused by the melting ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica. He presented the latest research and developments, and the projections for future sea level rise. Crucially, Professor Stokes stressed that exceeding a +1.5°C rise in global temperatures is likely to trigger an irreversible retreat of the ice sheets in Greenland and West Antarctica and that the “safe” limit for the preservation of these ice sheets is likely closer to +1.0°C.




Scan the QR code
to watch the video



An aerial photograph of a massive, white ice iceberg floating in the ocean. The iceberg is heavily fractured with a network of dark, jagged cracks. The surrounding water is a deep blue, and the sky is a pale, hazy blue. The overall scene conveys a sense of scale and the fragility of the ice.

"The science is very clear, and our mantra is very simple: you cannot negotiate with the melting point of ice. The world's icy environments may seem distant for many, but what happens in these regions will impact almost everyone on the planet. Sea level rise represents an existential threat to many countries, and over 250 million people live within one metre of sea level, which could be exceeded as early as 2100 under current emissions scenarios. Rapid and deep cuts in emissions of greenhouse gases are needed to reach 'net zero' by mid-century, which is our only hope of keeping warming within the limits set out in the Paris Agreement.

Professor Chris Stokes
Durham University

 Iceberg in Disko Bay. Credit: NASA/Maria-Jose Miñas

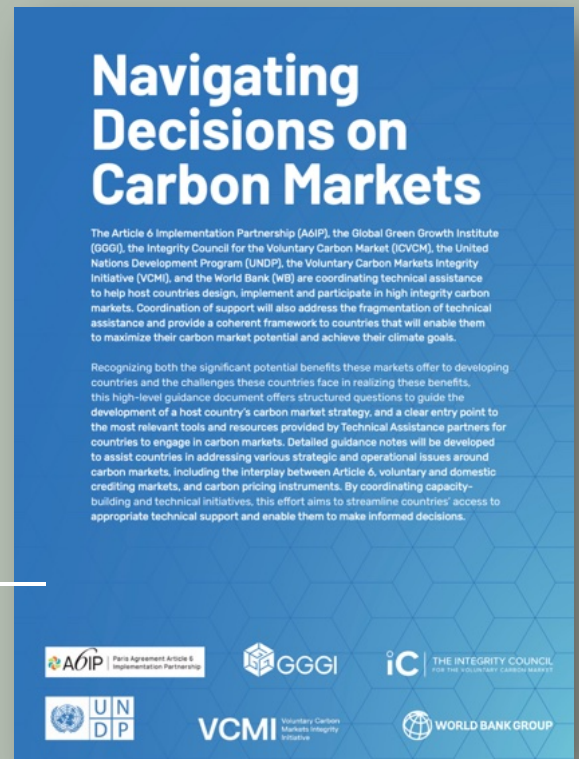
Side Events & Sessions

(15th & 16th of November)

Navigating Decisions on Carbon Markets

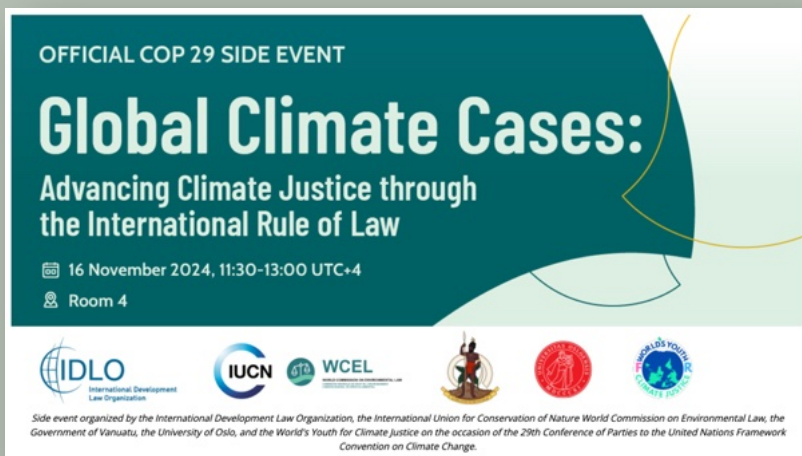
Professor Habib Rahman attended a session organised by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) Pavilion on the 15th of November. The session recognised both the significant potential benefits of the carbon markets for developing countries and the challenges these countries face in realising these benefits. The resulting document offers technical information on carbon markets.

Scan the QR Code to view the full document.



