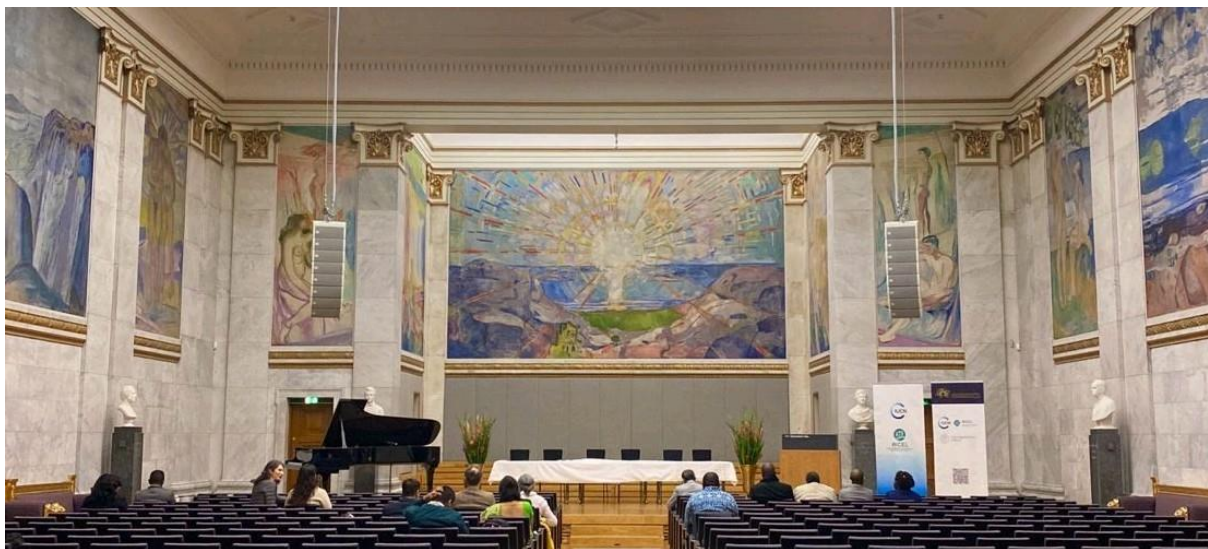


CLIMATE CHANGE LAW NETWORK BLOG POST #3 (2022) HOW TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE, POLLUTION AND BIODIVERSITY LOSS?

In this short blog post, [Francesco Sindico](#), IUCN WCEL Climate Change Law Specialist Group Chair shares his experience attending the IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law 2022 Oslo International Environmental Law Conference.



I had the pleasure of participating to the IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law 2022 Oslo International Environmental Law Conference “The Transformative Power of Law: Addressing Global Environmental Challenges” from 03 to 06 October 2022. I contributed as a panellist in a session titled “How to Address Climate Change, Pollution and Biodiversity Loss?” In this blog you can find the questions I was asked and my answers. I was joined in the session by the co-chair of the IUCN WCEL Climate Change Law Specialist Group Fabiano de Andrade Correa de Sousa. With Fabiano I shared the physical and virtual stand with Emmanuel Kasimbazi (Director, Environmental Law Centre, School of Law, Makerere University, Uganda), Eirik Hovland Steindal (Senior Researcher NIVA, Norway), Jordan Diamond (Director, Environmental Law Institute), Rose-Liza Eisma Osorio (Chair, IUCN Academy of Environmental Law) and Maud Lelievre (President, IUCN National Committee, France). The session was chaired very skilfully by Michelle Lim (Singapore Management University and Deputy Chair of the WCEL Biodiversity Law Specialist Group).

1. What do you see as the key linkages between the three issues (climate, biodiversity, pollution)? How do we also consider issues of equity alongside these?

One key linkage is the link between measures to mitigate climate change and their potential negative consequences on biodiversity and pollution. As an example, consider the development of offshore renewable energy (wind energy or tidal) and its potential impacts on the marine environment. Or the development of renewable energy into green hydrogen and possible pollution and risks from this emerging technology.

When it comes to issues of equity, again consider similar example. Mitigating climate change may call for revised land management practices (ie peatland restoration). However, over generations peat has been cut and cleared to provide a livelihood for families and communities. We need to balance climate change mitigation and equity considerations of those living on the land from which emissions are generated.

2. How well do existing legal frameworks deal with the interlinkages and feedbacks across these social-ecological issues?

Law needs to be able to bridge these issues. First, it needs to identify where to develop renewables with proper input by communities, the environment and investors. Second, it needs to promote renewable energy projects that benefit not only the environment, but also the communities and their wider socio-economic development. These two facets require a combination of science, public participation, economic measures (auction for example) and accountability.

3. What is the transformative power of law? How can this be used to address these interconnected sustainability challenges? What types of underlying system and value change needs to occur to bring about the legal change proposed?

Here I wish to make two points. First, I think we may be asking too much from law. Law is part of a much wider socio-economic puzzle. Law draws from science, societal awareness, politics and economics. So when it comes to required system and value change, for me that is a political question. But I will say that science, a clearer understanding of the science underlying the link between climate change, biodiversity and pollution is needed.

Second, law can and should have a role to balance these interconnected sustainability challenges. On the one hand, law needs to embed effective wide stakeholder engagement input. On the other hand, law needs to provide a clear and predictable environment for all stakeholders, including business to operate.

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I would be delighted to read comments from other colleagues in the IUCN WCEL Climate Change Law Specialist Group on the role of law in simultaneously addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Even better if colleagues can share some examples of this happening, be it at international or domestic level.

Francesco is a Professor in International Law at the University of Strathclyde Law School. He is currently on secondment with the Scottish Government where he leads on the Carbon Neutral Islands project. This blog reflects his views in his personal capacity.