







DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

SCHULICH SCHOOL OF LAW
Marine & Environmental
Law Institute

MELAW20 & MELP50 ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

MARINE AND ENVIRONMENTAL LAW: RETROSPECT AND PROSPECTS
20-21 MAY, 2025

Weldon Law Building, Room 105, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada **(HYBRID)**

Conference Program
Compilation of Abstracts
Biographies
Summary Report

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

20 May 2025, Tuesday

8:30 am - 9:00 am CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

9:00 am - 9:30 am Welcome Address

Sarah Harding, Dean, Schulich School of Law
Sara Seck, Director, MELAW
Sara Ross, Associate Director, MELAW

9:30 am - 10:30 am Panel 1: Ocean Equity and Biodiversity

Moderator: Cecilia Engler

Sherry Pictou, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Governance (Tier 2); Associate Professor, MELAW
Indigenous Knowledges toward Ocean Equity

Vu Hai Dang, Expert at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (*virtual*)
Sustainable Use of Biodiversity beyond National Jurisdiction: Towards a More Effective Participation of Developing States in the BBNJ Agreement Implementation

Olga Koubrak, Post-doctoral Fellow, MELAW
Effectiveness of Marine Species at Risk Conservation within the UNEP Regional Seas Programme: Taking Stock and Charting Future Courses

10:30 am - 11:30 am Panel 2: Mining the Deep Seabed: Some Considerations

Moderator: Erin Dobbelsteyn

Tony Puthucherril, Professor, O.P. Jindal Global Law School, India
A TWAIL Approach to Mining at Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea

Devdatta Mukherjee, PhD Candidate, MELAW
To Mine or Not to Mine is Not the Only Question: On Deliberative Democracy in Deep Seabed Mining

Keith Edward MacMaster, Lawyer, Weldon McInnis Barristers and Solicitors
Bypassing the Treaty: The United States, UNCLOS and Valuing Seabed Minerals – Towards a Sustainable Seabed Mining Asset Valuation Code

11:30 am - 11:45 am COFFEE BREAK

11:45 am - 12:45 pm Panel 3: Rethinking Governance of the Marine Environment

Moderator: Sara Ross

David VanderZwaag, Professor Emeritus, MELAW
Governance and the Central Arctic Ocean: Cooperative Currents, Murky Waters

Sara Seck, Professor, Yogis & Keddy Chair in Human Rights Law; Director,
MELAW
Relational Approaches to Business Responsibilities for the Marine Environment

12:45 pm - 1:45 pm LUNCH

1:45 pm - 2:45 pm Panel 4: Environment and the Changing Contours of Property and Personhood

Moderator: Sara Seck

Sara Ross, Associate Professor, MELAW
Finding the Legal Person: Models, Methods, Benefits, and Framework for Assigning Legal Personhood to Sea Ice

Kevin Berk, PhD Candidate, MELAW; Purdy Crawford Fellow
Coastal Protection in Nova Scotia: A Clash of Private Property Rights and Public Environmental Objectives

Jodi Lazare, Associate Professor, MELAW; Associate Dean, Academic
Private Property and Public Discourse: Industrial Animal Farming and the Environment

2:45 pm - 3:45 pm Mi'kmaw Law, Language and Art: Interactive Learning with Naomi Metallic and Cheryl Simon

Naomi Metallic, Associate Professor, MELAW; Chancellor's Chair in Aboriginal Law and Policy

Cheryl Simon, Assistant Professor, MELAW

3:45 pm - 4:00 pm BREAK

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm Keynote Address

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP; Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations

History and Prospects of Marine and Environmental Law in the Triple Planetary Crisis – Some Reflections

5:00 pm - 5:15 pm BREAK

5:15 pm - 6:00 pm Early Days of MELP & Special Address

Norm Letalik, Counsel, Metcalf & Company
Early Days of MELP

Aldo Chircop, Professor, MELAW
Special Address: MELP @50: A Retrospect of Canadian Maritime Law and Implications for the Programme's Mission

6:00 pm – RECEPTION (Atrium – 2nd floor)

21 May 2025, Wednesday

8:30 am - 9:00 am **CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**

9:00 am - 10:00 am **Panel 5: Multi-level Fisheries Governance and Food Security**

Moderator: Constance MacIntosh

Stuart Kaye, Director of ANCORS at the University of Wollongong (*virtual*)
Multilateral Fisheries Enforcement: Can Remote Sensing Technologies Strengthen the Prospects for more Effective Cooperation between States?

Jamie Baxter, Associate Professor, MELAW
Shellfish and Seaplants as Food: Lessons from and for Regulatory Reform

Cecilia Engler, Post-Doctoral Fellow, MELAW
International Fisheries and the Tangled Web of International Law

10:00 am - 11:00am **Panel 6: Ocean and Climate**

Moderator: Camille Cameron

Loveth Ovedje, PhD Candidate, MELAW
Bridging the Climate Finance Gap: Supporting Coastal LDCs and SIDS in Building Marine Resilience

Patrícia Galvão Ferreira, Associate Professor, MELAW
From Dialogue to Mechanism? The Case for Thick Integration of Ocean-Climate Nexus in the Paris Agreement

Constance MacIntosh, Professor, MELAW
Forced Migration at Sea: State and Ship-Master Responsibilities and Responses

11:00 am - 11:15 am **COFFEE BREAK**

11:15 am - 12:15 pm **Panel 7: Climate Litigation**

Moderator: Patricia Galvão Ferreira

Erin Dobbeltsteyn, Schulich Fellow 2024-2025, Research Associate, MELAW;
PhD Candidate, University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law
Fundamental (In)justice and the Existential Threat of Climate Change

Camille Cameron, Professor, MELAW
Climate Litigation: Is it Worth it?

Kolawole Abiri, PhD Candidate, MELAW
Repeat Players and the Rise of Environmental Authoritarianism: A New Era in Climate Litigation

12:15 pm - 1:15 pm **LUNCH**

1:15 pm - 2:35 pm

Panel 8: Business in the Marine Environment: Normative Adaptations and Inclusivity

Moderator: Sara Seck

Jay L. Batongbacal, Professor, University of the Philippines College of Law;
Director, Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea of the U.P. Law Center
Reflections on a Social-Ecological Justice Framework, Fifteen Years Later

Mohamad Alikhani, Research Fellow, MELAW
From Theory to Practice: Integrating Ecological Normativity into Offshore Wind and Marine Spatial Planning

Akinwumi Ogunranti, Assistant Professor of Law, University of Manitoba
Business and Human Rights Treaty—A Hard Look at Legitimacy

2:35 pm - 3:00 pm

Closing Remarks and Reflections

Sara Seck, Director, MELAW

5:00 pm –

Ferry to Dartmouth

Ferry from Halifax to Dartmouth, Halifax Ferry Terminal, 5075 George St, Halifax
Note: the ferry departs every 15 minutes at 5pm | 5:15pm | 5:30pm | 5:45pm

6:00 pm –

Dinner: Wooden Monkey

40 Alderney Dr #305 (Above Ferry Terminal), Dartmouth
The Wooden Monkey Restaurant | Halifax & Dartmouth NS

COMPILATION OF ABSTRACTS

1: OCEAN EQUITY, BIODIVERSITY AND THE DEEP SEABED

“Indigenous knowledges toward ocean equity”

- **Sherry Pictou**, Tier 2 CRC Indigenous Governance, MELAW

The importance of Indigenous Knowledges for ocean sustainability is highlighted in a series of “blue papers” commissioned by the *High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy* which calls for the “coproduction” of ocean plans with Indigenous Peoples. Many challenges remain especially in applying the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and fundamental Human Rights in international decision-making processes, and application of the new Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) in Deep Sea mining and for achieving the SDG 14 – Life Below Water, itself. Central to these challenges lies within how non-Indigenous knowledge, classical scientific method and governance systems: 1) often treat the ocean as being separate from the land; 2) Indigenous People are often conceptualized as being only land based; and 3) there is an assumption that Indigenous Knowledges need to be integrated or validated by non-indigenous knowledge or classical scientific methodologies. This presentation considers how Mi’kmaw and Indigenous worldviews more broadly, offer potential insights that embrace the strength of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges toward ocean equity.