Global Climate Cases: Advancing Climate Justice through the International Rule of Law

Professor Petra Minnerop and Mustafa Kamran joined discussions on key climate judgements during an official side event on the 16th of November. Speaking at the event, Justice Jawad Hassan (High Court, Pakistan) directly commended Durham University's contribution to this field. Justice Hassan underscored the importance of educating judges on the latest developments on climate litigation and environmental jurisprudence. He welcomed Durham University's efforts in relation to continuous professional development (CPD) for the judiciary and stressed the significance of the recently signed MoU between CSDLP and the Federal Judicial Academy of Pakistan, for developing curricula for the educational purposes of the judiciary.



Climate Change and Courts: Judicial Perspectives on Climate Litigation

We continued our discussions in the afternoon with the judiciary from leading courts around the world, including Chief Justice Antonio Herman Benjamin of the Brazilian National High Court, Luc Lavrysen, President of the Constitutional Court, and Chingiz Asgarov, Deputy Chief Justice of Supreme Court Azerbaijan. Justice Antonio Benjamin highlighted the growing relevance of climate change issues to the judiciary and the need for judges to share their learning and experience on this issue.

The side event concluded with a roundtable discussion on the reflections of several Supreme Court justices from India, Nepal, Indonesia, Mozambique, and Pakistan. Professor Minnerop and Mustafa Kamran met judges and discussed the potential of developing CPD courses and curricula for the educational purposes of the judiciary around international legal trends addressing global environmental challenges. During the discussions, Professor Minnerop also drew the attention towards the International Judicial Roundtable Conference, which is organised by Durham Law School and the Durham International Dispute Resolution Institute, and extended a warm welcome to visit Durham University.



From left to right: Mrs Riffat Inam Butt, Secretary of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan; Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan; Ghulam Mustafa Kamran, PhD Candidate Durham Law School; and Professor Petra Minnerop, Professor of International Law in Durham Law School.

Scan the QR Code to watch the side event.





Abir Abdullah / Climate Visuals Countdown

Official Side Event at COP 29
**Just Transition – a Fairness Discourse
for Enhancing Adaptation and
Improving Social Resilience**

13:15 – 14:45 | 18th of November 2024 | Side Event Room 5 |
Blue Zone | Baku, Azerbaijan

The fairness discourse in international law has a new interlocutory face—the concept of just transition. A just transition promises better futures for all, based on ambitious mitigation, enhancing adaptation, and improving social resilience amidst climate disruption and underlying vulnerabilities. Our theory of change is that just transitions depend on the empowerment of women and youth to lead societies into a sustainable, equitable and fairer future.



Durham University, in collaboration with the International Environmental Communication Association

Moderator:

◇ **Professor Petra Minnerop**
Professor of International Law, Durham University, UK.

Speakers:

◇ **Hon. Ruth Nankabirwa Ssentamu**
Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, Uganda.

◇ **Professor Laura Marsilliani**
Professor of Economics, Durham University, UK.

◇ **Professor Gregg Walker**
Professor of Environmental Sciences, Oregon State University USA.

◇ **Ms Danielle Yeow**
Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore.

◇ **Ms Ruta Trainyte**
International Environmental Communication Association.

◇ **Ms Emily Faint**
Net Zero Policy Manager at the British Standards Institution (BSI).



Durham University's application, led by Professor Petra Minnerop, to host an official UNFCCC Side Event was approved by the UNFCCC Secretariat. The event was live-streamed from the COP29 venue, Baku, Azerbaijan, on UNFCCC official channels and viewed by Durham University staff and students.

The event was moderated by **Professor Petra Minnerop**. She highlighted the importance and the concrete mandate of the COPs as spelt out in Article 7 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and offered a brief overview of the previous advancements up to the outcome of the first global stocktake (Decision 1/CMA.5). While explaining the concept note of the event, she also stated that "women represent not only half of the world's population, they also educate the next generation. Their choices and knowledge define all our futures. But we must enable them to choose." Additionally, she explained that the term just transitions has its roots in the work of the International Labour Organisation. The Paris Agreement mentions the term just transition only in the preamble, where it refers to the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce. However, the new just transition work programme appears to have widened the focus, which could promise more fundamental change.



Hon. Ruth Nankabirwa Ssentamu, Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, Uganda, opened her speech by highlighting Durham University's valued partnership with Uganda through Durham University's Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy. She emphasised the importance of such collaborations not only for the advancement of climate action but also for the accomplishment of just transitions, particularly in vulnerable communities and



underdeveloped countries. Hon. Minister Ssentamu offered an eye-opening view of the vulnerability of the Ugandan population. She highlighted that Uganda expects to replace charcoal and fire with Gas; however, access to clean energy is crucially required. “A just transition should not be abrupt. We must allow room for adaptation and provide accessible provisions”. The Ugandan Government has donated land, provided subsidies to communities and is also trying to work towards just energy transition on a larger scale. While highlighting the importance of communication in the COP’s processes, she emphasised that the COP offers a platform for vulnerable countries and communities to raise their voices.



Professor Laura Marsilliani, Professor of Economics at Durham University, spoke on the role of carbon markets’ revenues from the auctioning of carbon permits for just transitions. She offered the best practice example of the EU ETS that has raised billions in auctioning revenues since its inception. According to the latest EU ETS regulation 2023, these revenues should be fully (100%) allocated towards the realisation of climate mitigation and adaptation and clean energy projects. Germany is leading the way in raising auctioning revenues. Laura highlighted the link between the ETS and the newly established Climate Social Fund to

be deployed for the period 2026-32 with the objective of supporting the groups mostly affected by the green transitions such as poor households. For the latter, high energy prices and the ensuing shift towards a green economy resulting from more stringent carbon markets mean less disposable income for non-energy expenditure and fewer employment opportunities in carbon-intensive sectors. Poor households are also those facing financial constraints when it comes to borrowing for clean tech such as heat pumps. It is expected that the SCF would mobilise at least EUR 86.7 billion over the 2026-2032 period and contribute to the goal that no one is left behind in the transition towards a green economy.

Professor Gregg Walker, Professor of Environmental Sciences, Oregon State University USA, represented our co-host, the International Environmental Communication Association. Professor Walker focussed on the importance of communication relating to just transition which covers a wide range of communication functions across the development





spectrum, such as information, public relations, social marketing, community voice, etc. He stated that we should empower every stakeholder interested party in this idea of just transition. He further emphasised that just transition is a principle, process, and practice. The practice of just transition means that the people most affected by pollution should be in the leadership of crafting policy solutions. He highlighted the acronym FAAITH to highlight some principles: F- Fairness, A - Accountability, A - Access, I - Inclusion, T Transparency, and H - Honesty. If we adhere to all these principles, individuals trust one another, trust the process, and believe their voices are heard. People will support decisions that differ from their preferences if they have a voice in crafting them.



Ms Danielle Yeow, from the Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore, emphasised that implementation for climate projects needs to be inclusive. Just transition will require a vast increase in renewable energy and the mineral demand for clean energy technologies is double today and we need an affordable supply of transitional minerals. Additionally, there is a real need to properly manage this supply chain and avoid perpetuating this commodity dependence. Critical minerals provide a critical opportunity to grow a stable economy and boost revenues—but only if appropriately managed. The focus of this panel is about empowering women and children. Foundational aspects must be included - Implementing existing human rights laws and performing human rights due diligence, assessment, and engagement is also essential.

Ms Ruta Trainyte, the International Environmental Communication Association. She offered valuable insights from Lithuanian perspectives as a case study, on the themes of just transition, sustainability communication, and knowledge of sustainability reporting.



Ms Emily Faint, Net Zero Policy Manager at the British Standards Institution (BSI), shared insights into the work of the BSI and encouraged increased participation. She stressed the importance of the national standards body for representation in the international standard system. The International Standards System is a network of government-appointed standard bodies worldwide. These bodies convey the needs of business and civil society through an international process. Standards are required to build trust, so other countries, including assessment bodies, support them. For instance, if a company is audited for sustainability practices, trust will depend on whether or not the audit is coming from a recognised institution. To achieve the goal of just transition, it is crucial to participate in these forums. The role of international standards is to help scale action.



Our side event was well attended, in the room and online, by UNFCCC delegates, Durham University staff members, and postgraduate and undergraduate students. It provided an opportunity and international platform to showcase the University's thought leadership and the research work being done on just transitions and climate change law. Special thanks to Sophia Waseem Khan, Simeng Wang, Dr Can Eken, Dr Owen Boyle, and Kate Morris for organising the viewing of this side event in Durham.