“Sustainable Use of Biodiversity beyond National Jurisdiction: Towards a More Effective Participation of Developing States in the BBNJ Agreement Implementation”

- **Vu Hai Dang**, Expert at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (virtual)

Adopted on 19 June 2023, the BBNJ Agreement is now open for signature from 20 September 2023 to 20 September 2025. It addresses four main issues: marine genetic resources, including the fair and equitable sharing of benefits; measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas; environmental impact assessments; and capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology. One of the most important concerns of the international community during the Agreement negotiations was how to ensure an equitable sharing of benefits from the use of marine biodiversity resources beyond national jurisdiction as many developing countries do not possess sufficient capacity to exploit those resources. This paper provides suggestions for more effective participation of developing countries in the sustainable use of biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction as stipulated by Agreement based on the similar experiences in implementing the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

“Effectiveness of Marine Species at Risk Conservation within the UNEP Regional Seas Programme: Taking Stock and Charting Future Courses”

- **Olga Koubrak**, Post-doctoral Fellow, MELAW

The transboundary nature of many marine species at risk makes international law a necessary tool in addressing the ongoing biodiversity crisis. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and its Regional Seas Programme consists of 18 individual programmes spanning the globe and bringing together 143 countries in regional collaborations. This presentation will briefly discuss the relative potential effectiveness of the North-East Atlantic, Mediterranean, East Africa, and Caribbean programmes based on twelve elements grouped under legal and institutional structure, and regional implementation. The presentation will show that all four of the reviewed programmes have the legal and institutional structures needed to protect and recover marine species at risk. However, regional implementation is lagging in particular in areas such as recovery planning and compliance review. Proposed future directions include

improved transparency and accountability, integration of social, economic, and environmental concerns, and establishment of regional ocean governance networks.

PANEL 2: MINING THE DEEP SEABED: SOME CONSIDERATIONS

“A TWAIL Approach to Mining at Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea”

- **Tony Puthucherril**, Professor of Law, O.P. Jindal Global Law School, India

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports that to keep the global warming target below 1.5 °C, renewable energy must provide 70-85% of all electricity by 2050. However, reaching this energy transition goal seems improbable, given the escalating concerns about the depletion of the best and most accessible deposits of terrestrial minerals. This situation has rekindled interest in deep-seabed mining. Since the 1870s, when the HMS Challenger embarked on history's first oceanographic expedition and collected a bucket of silt from the ocean floor at a depth of 4,727 metres containing potato-shaped nodules, awareness has increased that the ocean floor is littered with nodules rich in manganese, nickel, copper, cobalt, and other rare metals essential for facilitating the energy transition. However, many areas targeted for seabed mining are known habitats of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs). Whether it's polymetallic sulphides near hydrothermal vents, cobalt-rich crusts on seamount flanks, or polymetallic nodule fields on abyssal plains, these resources are interconnected with their distinctive and, in some cases, unique assemblages of marine species, leading to a strong scientific consensus that deep-sea mining could inflict irreversible damage to an already stressed ocean.

Nonetheless, a small cluster of private enterprises in the Global North, which dominate the deep-sea mineral sector through subsidiaries, partnerships, and subcontractors, exert considerable influence in persuading states, particularly those in the Global South, to exploit the deep seabed. They advocate that deep-sea mining could benefit the public and bolster the emerging economies of developing nations and their future generations. Notably, among the few developing countries that support these companies are small island developing states, which endure the brunt of the challenges posed by climate change and face the risk of an existential crisis. By endorsing these companies at the forefront of seabed mining, these nations also expose themselves to substantial liabilities and other hazards.

This paper examines these issues from the environmental justice perspective, using a TWAIL lens on international law as its primary methodology. Part II offers an overview of the deep seabed's fundamental geological features and its resources' essential characteristics. Part III outlines the evolution of the legal framework governing the deep seabed, culminating in Part XI of UNCLOS. Although it functions as an independent Code, this section will also analyse the factors that led to the development of the implementation agreement and its specifics. Part IV describes the institutional structures established to support the international legal regime, particularly the International Seabed Authority, and evaluates its work over the decades leading to the Mining Code. Part V discusses the environmental impacts of deep-seabed mining and evaluates the possibility of a moratorium on such activities. The paper concludes by emphasizing the inherent injustice in the current regime, which skews the balance in favour of a moratorium on mining rare minerals from the bottomless pit of the ocean floor.

“To Mine or Not to Mine is Not the Only Question: On Deliberative Democracy in Deep Seabed Mining”

- **Devdatta Mukherjee**, PhD Candidate, MELAW

Since 2014, the International Seabed Authority (ISA) has been developing rules, regulations, and procedures to govern the commercial exploitation of seabed minerals. The transformation of a much-deferred possibility to an operational industry appeared imminent in 2021 when Nauru triggered the “two-year rule” at the behest of its contractor, The Metals Company. The ecological harms of such mining, the low prospects of revenue redistribution, and its unlikely contribution to the green energy transition are frequently cited in arguments

against mining deep seabed. A moratorium is currently in place. Much literature ponders upon the pros and cons of such mining and moratorium.

This paper comments on the dearth of deliberative democracy in deep seabed mining, which delimits the scope of participation of various rights holders. It is contended that an expansive conception of the principle of the common heritage of (hu)mankind (CHM), hinged on its immanent possibilities and evolutionary scope, could inspire new approaches to addressing this lack of participation.

Emerging discussions and perspectives that speculate on expanding the participatory dimensions of the concept of CHM as a limit to the exploitation of ocean commons, or have the potential to influence such speculation, would be explored. The paper utilizes Habermas' theory of "communicative action" posited to advance "deliberative democracy," read with Allott's primary axiomatic principles for a "fundamentally new international law of the sea", as its ideational background. While it is important to create opportunities for Indigenous and other marginalized voices that have been excluded from the conversation due to the history of colonization, it is even more crucial to contest the boundaries within which these voices are expected to frame their participation. Such contestation is important, as it could have implications for future generations.

"Bypassing the Treaty: The United States, UNCLOS and Valuing Seabed Minerals – Towards a Sustainable Seabed Mining Asset Valuation Code"

- **Keith Edward MacMaster**, Lawyer, Weldon McInnis Barristers and Solicitors (PhD 2024)

Seabed mining in areas beyond national jurisdiction is governed by the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, the Mining Code, domestic laws of member states, and international law. The United States is not a signatory to UNCLOS. The Metals Company ("TMC") proposes to work with the Trump Administration to bypass UNCLOS, using the *Deep Seabed Hard Mineral Resources Act* to justify this action. TMC is a publicly traded corporation, under the mandate of the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC"). The SEC, along with regulators in Canada, Australia, among others, require valuations based on mineral asset valuation codes. Unfortunately, mineral valuation code research shows gaps in incorporating environmental and social factors into financial valuations. Moreover, the International Seabed Authority ("ISA") has not created a valuation code for seabed minerals, leading to a gross overestimation of valuations. This presentation posits that a sustainable seabed mining asset valuation code, incorporating environmental factors into financial valuations should be created, and develops ten (10) 'principles' that must be addressed in such a code.

PANEL 3: RETHINKING ARCTIC GOVERNANCE

"Governance and the Central Arctic Ocean: Cooperative Currents, Murky Waters"

- **David VanderZwaag**, Professor Emeritus, MELAW

Retreating and thinning sea ice has placed the central Arctic Ocean (CAO), a large "donut hole" of high seas and underlying seabed, on the political and public radars because of prospects for increased shipping, future commercial fisheries and seabed mining. Governance of the CAO will be the focus of this two-part presentation. Global and regional "cooperative currents" will first be described. Global streams of cooperation include: the UN Law of the Sea Convention; numerous International Maritime Organization (IMO) guidelines and agreements applicable to the CAO, such as the Polar Shipping Code; and various multilateral environmental agreements, particularly the Convention on Biological Diversity. Regional cooperative eddies include:

three regional treaties on search and rescue, marine pollution preparedness and response and Arctic scientific cooperation; the 1973 Polar Bear Conservation Agreement; adoption in 2018 of the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the CAO; and coverage by the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) of a CAO segment. Future governance uncertainties will next be highlighted. Four main areas of murkiness include: sorting out the future of CAO fisheries governance; deciding on future steps within the IMO

to address CAO shipping; determining extended continental shelf boundaries in the Arctic and seabed development futures; and seeing how the new global agreement on marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) will apply to the CAO. The presentation will conclude with some key questions including, among others: What is the future of the Arctic Council and might it play roles in enhancing CAO governance cooperation? Will the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework targets influence future conservation measures for the CAO?

“Relational Approaches to Business Responsibilities for the Marine Environment”

- **Sara Seck**, Professor and Director, MELAW

In previous work I have explored the contours of a relational approach to legal analysis and applied this approach to the analysis of business responsibilities to respect human rights, in accordance with the 2011 UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Much of this previous work focused on the challenges created by extractive industries for environmental and climate justice, with particular attention to the rights of Indigenous peoples and intersectional gender justice. More recently, this evolving analysis has accounted for the implications of the UN General Assembly’s 2022 recognition of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, comprised of interdependent substantive, procedural and non-discrimination rights. In 2024, additional insights have emerged from the ITLOS Climate Advisory Opinion, despite the majority’s failure to explicitly integrate a human rights-based approach. The aim of this contribution is to explore how lessons from my past research, informed by recent developments – both hopeful (UNGA, ITLOS) - and challenging (Trump) - could and should inform the challenges facing the marine environment from business activities. Case studies to be considered include those designed to contribute to transformative climate action, such as marine carbon dioxide removal (mCDR), and innovations designed to respond to another fossil-fuel-related challenge – that of plastic pollution.

PANEL 4: ENVIRONMENT AND THE CHANGING CONTOURS OF PROPERTY AND PERSONHOOD

“Finding the Legal Person: Models, Methods, Benefits, and Framework for Assigning Legal Personhood to Sea Ice”

- **Sara Ross**, Associate Professor, MELAW

Numerous examples exist of invisible, intangible, and cultural entities that have been assigned legal personhood—ships, corporations, and so on. Increasingly, however, natural entities like water, land, and forests have also been assigned legal personhood in New Zealand, Canada, Peru, and Panama. Following these case studies, this paper investigates the assigning of legal personhood to sea ice, notably in the Arctic. The paper considers several examples of legal personhood as well as models for legal personhood, such as indirect versus direct legal personhood, passive versus active legal personhood, and bundle theory. The paper will also turn to the eight principles of IQ (Inuit Quajimajatuqangit), notably that of Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq—meaning respect and care for the land, animals, and the environment—in order to propose that the latter could be supported by the legal personhood of sea ice as a legal protection mechanism that resonates with Inuit principles and values.

“Coastal Protection in Nova Scotia: A Clash of Private Property Rights and Public Environmental Objectives”

- **Kevin Berk**, PhD Candidate, MELAW; Purdy Crawford Fellow

In 2019 the Nova Scotia legislature passed the Coastal Protection Act. The primary goal of the Act was to regulate damaging development and activity on the coastline. Given that 85% of Nova Scotia’s coast is privately owned, the Act would in effect mostly regulate private property owners. Upon passing, the Act was not immediately implemented in order to allow for public consultation to determine the scope and content of its regulations. After five years of public consultations the Government of Nova Scotia announced that the Act

would not be implemented and was instead to be replaced with a plan which relies on private property owners responsibly managing their land. This decision was made despite the Act being supported by over two-thirds of Nova Scotians. During this consultation period the Supreme Court of Canada's 2022 decision in *Annapolis Group Inc. v Halifax Regional Municipality* reformulated the law of constructive expropriation in Canada. The previous common law test was in part established by a leading case which affirmed Nova Scotia's ability to regulate privately owned beaches. According to the dissent in *Annapolis*, the majority's reformulation of the test "dramatically expands the potential liability of [governments] engaged in land use regulation in the public interest." Building upon this backdrop this paper seeks to examine (1) the tension between private property rights and coastal protection objectives in Nova Scotia, (2) whether the Act would have been the type of land use regulation that would be captured by the SCC's expansion of constructive taking law, and (3) whether the government's current coastal plan follows best practices for supporting the participation of private property owners in contributing to public environmental objectives. Ultimately it will be argued that given the prevalence of private ownership, effective coastal protection in Nova Scotia requires not only the prevention of irresponsible private property use, but also the active participation of private property owners.

"Private Property and Public Discourse: Industrial Animal Farming and the Environment"

- **Jodi Lazare**, Associate Professor, MELAW

In both Canada and the US, activists are regularly prosecuted and sometimes jailed for entering industrial animal farms to document the harm that farms cause both to animals and to the natural environment. Indeed, the climate consequences of industrial animal farming are far-reaching, but rarely discussed in conversations around industrial farming and environmental protection. This presentation brings together industrial animal farming, environmental harm, and the protection of private property, to suggest that property law, as it is traditionally understood and interpreted by legal authorities, no longer suits the reality of industrial farming and the consequent environmental degradation.

The offences with which activists are charged are primarily aimed at protecting private property — something the legal system takes for granted. But in protecting the private, these and similar offences inhibit meaningful discussion around animal agriculture, food production, and the environment — subjects that courts and scholars describe as legitimate matters of public debate. Indeed, the information that typically flows from this type of activism is fundamental to public discourse, the right to information on which to base consumer choices, and, importantly, democratic debate about the legalities of animal farming, food production, and environmental protections — that is, the stuff of free expression.

This presentation queries whether the private property paradigm, in which food production lives, serves an appropriate social function. It draws on progressive property law concepts to suggest that the role/purpose/function of private property in the common law may no longer be appropriate in the context of the current climate crisis.

SPECIAL LECTURE: MELP @50: A RETROSPECT OF CANADIAN MARITIME LAW AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROGRAMME'S MISSION

- **Aldo Chircop**, Professor, MELAW

The Marine Environmental Law Programme (MELP) at the Schulich School of Law was established in 1974 in response to legal education and research needs triggered by the United Nations Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment, 1972 and the convening of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, 1973-1982. Since then, international maritime law has been developed, often with significant Canadian inputs, into arguably one of the most effective fields of international law. In turn, Canadian maritime law experienced a total transformation from institutions still carrying a colonial heritage to a body of modern federal maritime law emulated by other jurisdictions. The MELP academic mission evolved over time to respond to the paradigmatic change. This presentation tells the story of how Canadian maritime law developed and evolved since the establishment of MELP and reflects on potential future legal development and implications for MELP's education mission.

PANEL 5: MULTI-LEVEL FISHERIES GOVERNANCE AND FOOD SECURITY

“Multilateral Fisheries Enforcement: Can Remote Sensing Technologies Strengthen the Prospects for more Effective Cooperation between States?”

- **Stuart Kaye**, Director of ANCORS at the University of Wollongong (virtual)

In recent years, there has been huge growth in the availability of remote sensing technologies that might be useful in fisheries enforcement. Such technologies include satellite imagery, improved vessel monitoring systems (VMS), long distance drones and the adaption of existing systems, such as Automatic Identification System (AIS) data. All of these technologies make it easier for States to detect illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. However, there has not been a similar growth in international cooperation in enforcement between States. This paper considers existing models for cooperation, and how these may be enhanced and strengthened through the use of remote sensing technology.