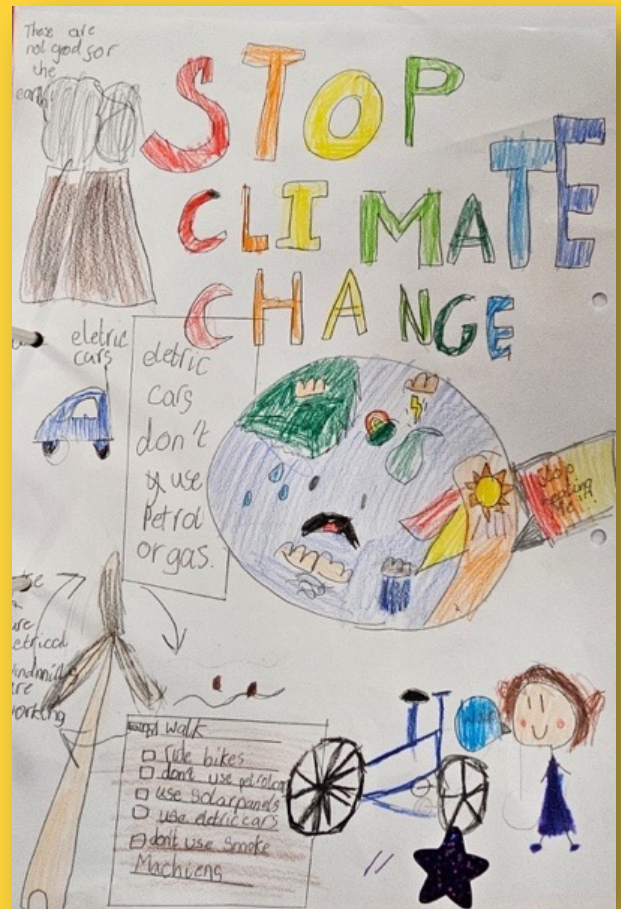
Video recording of this side event will soon be available on the UNFCCC Events page. Scan the QR Code to access the UNFCCC Events Channel.



Live Session from Baku with St Oswald's Primary School

(19th of November)

Our delegation joined Year 3 (Neville) and Year 6 (Bailey) children of St Oswald's Primary School live from COP29, Baku Azerbaijan, On Tuesday the 19th of November. Professor Petra Minnerop, Professor Laura Marsiliani, Ghulam Mustafa Kamran, and Dr Lucia Sbragia (Associate Professor, Durham Business School - on the ground at St Oswald's) talked to Year 3 (Neville) and Year 6 (Bailey) children of St Oswald's Primary School to share views around COP processes and the global issue of climate change. Our delegation talked about facts and figures regarding climate change and the importance of a sustainable lifestyle to safeguard our planet. Children had an exclusive live view of the negotiations at the UNFCCC COP29 plenary and the COP29 Venue. The interest and level of understanding were visible in the questions asked by children from both classes; this is a credit to Mr R. Handy (Bailey Class) and Mrs H. Ribchester (Neville Class) who are teaching the children in a way that fosters compassion for the sustainable future of our planet. In addition to offering on-ground support, Dr Lucia Sbragia printed and provided COP29 lanyards for all children as a souvenir and a token of appreciation to encourage them further and to enhance their interest and engagement with this critical global issue.



Poster created by a Year 3 Child from St Oswald's Primary School.



Mustafa with the youngest delegate at COP29 - Leroy, representing the Abibiman Foundation.

"The younger and future generations are central to the notion of sustainable development. The efforts being made at COPs and other international fora are to safeguard a safer, healthier, and sustainable future for the generations to come. More than ever, this is the time to put the unsustainable ways of production and consumption to a halt - the unsustainable ways that are harmful to both physical and non-physical facets of human life.

Ghulam Mustafa Kamran

PhD Candidate, Durham Law School

State Obligations in the Context of Climate Change: The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

(19th of November)

This event was hosted by the Cryosphere Pavilion and it was live-streamed. Professor Petra Minnerop spoke about the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and their recent advisory opinion on climate change and its relevance to the international climate regime. She explained how the Tribunal had advanced the law by confirming that the anthropogenic introduction of carbon dioxide and heat (energy) into the marine environment causes climate change and ocean acidification and constitutes pollution of the marine environment.