“Shellfish and Seaplants as Food: Lessons from and for Regulatory Reform”

- **Jamie Baxter**, Associate Professor, MELAW

New amendments this fall to Nova Scotia's Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act recognized for the first time that “fish harvesting, fish processing and aquaculture industries are integral to the food system,” as the frame for a suite of regulatory reforms for shellfish and seaplant aquaculture. As the only Canadian jurisdiction that currently acknowledges seafood as “food”, this change represents what could be a fundamental shift in how we approach aquaculture (and perhaps fisheries) regulation--particularly of small and medium-sized shellfish and seaplant farms that promise positive ecosystem benefits and are integral to rural and coastal economies. The presentation will trace key points in the history of aquaculture regulation in Nova Scotia, describe the processes of policy and legal advocacy that brought about the recent reforms, and discuss ongoing opportunities and challenges.

“International Fisheries and the Tangled Web of International Law”

- **Cecilia Engler**, Post-Doctoral Fellow, MELAW

In the face of the multiple crises affecting the natural environment and their dire consequences for societies and individuals, there is a growing awareness of the need for comprehensive solutions to Earth governance, including ocean governance. As a result, the law of the sea, biodiversity law, climate change law, and human rights law have become intertwined in the search for solutions. This evolution is evident in international fisheries law. In implementing the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and other relevant international instruments, States and regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) have expanded their mandates and actions to include the conservation of marine biodiversity, adaptation to climate change, and, to a lesser extent, the protection of human rights. This presentation describes and assesses this evolution and its challenges. In doing so, I also reflect on my journey with the Marine & Environmental Law Institute over the past twenty years.

“Bridging the Climate Finance Gap: Supporting Coastal LDCs and SIDS in Building Marine Resilience”

- **Loveth Ovedje**, PhD Candidate, MELAW

This presentation focuses on the underappreciated role of marine ecosystems in climate resilience, particularly within global climate finance frameworks. While much attention has been given to finance gaps for land-based climate adaptation and mitigation projects, marine ecosystems are critical to climate resilience but remain largely neglected. The Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance (ORRAA) is pioneering innovative financial mechanisms aimed at building resilience for coastal communities by driving significant investment into ocean and coastal resilience projects. With Canada’s contributions to ORRAA and its focus on deploying USD \$500 million into coastal adaptation projects by 2030 in coastal Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), this initiative exemplifies how marine-based climate solutions could enhance both environmental objectives and community resilience. By highlighting ORRAA’s model, the presentation would explore if this initiative reflected sufficient integration of ocean-focused climate finance to leverage the immense adaptive potential of marine ecosystems.

“From Dialogue to Mechanism? The Case for Thick Integration of Ocean-Climate Nexus in the Paris Agreement”

- **Patrícia Galvão Ferreira**, Associate Professor, MELAW

The UNFCCC Oceans and Climate Dialogue has emerged as a vital platform to address the interconnectedness of ocean health and climate change. This presentation will first assess the short history and current status of the Dialogue within the broader framework of international climate governance. The core of the presentation is an examination of the legal dimensions of the OC Dialogue, particularly the question whether the Dialogue should evolve into a formal mechanism under the Paris Agreement. This analysis will include procedural and substantive considerations, including the scope of existing mandates, principles of international environmental law, and the potential legal architecture for such a mechanism, including its integration with existing climate finance and technology frameworks, and reporting obligations.

“Forced Migration at Sea: State and Ship-Master Responsibilities and Responses”

- **Constance MacIntosh**, Professor of Law, Schulich School of Law

Environmental, climatic and civil stressors have resulted in enormous human displacement. This has meant there are growing numbers of people fleeing not just economic deprivation and persecution, but also starvation. In some but not all instances human rights law may provide a shield or a location of sanctuary for these people. But human rights law is often linked to state actions, and to territoriality, and those who are displaced are in many instances traversing the ocean or seas. The ocean is a zone where few state actors operate directly, and instead the law of the sea dictates expectations and obligations for those on vessels. The law of the sea, though, was not imagined as a mechanism for allocating responsibilities and obligations in situations of mass displacement. Rather, it was born out of the practices and experiences of those who are upon the ocean for commercial or recreational purposes. This paper considers the relationship between these legal instruments, how they are complementary as well as different, and the impact of the current global political environment on their interpretation.

“Fundamental (In)justice and the Existential Threat of Climate Change”

- **Erin Dobbelsteyn**, Schulich Fellow 2024-2025, Research Associate, MELAW; PhD Candidate, University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law

Canadian courts are being increasingly called upon to adjudicate the constitutionality of government climate action. To date, five challenges invoking sections 7 and 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms have been launched against governments' inadequate approaches to tackling climate change. Section 7 claims face two particularly steep hurdles: persuading courts to engage with perceived “positive rights claims” and identification of a principle of fundamental justice with which the government has failed to comply in order to establish a violation of section 7's right to life, liberty, and security of the person.

To overcome these interrelated hurdles, litigants must rely on jurisprudence that is confusing in its inconsistencies and its lack of judicial transparency. Taken as a whole, however, this jurisprudence reveals that judges have the discretion and legal tools to adjudicate climate Charter claims and to find governments' anemic responses to an unfolding planetary catastrophe unconstitutional. The real question is whether courts will have the courage to step up and affirm the Charter's role in confronting the existential threat of climate change.

This article explores the muddled state of the jurisprudence on the principles of fundamental justice and reviews how litigants have approached and courts have responded to these section 7 barriers in Charter climate cases thus far. It proposes a blueprint for overcoming judicial resistance to adjudicating climate rights and the barriers to section 7 redress in ongoing and future climate cases through a modification of the conception and analysis of the principles of fundamental justice.

“Climate Litigation: Is it Worth it?”

- **Camille Cameron**, Professor, MELAW

There has been a significant increase in climate change litigation over the past decade. In July 2023, the United Nations Environment Programme reported that as of November 2022, there were 2,180 climate change litigation cases underway throughout the world, a number 2.5 times higher than five years earlier. The cases are distributed across at least 65 jurisdictions, up from 24 in 2017, and 39 in 2020. More recent statistics indicate that the number of cases continues to increase, although at a slower pace than previously.

There are various reasons for resort to the courts to adjudicate climate disputes. One is dissatisfaction with the failure (or lack) of other regulatory processes to deal meaningfully with climate change challenges. Another reason is that the complexity of climate change challenges calls for a variety of responses. A factor that has the potential to be both a reason for and a result of climate change litigation is the capacity of litigation to build or strengthen social and political movements and networks, and to communicate broadly about the dangers of climate change and the need for effective responses.

The presenter is a co-editor, with Professor Patricia Galvao-Ferreria and Riley Weyman, of a book in progress, *Elgar's Cases in Context: Climate Change Litigation*. The primary aims of this book are to offer a critical examination of the features and nuances of emblematic cases and to explain how courts around the world are breaking new ground and dealing with the novel arguments and claims being brought to them in climate change cases. In this session I will report on the overall themes that have emerged from the Global South and North cases that make up our study, with a focus on the questions: was this litigation “worth it”? If yes, how? If not, why not?

“Repeat Players and the Rise of Environmental Authoritarianism: A New Era in Climate Litigation”

- **Kolawole Abiri**, PhD Candidate, MELAW

In his 1974 article, Marc Galanter introduced the concept of repeat players, a socio-legal approach, to illustrate how certain actors in society repeatedly and strategically engage with the courts to establish and maintain regulatory outcomes favourable to their preferences and long-term visions. Most studies have concentrated on corporations and government institutions with established transnational structures as repeat players, who have the ability to significantly undermine local mobilizations or prevent social change. As these conventional repeat players characteristically play for the rules, use litigation to control the content of the law, and set future precedents, they weaken democratic deliberations by over-legalizing decision-making that will engender repeat litigation. However, the concept of repeat players is neither a homogeneous class nor a permanent status. With the growth of the environmental movement in the 1970s, inspired by the works of naturalists, conservationists, and preservationists, many transnational environmental defenders and climate justice movements have emerged to enhance the diversity of repeat players and to challenge the hegemonic potentiality of the classical repeat players. This research builds on Galanter’s notion of repeat players and seeks to examine (1) the evolution of transnational environmental defenders and climate justice movements as repeat players in climate litigation, (2) whether they fit into the description of the classical repeat players, and (3) whether the non-traditional repeat players are not limited in their scope and effectiveness to achieve results similar to other repeat players in climate governance.