Key takeaways from the ITLOS decision are that States Parties have the specific obligations to take all necessary measures to prevent, reduce and control marine pollution from anthropogenic GHG emissions and to endeavour to harmonise their policies in this respect. Such measures should be determined objectively, taking into account, inter alia, the best available science and relevant international rules and standards contained in climate change treaties such as the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, in particular the global temperature goal of limiting the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and the timeline for emissions pathways to achieve that goal. The scope and content of necessary measures may vary in accordance with the means available to States Parties and their capabilities. The necessary measures include, in particular, those to reduce GHG emissions. Furthermore, the obligation to take all necessary measures is one of due diligence. The standard of due diligence under Article 194 of the Convention on the Law of the Sea is stringent, given the high risks of serious and irreversible harm to the marine environment. The Tribunal acknowledged that the implementation of the due diligence obligation may vary according to States' capabilities and available resources.



“Climate change has entered international courtrooms, including the International Court of Justice, the European Court of Human Rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea delivered its much-anticipated, unanimous advisory opinion on 21 May 2024. This landmark advisory opinion is significant for the development of international environmental law; it integrates legal reasoning and scientific research.”

Professor Petra Minnerop
Durham University

Scan the QR code
to watch the video



Reception in Memoriam of Professor Saleemul Huq at ICCAD – Role of Research Institutes in Capacity Building

(20th of November)

Our delegation was invited to attend a pavilion event organised by the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD). This event was followed by a reception to commemorate



the late Professor Saleemul Huq's efforts as a leading climate scientist and as the founding director of the ICCAD. Professor Huq was a close collaborator of the CSDLP and the IHRR at Durham University. Our delegation was joined by Yasmin Batliwala, the Chief Executive of the Advocates for International Development (A4ID), Saqib Huq, the managing director of ICCAD, Noor-e-Elahi, and Saify Iqbal, the programme coordinators at the ICCAD.

Declaration on the Use of Carbon Markets and Revenues – at the European Roundtable on Climate Change

(20th of November)

Professor Laura Marsiliani attended a high-profile session organised by the European Roundtable on Climate Change and Sustainable Transition (ERCST) where she engaged with senior policy makers. A 'Declaration on the Use of Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) Revenues' was also presented at the session.



“While there was agreement in using the CBAM revenues as climate finance, no consensus was achieved on whether those should be mobilised for developing or EU countries or towards enhancing cleaner production, or indeed for benefitting those disproportionately affected by the CBAM. Interestingly, developing countries did not engage in the conversation.”

Professor Laura Marsiliani
Durham University



Media Engagement

Voice of Islam Live Radio Discussion on COP29's Progress and Processes (20 November)



Ghulam Mustafa Kamran gave an interview on COP29's progress and processes during a live radio discussion on Voice of Islam – a UK-based radio station. He spoke on the role of international law in holding State Parties accountable for commitments made at COPs in relation to climate change. He outlined the basic principles of international law, of state sovereignty and consent and how States consent to be bound by, i.e., the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement, and other international treaties. Consequently, Mustafa stressed that most of the negotiations at COPs are around the explanation of concepts and terminology of the international treaty regime.

Mustafa further spoke on the rise of climate litigation in recent years at the international, regional, and domestic levels. The listeners were given an overview of how the courts are being used as legal avenues to establish accountability. Especially where the treaty regime does not assign clear responsibilities and state obligations under the international climate regime.

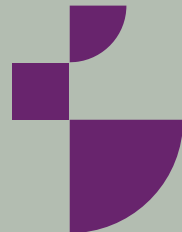
Mustafa underscored the important role of NGOs and non-state actors, discussing how these actors can enable the voices of those most affected by climate change to be heard on an international stage. He discussed the concept of just transitions and the need for international collaboration to overcome the most pressing climate challenges facing communities across the globe.

TV Interview with CBC Azerbaijan

(21 November)

Professor Petra Minnerop was interviewed by the news channel CBC Azerbaijan and was asked to share thoughts on the negotiations and slow progress at COP29. She discussed the role of the ambition of the developed countries and their leadership in making emissions reductions a reality.





Climate Change Law and Policy Seminar from COP29 with Durham Students

(21 November)

Professor Petra Minnerop held an online seminar with Year 3 LLB Students taking the climate change law and policy module at Durham Law School.

In this seminar, she explained the process around multilateral negotiations at COP and how it is divided into two weeks of negotiations. Students had the opportunity to listen to the live negotiations, both in the COP29 main plenary and in one of the negotiations rooms. During the statements of the high-level State representatives in the main plenary, students listened to the speech of Edward Miliband, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change of the UK Government. The students also witnessed the heated debate around the new collective quantified goal on climate finance. The tensions were visible as ministers from several countries raised concerns that the lack of ambition and the absence of sufficient financial proposals from developed nations were detrimental not only to the overall negotiations but also to the lives of vulnerable communities.

Students asked several questions, and the discussions covered, among other issues, the mandate of the COPs, the importance of scientific knowledge and evidence, the role of universities as observer NGOs, the legal significance of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the formal and informal grouping of the Member States and their impact on the negotiations, and the expected outcomes of the COP29.

Scan the QR code to watch the seminar recording (accessible only by Durham University Students)



Protests, Processes and Outcomes

(22 - 24 November)

The pictures below capture the atmosphere during the closing stages of COP.



Social Media Interaction and Engagement

We are pleased that our social media accounts and webpages received significant attention in recent months. Our team at CSDLP led an active social media campaign and received nearly 14,000 organic impressions on one of our posts, with a surge of over 700 new followers – including not only Durham University students but several other professionals and partners at domestic and international levels. More details on our web pages and social media accounts are on page 35 of this report.



Reflections on COP29

On an ongoing basis, our delegation shared their research expertise and professional views around the thematic areas of COP 29.

'Earth's ice at risk of irreversible loss' by Professor Chris Stokes

'COP29 and the Potential of Revenues from Carbon Markets and CBAM for a Just Transition to Net Zero' by Professor Laura Marsiliani

'Coping with COP29' by Professor Petra Minnerop

'The Possibility of Climate Restoration Law' by Professor Petra Minnerop and Dr Friederike Otto

'KlimaSeniorinnen v Switzerland: the European Court of Human Rights Leads the Way on Climate Action' by Professor Petra Minnerop and Professor Andy Haines

'COP Presidencies Troika: The Contradictory Narratives and Regressive Negotiations at COP29' by Ghulam Mustafa Kamran

'COP29 Unveiled: 'The Push and Pull of Progress' - A Reflection and Insights from COP29' by Sophia Waseem Khan

Scan the QR code to access these articles on our "Reflection on COP29" web page.





United Nations
Climate Change

New Partnerships

Our delegation visited several pavilions of different Member States, international bodies, and NGOs. New partnerships were established with the Asian Development Bank, the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office UK, the Green Climate Fund, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, and the International Cryosphere Climate Initiative. Our delegation visited the Just Transition Pavilion by the International Labour Organisation, the International Centre for Climate Change and Development, and countries including Bulgaria, Australia, Singapore, and Pakistan.



Professor Petra Minnerop and Ghulam Mustafa Kamran with Ms Daniel Yeow from the Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore.



Professor Petra Minnerop and Ghulam Mustafa Kamran with Ms Romina Khurshid Alam, Prime Minister's Coordinator for Climate Change at the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Pakistan.



In-session workshop under Article 6.8 of the Paris Agreement - GCNMA 6

Professor Habib Rahman attended a workshop on the 12th of November under Article 6.8 of the Paris Agreement at the 6th meeting of the Glasgow Committee on Non-market Approaches (GCNMA 6).



Photo by UNFCCC



Professor Chris Stokes and Sophia Waseem Khan in the plenary hall at COP29.



Professor Petra Minnerop, Professor Laura Marsiliani, and Ghulam Mustafa Kamran with Ms Yasmin Batliwala, the Chief Executive at the Advocates for International Development (A4ID).

Student Events

Game Changer COP29 Challenge

On 18th & 19th October 2024, Durham University's Venture Lab organised a Game Changer COP29 Challenge, bringing together 66 students for an inspiring and collaborative innovation experience. Focused on the theme of "Solidarity for a Green World," this special edition challenge encouraged participants to explore how they can contribute to a just transition toward sustainable development in line with global COP29 priorities.

Throughout the event, students engaged in dynamic workshop-based tasks designed to spark creative thinking and problem-solving. They delved into key issues surrounding the COP29 agenda, analysing news stories and developments leading up to the international summit. By gaining new perspectives on global climate challenges, participants broadened their understanding of sustainability and social responsibility.

The challenge emphasised the practical application of Design Thinking methodologies, guiding students to generate innovative solutions tailored to real-world problems. Participants worked in teams to ideate, refine, and develop actionable strategies, culminating in the creation of a pitch to win a share of £3,000.

In addition to honing their problem-solving skills, students had the opportunity to develop essential communication and pitching abilities. Teams presented their ideas to a panel of judges, showcasing their innovative solutions and demonstrating their potential impact on the global stage.