PANEL 8: BUSINESS IN THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT: NORMATIVE ADAPTATIONS AND INCLUSIVITY

“Reflections on a Social-Ecological Justice Framework, Fifteen Years Later”

- **Jay L. Batongbacal**, Professor, University of the Philippines College of Law; Director of the Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea of the U.P. Law Center

In 2010, my dissertation proposed a social-ecological justice framework for ocean energy technologies centered on participatory decision-making, equitable benefit distribution, and ecological sustainability. A decade and a half later, developments in the extractives industries in energy, fishing, and minerals, and changes in the social and ecological landscapes, necessitate a critical re-assessment of the framework's viability and relevance in a world of increasingly extreme climate-related events, heightened demands for natural resources, and intensifying reliance on technological solutions to social problems. Notably, the concept of participatory decision-making appears to have waxed and waned, as practical implementation is making public consultations routinized and perfunctory and remains hindered by persistent power imbalances and limited community engagement. The pursuit of equitable benefit distribution faces ongoing challenges, as access to resources and livelihood opportunities diminish in the shadow of urgent projects. The escalating effects of climate change, pollution, and over-exploitation have also significantly altered the ecological context, demanding a more robust and adaptive approach to ecological sustainability. Key lessons learned include the crucial importance of cultural impacts, the dynamic interplay of social and ecological conditions spread over time, and the need for nuanced understanding of the intersections between them. Alternating bouts of judicial conservatism and activism complicate the legal parameters, and challenges remain in addressing systemic inequalities and foresting genuine community empowerment. On the brighter side, realization of the need for forward and sensitive marine spatial planning in the renewables sector indicate a potential for some improvement. Moving forward, it is essential to prioritize the integration of social-ecological justice principles into policy and practice. This requires strengthening participatory governance mechanisms, ensuring equitable access to benefits, and adopting a precautionary approach to ecological sustainability. Future research and action must emphasize collaborative approaches in planning as much as decision-making, appropriate means of incorporating genuine indigenous knowledge, and fostering interdisciplinary dialogue to address the complex challenges of ocean resource management. This reflection seeks to ensure the continuing relevance of a social-ecological justice framework, while highlighting the need for continuous adaptation and innovation, especially in the renewable energy sector which promises massive growth within the next decade.

“From Theory to Practice: Integrating Ecological Normativity into Offshore Wind and Marine Spatial Planning”

- **Mohamad Alikhani**, Research Fellow, MELAW

The development of offshore wind energy (OWE) should be grounded in ecological integrity and facilitated through marine spatial planning (MSP) as an operational and legal tool. Ecological normativity—the duty to protect ecosystems and their integrity—can guide both MSP and the regulation of OWE. Ecological normativity requires that the law recognizes and enforces ecological limits, establishing a non-negotiable baseline for decision-making. MSP, as a participatory and integrative planning process, should reinforce ecological sustainability while accommodating the spatial and temporal allocation of marine uses, including offshore renewable energy. However, Canada’s existing legal and policy frameworks, such as the Blue Economy Regulatory Roadmap, lack statutory obligations to implement MSP. It is argued that amending the *Oceans Act* to mandate MSP would ensure legal authority and coherence across federal-provincial jurisdictions. Five key foundations are proposed to facilitate an effective regulatory framework for OWE in Canada: (1) MSP should apply the ecosystem approach; (2) integrated planning must cover all marine areas; (3) federal-provincial cooperation is essential in Canada’s federal system; (4) sector-specific policies and plans—such as OWE sectoral policies and plans—should be created to designate priority zones; and (5) legal frameworks, including the current Canada-Nova Scotia offshore energy regulatory framework should align with such policies and plans within MSP. Such a framework for OWE, embedding ecological normativity into MSP and OWE regulation, offers a pathway toward legal arrangements that are not only functionally effective but also ecologically sustainable.

“Business and Human Rights Treaty—A Hard Look at Legitimacy”

- **Akinwumi Ogunranti**, Assistant Professor of Law, University of Manitoba

In 2014, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution to develop a treaty to protect rightsholders against corporate human rights and environmental abuses. The treaty is being discussed at an Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group (OEIGWG), a consultative forum that allows stakeholders, including states, civil society groups, and industry associations, to contribute to the final draft of the treaty. After a decade of OEIGWG sessions, this article assesses the legitimacy of the UN’s deliberative framework. Using a democratic deliberative theory and analytical framework, it argues that it is difficult to consider the OEIGWG legitimate regarding its procedural input (inclusion, consensus, transparency, and fairness) and substantive output (coverage, efficacy, and enforcement). Given this realization, this article concludes that the OEIGWG is currently in a legitimacy crisis. It then invites us to consider alternatives that lead beyond the UN.

BIOGRAPHIES

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema

Deputy Executive Director, UNEP

Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations



Elizabeth Maruma Mrema is Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. Ms. Mrema was appointed to this role by the UN Secretary-General in 2022.

Between 2020 and 2022, Ms. Mrema served as the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity. In this role, Ms. Mrema shepherded global consensus on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, a landmark agreement to protect and restore the natural world on which humanity depends.

For over two decades, Ms. Mrema served in various capacities in UNEP, including as the Director of the Law Division and the Deputy Director of the Ecosystems Division. Between 2009 to 2012, she served as the Executive Secretary of the Secretariat for the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, Acting Executive Secretary of the Agreement on the

Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (UNEP/ASCOBANS), and Interim Executive Secretary of the UNEP/Gorilla Agreement, all based in Bonn, Germany.

A lawyer and career diplomat Ms. Mrema has received several awards, including the Nicolas Robinson Award for Excellence in Environmental Law from the IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law in 2021; and the Kew International Award in 2022. In 2023, Ms. Mrema was included in Time magazine's 100 most influential people's list and the Financial Times 25 most influential women list.

A national of the United Republic of Tanzania, before joining the UN, Ms. Mrema worked with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Sherry Pictou, Associate Professor of Law and Management; Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Governance (Tier 2), Faculty Associate, MELAW



Dr. Sherry Pictou is a Mi'kmaq woman from L'sitkuk (water cuts through high rocks) known as Bear River First Nation, Nova Scotia. She is an Associate Professor in the Faculties of Law and Management (Public and International Affairs) at Dalhousie University. Dr. Pictou holds a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Governance and is a Co-Principal Investigator in a New Frontiers Research Fund (NFRF) grant: Ārramāt: Biodiversity Conservation and the Health and Well-being of Indigenous Peoples (2022). She also serves as the District Chief for the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq. Dr. Pictou served on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Task Force on Indigenous and Local Knowledge 2019-2023. Dr. Pictou is also a former Chief for her community and the former Co-Chair of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples.

Vu Hai Dang, Expert at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam



Vu Hai Dang is a researcher in international law. He holds a JSD in international environmental law from Dalhousie University and a Professional Master in international trade law from Paris V University. He is an Expert at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam. He heads the Centre for ASEAN and Maritime Cooperation of the East Sea Institute. His area of expertise includes international law, law of the sea, and international environmental law with a geographical focus on Southeast Asia and the South China Sea. He has experience working in the fields of private practice, civil service, diplomacy, and academia.