The Game Changer COP29 Challenge highlighted the power of student-led innovation and collective action in tackling urgent global challenges. By fostering creativity, collaboration, and a commitment to sustainability, this event empowered Durham University students to become active contributors to a greener and more equitable world.



Scan the QR code to find out more about Game Changer

To be kept up to date with future Game Changer events and other Venture Lab activities, sign up to the newsletter using the QR Code



Student Welcome Event at CSDLP

Before COP, we invited students to a Welcome Event on the 5th of November. The CSDLP Team was pleased to see students from both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, from different disciplines, and different clubs and societies.



This welcome event offered an insight into the work of CSDLP and provided a detailed overview of our engagements with the UNFCCC as an observer NGO. Students showed great interest in joining our efforts and getting involved in the UNFCCC processes by joining the Centre.

Post-COP Pre-Christmas Catch-up with Students

On the 3rd of December, the CSDLP organised a post-COP29 student event to have an informal catch-up with our Durham Delegation. Over 30 students attended in person and actively engaged in the discussions.



COP Debrief at Durham Castle

Following the tradition from last year, the CSDLP is collaborating with ECO DU, Greenspace, Castle Environment, Durham Climate Society, and Palaeontological Society to organise a post-COP event at Durham Castle. This annual event is open to undergraduate and postgraduate students from all disciplines and guests from the local community.

COP Debrief at Durham Castle

Wednesday the 29th of January 2025 | 8:00 – 9:30 PM
Durham Castle Great Hall

Welcome from 7:00 PM at Castel Undercroft Bar

The Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy, in collaboration with ECO DU, Greenspace, Durham Climate Society, Castle Environment, and Palaeontological Society, warmly welcomes you to join Durham University Delegates for an informal and insightful discussion to explore the outcomes of the COPs at Durham Castle. The Delegates will unpack the key takeaways from this year's COP29 (Climate Change) and COP16 (Biodiversity).

This event continues our tradition of welcoming **undergraduate and postgraduate students** from all disciplines and **guests from the local community**.



Please scan the QR code for further information and registration.

Meet the Delegates

▪ **Professor Petra Minnerop**
Professor of International Law



▪ **Professor Laura Marsilliani**
Professor of Economics



▪ **Professor Chris Stokes**
Professor of Environmental Sciences



▪ **Professor Habib Rahman**
Professor of Economics



▪ **Dr Simona Capisani**
Assistant Professor in Philosophy



▪ **Ghulam Mustafa Kamran**
Postgraduate Research Associate



▪ **Sophia Waseem Khan**
Undergraduate Natural Sciences



Events under the Global Citizenship Programme at Ustinov College

A follow-up event to unpack Durham University's engagements with the UNFCCC processes will be held on the 5th of February 2025 under the Global Citizenship Programme at Ustinov College.

Mustafa at Ustinov College at a post-COP28 GCP event – photo from last year.

Going Forward: Preparations for SB62 Bonn and COP30 Brazil

We will continue to engage with our partners at SB62, Bonn, including from Brazil for joint research ventures and collaborative activities, leading up to COP30. We have already started collaborating with Brazilian Universities, including the Mackenzie University of São Paulo, the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, and the University of São Paulo at Ribeirão Preto, Brazil. We are also looking forward to continuing to collaborate with our existing partners to enhance our research work and enrich our contributions to environmental actions.

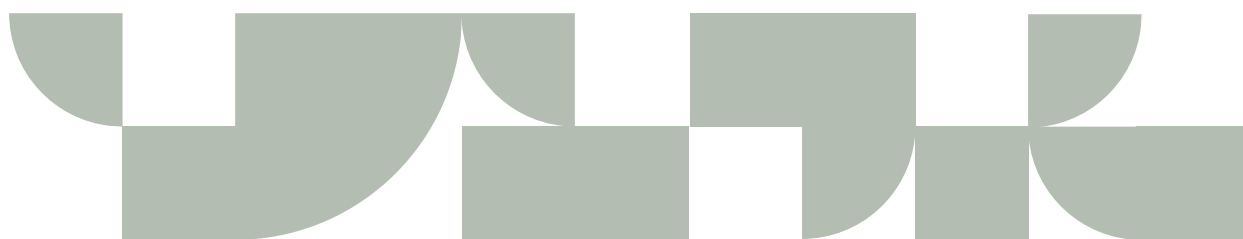


Photo by Dean Calma / IAEA



Durham
University

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