Olga Koubrak, Post-doctoral Fellow, MELAW



Olga is a postdoctoral fellow at the Marine and Environmental Law Institute at Dalhousie University, where her current research looks at transboundary fisheries management in the context of climate change. She holds a PhD from Dalhousie University and has published on ocean-related issues at both national and international levels. Olga also leads SeaLife Law, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of endangered marine species. Through SeaLife, Olga has been an observer at a number of intergovernmental organizations in the Caribbean Region for over eight years, advocating for better domestic implementation of international obligations and improved protections for sea turtles, sawfishes, and sharks.

Tony Puthucherril, Professor of Law, O.P. Jindal Global Law School, India



Tony George Puthucherril is a Professor of Law at the O.P. Jindal Global Law School, India, where he teaches International Environmental Law, Ocean Law & Policy and International and National Perspectives on River Law. He is also a Senior Research Fellow with the International Ocean Institute, Canada. Dr. George holds a Ph.D. in Sea Level Rise, Integrated Coastal Zone Management, & Coastal Law and an LL.M. in Maritime Law from Dalhousie University. Among his publications, the two major ones are – “From Shipbreaking to Sustainable Ship Recycling” (Martinus Nijhoff, 2010) , which has been acclaimed as “the work” on this subject and “Towards Sustainable Coastal Development” (Martinus Nijhoff, 2014), “a book that should be read by coastal policymakers and decision-makers from all countries”.

Devdatta Mukherjee, PhD Candidate, MELAW



Devdatta Mukherjee is a PhD candidate at the Schulich School of Law and a Graduate Research and Writing Assistant at the MELAW. She has an MPhil in International Legal Studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She obtained an LLM from the Indian Law Institute, specializing in human rights and humanitarian law. Devdatta was a Nippon Foundation Fellow at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in 2022-'23. She worked as a legal officer with the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, at its headquarters in New Delhi, for more than five years. Prior to that, she had taught international trade law for a semester at a university in India. Law of the sea, international environmental law and international trade law constitute her areas of research interest.

Keith MacMaster, Lawyer, Weldon McInnis Barristers and Solicitors



Keith MacMaster, a proud Cape Bretoner, obtained his Bachelor of Laws from Dalhousie University in 2003, his MBA from the Richard Ivey School of Business at Western University in 2007, and Doctorate in Laws (PhD) in 2023. He has practiced law in Nova Scotia and Ontario and has also been a licensed financial planner, working for law firms and financial institutions. Keith joined Weldon McInnis in 2023, after completing his doctoral dissertation.

He currently practices in the areas of corporate and commercial law, environmental, and commercial real estate. He has experience in share and asset transactions, financial services, bankruptcy matters, and complex contractual arrangements.

Keith has also taught part time at the Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University. He has taught courses in bankruptcy and insolvency, property law, environmental law, business and investment law, professional ethics, and the law of trusts. He has published articles in peer reviewed journals on topics such as sustainable investing, seabed mining, and is currently writing an article on bankruptcy law in Nova Scotia.

David VanderZwaag, Professor Emeritus, MELAW



David VanderZwaag is a Professor Emeritus of Law at the Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University. He is a former Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) in Ocean Law and Governance, as well as former director and associate director of the Marine & Environmental Law Institute.

Professor VanderZwaag is a member of the International Council of Environmental Law as well as the IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL). From 2004-2018, he co-chaired the WCEL's Specialist Group on Oceans, Coasts and Coral Reefs.

Dr. VanderZwaag has authored over 150 papers in the marine and environmental law field. His most recent co-edited book publications are: *Research Handbook on Ocean Acidification Law and Policy* (Edward Elgar, 2021); *Research Handbook on Polar Law* (Edward Elgar, 2020); *Aquaculture Law and Policy: Global, Regional and National Perspectives* (Edward Elgar, 2016); *Routledge Handbook of National and Regional Ocean Policies* (Routledge, 2015); *Polar Oceans Governance in an Era of Environmental Change* (Edward Elgar, 2014); and *Recasting Transboundary Fisheries Management Arrangements in Light of Sustainability Principles: Canadian and International Perspectives* (Martinus Nijhoff, 2010).

His educational background includes PhD (1994, University of Wales, Cardiff), LL.M. (1982, Dalhousie Law School), J.D. (1980, University of Arkansas Law School), M.Div. (1974, Princeton Theological Seminary), and B.A. (1971, Calvin College).

Sara Seck, Professor, Yogis & Keddy Chair in Human Rights Law, and Director, MELAW



Professor Dr. Sara Seck is the Director of the Marine & Environmental Law Institute (MELAW). She was appointed as the Yogis & Keddy Chair in Human Rights Law in 2021. Her research focuses on the relationship between international human rights law, environment, and business law, with attention to the rights of local and Indigenous communities, intersectional gender justice, and global south perspectives on sustainable development. She has researched and published extensively on home state duties and business responsibilities in the extractive industries context. Related research considers how insights from feminist and relational theorists should inform approaches to environmental and climate justice.

Since joining MELAW, her research has increasingly integrated attention to the marine environment, including at the climate oceans nexus. She became a co-editor of the *Ocean Yearbook* in 2021. She is co-editor of three books: *Global Environmental Change and Innovation in International Law* (CUP 2021); *The Cambridge Handbook of Environmental Justice and Sustainable Development* (CUP 2021); *Research Handbook on Climate Change Law and Loss & Damage* (EE 2021).

She is originally from St. John's NL, and has a pre-law professional background in music. She studied law in Ontario where she articulated with a Bay Street business law firm. After completing a PhD in law at Osgoode Hall Law School, she joined Western University in 2007, and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2013. She joined the Schulich School of Law in July 2017.

Sara Ross, Associate of Law; Associate Director, Marine & Environmental Law Institute; Director, Marine & Environmental Law Program



Dr. Sara Ross is an Ontario-licensed lawyer and Associate Professor at Schulich, in addition to the Associate Director of MELAW, Director of MELP, and Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Dalhousie Legal Aid Service. A former acting Associate Dean of Research, Dr. Ross received an Excellence Award in the category of Female Trailblazer of the Year from the 2024 Canadian Law Awards. She is the author of the *Law and Intangible Cultural Heritage in the City* (Routledge, 2019), co-author of *Private International Law in Common Law Canada: Cases, Text and Materials, 5th Edition* (Emond Publishing, 2022), and author of the forthcoming book *Nowhere to Go: Housing Heritage, Hotels, and Homelessness* (Cambridge University Press, 2026). She is also the co-Editor-in-Chief of the peer-reviewed journal *Canadian Legal Education Annual Review*, Treasurer of the Canadian

Association of Law Teachers, and Program Chair of the Association of Law, Property & Society.

Kevin Berk, PhD Candidate, MELAW; Purdy Crawford Fellow



Kevin Berk is a doctoral candidate at the Schulich School of Law. Kevin holds a JD from the University of Windsor's Faculty of Law, and an LLM from Osgoode Hall Law School. His PhD research focuses on the intersection between environmental, treaty, and property law, with a particular focus on the role of Nova Scotian private property owners in achieving reconciliatory and environmental objectives in Mi'kma'ki. Since beginning his PhD in 2020 Kevin has been able to teach a wide variety of courses including undergraduate, first-year law, upper-year law, intensives, and moot competitions. Kevin served as a Schulich Fellow during the 2023-2024 school year and as a Purdy Crawford Fellow during the 2024-2025 school year.

Jodi Lazare, Associate Professor of Law; Associate Dean, Academic, Faculty Associate, MELAW



Dr. Jodi Lazare is an associate professor at the Schulich School of law and serves as the associate dean (academic). She holds law degrees in both Civil Law and Common Law from the University of Ottawa, and graduate degrees in Law (LL.M. & D.C.L.) from McGill University, both supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Prior to joining Schulich Law as a visiting Schulich Fellow during her doctoral studies, Jodi completed her articles as a clerk to the Hon. Justice Michael Moldaver at the Supreme Court of Canada.

Jodi's research and teaching interests are in Family Law, Constitutional Law, and Animal Law. She has research on the judicial use of non-legislated instruments in family law, the legal status of companion animals upon family breakdown, and the constitutionality of legislative efforts to suppress animal rights advocacy. She

is currently researching and writing about progressive property law as it applies to private property where animals are farmed for food.

Naiomi Metallic, Associate Professor of Law; Chancellor's Chair in Aboriginal Law and Policy; Aboriginal Law Certificate Coordinator, Faculty Associate, MELAW



She hails from the Listuguj Mi'gmaq First Nation located on the Gaspé Coast of Quebec, known as the Gespegewagi district of Mi'kma'ki. She speaks English, French and is becoming fluent Mi'gmaq (she has been taking weekly lessons since May 2018). After nearly 10 years of a very rewarding practice in Aboriginal law, she decided to make the move to academia to continue her work for First Nations in a different way — through teaching, writing, and speaking about the issues facing Indigenous peoples in Canada and how the law can be a tool for reconciliation and improving the lives of Indigenous peoples.

Cheryl Simon, Assistant Professor, MELAW



Cheryl Simon is an Assistant Professor who teaches Property and Special Issues in Aboriginal Law and Indigenous Governance at the law school. She is a proud Mi'kmaq woman from Epekwitk (PEI) with extensive experience in community-based policy development. She completed her BA in Native Studies from the University of Lethbridge and a law degree from the University of Victoria. She also studied Maori law and comparative Indigenous studies in New Zealand. She completed an LLM with a constitutional specialty at Osgoode law school in 2020. After briefly practicing law, Simon worked as manager of Governance Advisory Services with a national organization. She worked with First Nations communities across the country, assisting in developing governance models based on traditional systems before opening her own consulting business. Simon moved on to work for Mi'gmawe 'l Tplu'taqnn, a Treaty rights implementation organization, while teaching courses on identity law with Cape Breton University.

Norm Letalik, Counsel, Metcalf and Company



Norm Letalik was a partner in the Toronto office of Canada's largest law firm, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. For over 25 years Norm practiced at BLG as a litigator in the marine, aviation, automotive and insurance sectors defending domestic and global clients. He formed and headed BLG's Automotive Practice Group and at times was the national head of BLG's Product Liability, Arbitration and ADR, International and IT Practice Groups. He was the Toronto Head of the Marine Practice Group and was a member of the Aviation Practice Group. His practice consisted of defending shipowners and ship repairers, airlines, air frame and component manufacturers and airports. He defended auto manufacturers, distributors and dealers and other manufacturers and distributors in product litigation and class actions. He has been recognized by Best Lawyers in Canada for product liability defence, Lexpert for Shipping and Maritime Law and Who's Who Legal: Shipping.

Following his retirement from BLG, Norm was General Counsel, Corporate Secretary and a Corporate Director of Volkswagen Group Canada Inc., where he was responsible for all legal and regulatory matters and was the Chief Privacy and Compliance Officer. He also served as: Vice President, General Counsel and acted as Chief Privacy and Compliance Officer for Audi Canada Inc.; General Counsel to Automobili Lamborghini Canada; and Vice President and Corporate Secretary to Bentley Motors Canada, Ltd. Norm was also a Director of the Global Automakers of Canada industry group.

Prior to entering the practice of law, Norm was a professor at Dalhousie Law School and a Research Associate and Assistant Director of the Dalhousie Ocean Studies Programme, and a Visiting Fellow at the National University of Singapore Law School where he focused on Marine and Shipping Law. He has also lectured as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Toronto's Global Professional LL.M. Program and lectured at Queen's University Law School. He is the author of more than 50 legal publications and has been a speaker at countless legal forums and conferences over his career.

Norm has been a Barrister, Solicitor and Notary in Ontario since 1989 and was called to the Rolls as a Solicitor in England and Wales in 1998. Norm was the managing partner of the London, UK office of Borden DuMoulin Howard Gervais from 1996-98.

Aldo Chircop, Professor, MELAW

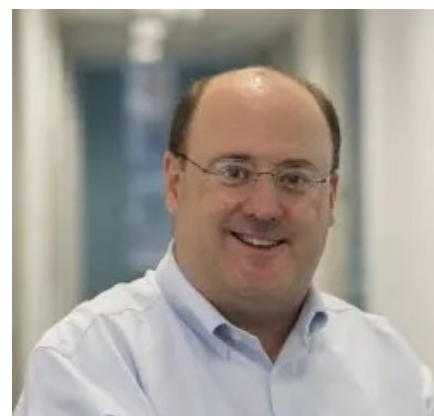


Aldo Chircop, JSD, is Professor of Law and former Canada Research Chair in Maritime Law and Policy (Tier I) at the Schulich School of Law. His research interests are in the fields of Canadian and international maritime law, international law of the sea, international environmental law, and Arctic shipping. Professor Chircop's career has spanned academic, government, non-governmental organizations and UN specialized agencies. He is currently Chair of the International Working Group on Polar Shipping of the Comité Maritime International and has advised several governments, intergovernmental organizations, and law firms on law of the sea and maritime law matters. In the academic domain, he was director of several institutes, including the International Ocean Institute (Malta), Mediterranean Institute (University of Malta), and Marine & Environmental Law Institute (Dalhousie University), and was Canadian Chair in Marine Environment Protection at the IMO World Maritime

University in Sweden.

Professor Chircop has received several academic and professional awards, including in maritime law by the Canadian Bar Association. He has published extensively, including the leading co-edited text on *Canadian Maritime Law* (Irwin Law, 2016; A Chircop, W Moreira, H Kindred, E Gold, eds). His most recent books are: *Area-Based Management of Shipping: Canadian and International Perspectives* (Springer Nature, 2024; A Chircop, F Goerlandt, R Pelot, and C Aporta, eds); *The International Convention on the Prevention of Pollution from Ships: A Commentary* (Elgar, 2025; H Ringbom and A Chircop, eds.). Professor Chircop was also co-editor of the *Ocean Yearbook* (Brill) from volumes 13 to 38.

Stuart Kaye, Director of ANCORS at the University of Wollongong



Stuart Kaye has been Director and Distinguished Professor of Law within the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security at the University of Wollongong since 2013. He is a former Dean and Winthrop Professor of Law at the University of Western Australia and held a Chair in Law at the University of Melbourne from 2006 to 2010. He was Dean and Professor of Law at the University of Wollongong between 2002 and 2006. He holds degrees in arts and law from the University of Sydney, winning the Law Graduates' Association Medal, and a doctorate in law from Dalhousie University.

He has an extensive research interest in the law of the sea and international law. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 2007 and of the Australian Academy of Law in 2011. He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours for service to international law and tertiary education.

Jamie Baxter, Associate Professor, Associate Dean (Research), Faculty Associate, MELAW



Jamie Baxter is an Associate Professor and the Associate Dean (Research) at the Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University, where he works and teaches on legal and policy aspects of land, farming, and food. Before studying law, Jamie completed his graduate studies in economics, focusing on rural and community development, and was a visiting Fulbright Scholar at the Appalachian Center, University of Kentucky. After law school, he articulated with a solo practice in Toronto specializing in cases of state and institutional misconduct, civil rights and Indigenous rights, and taught part-time in the Department of Food, Agriculture and Resource Economics at the University of Guelph. Jamie then clerked at the Federal Court of Canada before returning to graduate studies in law.

Cecilia Engler, Post-Doctoral Fellow, MELAW



Cecilia Engler is a Postdoctoral Fellow for the “Transforming Climate Action Through Law” project at the Marine & Environmental Law Institute, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University. She holds a PhD (Law) and a Master of Laws (LLM) from Dalhousie University and a law degree from the Universidad de Concepción, Chile. Her research focuses on international, comparative and national ocean law and policy, in particular international fisheries law, the ecosystem approach, aquaculture law, and ocean-based climate change mitigation and adaptation. She is the recipient of a Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship, Izaak Walton Killam Predoctoral Scholarships, and several academic awards, including the Governor General’s Gold Medal in Humanities and Social Sciences for her LLM thesis. She has been appointed as a legal expert in the field of fisheries by the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

Loveth Ovedje, PhD Candidate, MELAW



Loveth Ovedje is a PhD candidate at the Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University, specializing in climate finance law. Her research explores transformative climate finance mechanisms for accelerating renewable energy deployment in developing countries. She has served as a Research Assistant on environmental law/climate finance projects and was a Peer Reviewer for the Renewables 2022 Global Status Report, contributing insights on renewable energy governance in Nigeria.

Loveth has presented her research at various academic and policy forums, focusing on the intersection of climate finance, law, and sustainable development. She is part of the OpenThink Program, writing extensively on global climate governance.

Loveth was also a finalist in the 3-Minute Thesis (3MT) competition, where she effectively communicated her complex research to a broad audience.

Patrícia Galvão Ferreira, Associate Professor, MELAW



Dr. Patrícia Galvão Ferreira is an Associate Professor with the Marine & Environmental Law Institute at Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University. She received her SJD from the University of Toronto Faculty of Law, together with an interdisciplinary doctoral degree in dynamics of global change from the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy. She holds an LLM in international human rights law from the Faculty of Law at Notre Dame University and an LLB from the Federal University of Bahia in Brazil.

Dr. Galvão Ferreira previously served as assistant professor and academic director of the Transnational Environmental Law and Policy Clinic at the Faculty of Law at the University of Windsor, where she was cross appointed to the Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research/GLIER. At GLIER she worked alongside scientists on the environment and policy interface. Dr. Galvao

Ferreira's research and teaching are informed by her previous 20-year work in non-governmental organizations in the areas of human rights and economic justice, with focus in Latin America (particularly Brazil) and Southern Africa. She currently serves as the chairperson of the Brazil advisory board for the Center for Justice and International Law/CEJIL, where she worked as a human rights lawyer for 5 years.

Dr. Galvão Ferreira's research centres on transnational environmental law and justice, with particular focus on international climate law, climate justice, climate finance, and sustainable food systems.

Constance MacIntosh, Professor of Law, Schulich School of Law



Constance MacIntosh is a Professor with Dalhousie University's Schulich School of Law. She researches and teaches in the area of immigration and refugee law, and also in health policy, especially as it impacts on individuals and population groups and communities who may fall into jurisdictional gaps or disputes. She was the Director of Dalhousie's Health Law Institute, Acting Director for the MacEachen Institute for Public Policy and Governance, and a Domain Leader with the Atlantic Metropolis Project. Constance has served on expert panels concerning Aboriginal food security and the regulation of hydraulic fracturing. Her research is specifically informed by concerns about health justice and the role of legal categories in creating and perpetuating vulnerabilities or exclusions. She has been teaching and writing in migration law for about 20 years, on refugees and citizenship, and more recently on the

relationship between the law of the sea and asylum law. She has continued to develop a focus on international law concerning the rights of Indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities, with recent publications highlighting how to interpret and implement the CRPD and UNDRIP as complementary instruments.

Erin Dobbelsteyn, Schulich Fellow 2024-2025, Research Associate, MELAW; PhD Candidate, University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law



Erin is currently completing her PhD in environmental law at the University of Ottawa. She holds a BSc in Neuroscience from McGill University, a JD from Dalhousie's Schulich School of Law with a specialization in health law and policy, and an LLM in Global Sustainability and Environmental Law from the University of Ottawa. Before beginning her graduate studies, Erin practiced health law and professional regulation in Toronto for half a decade. As a PhD candidate, she is engaged in research and community initiatives related to environmental rights, climate justice, and public and planetary health. She represented Friends of the Earth Canada before the Ontario Superior Court of Justice and Court of Appeal as an intervener in the human rights-based climate *Charter* challenge: *Mathur v Ontario*. For the past two years, she has taught torts and a health law & policy seminar at the Schulich School of Law as a Schulich Fellow.

Camille Cameron KC, Professor, MELAW



Camille began her career in private practice in a commercial law firm in Halifax, Nova Scotia where she specialized in civil litigation. While in practice she was a frequent presenter at continuing legal education seminars and bar admissions courses and taught Civil Trial Practice as a sessional lecturer. After ten years of law practice, she obtained an LLM degree at the University of Cambridge and then took up an academic appointment in Hong Kong. Prior to joining the Schulich School of Law as Dean, she held academic posts at the University of Windsor, Canada and the University of Melbourne, Australia where she served terms as Associate Dean and as Director of the Civil Justice Research Group.

Her interests in comparative law and legal institutions in post-conflict societies led her to Cambodia in 1996 where she worked with a human rights group training lay criminal defenders and judges. She has worked as a consultant on similar international development projects in various countries, including Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Mongolia, China, Thailand, and Indonesia. Camille has served on numerous committees dealing with academic and senior administrative appointments and promotion, reviews of academic departments and faculties, teaching quality, and university governance. She has been the Chair and a member of the Board of Governors of Legal Aid Windsor, Chair of the Advisory Board of Community Legal Aid Windsor, a member of the Board of Directors of Hiatus House, and a member of the Independent Advisory Board on Supreme Court of Canada Judicial Appointments. She has been a Visiting Professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Peoples' University (Beijing) and the University of Oxford. Camille's current research focuses on class actions, climate change litigation, and litigation funding.

Kolawole Abiri, PhD Candidate, MELAW



Kolawole is a PhD candidate at the Schulich School of Law. His research focuses on climate change laws and policies, climate litigation, intersections between climate change and energy, climate and environmental justice, impact assessment, international environmental law, and how to use the mechanism of impact assessment to achieve sustainable development goals. Kolawole holds a Master of Laws from Uit The Arctic University of Norway, a Master of Legal Science from Uppsala University (Sweden), a Master of International and Comparative Law from the University of Eastern Finland, and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Ilorin (Nigeria). Kolawole also has over 22 years of litigation experience in Nigeria and has represented clients in civil and criminal litigations before all the superior courts in Nigeria, including the Supreme Court of Nigeria and the Court of Appeal. In addition to his research, Kolawole also teaches (on a part-time basis) *Law and Ethics for Chemical Engineers*, *Introduction to Environmental Law*, and *Law in its National and International Context*, all at Dalhousie University.

Jay L. Batongbacal, Professor, University of the Philippines College of Law; Director of the Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea of the U.P. Law Center



Jay L Batongbacal is a lawyer with degrees in Political Science and Law from the University of the Philippines, as well as Master of Marine Management and Doctor in the Science of Law, both from Dalhousie University (Canada). He has worked extensively on maritime affairs since 1997. Dr. Batongbacal was legal advisor to the Philippine delegation that successfully pursued the Philippines' claim to a continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles in the Benham Rise Region before the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and the successful application before the International Maritime Organization for the designation of the Tubbataha Reef Natural Park Particularly Sensitive Sea Area. Presently, he is a full Professor at the University of the Philippines College of Law, chairs its Graduate Studies Committee which oversees the College's LLM Program, and serves as Director of the Institute for

Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea of the U.P. Law Center.

Mohamad Alikhani, PhD, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University



Mohamad Alikhani's research interests include energy law, climate change law, ecological law, sustainability, and marine spatial planning. His PhD research examined how Canadian laws can be improved to better support the development of offshore wind energy, using ecological sustainability as the guiding theoretical framework. Drawing on principles of international law and a comparative analysis of national legal systems and practices, his work proposes reforms to strengthen the legal foundations for offshore renewable energy development in Canada.

Akinwumi Ogunranti, Assistant Professor of Law, University of Manitoba



Dr. Akinwumi Ogunranti (Akin) is an Assistant Professor of law at the University of Manitoba. He earned his LLB from the University of Ilorin and was called to the Nigerian Bar. He practiced law in a full-service commercial law firm for three years before starting his graduate studies. Akin earned his LLM and Ph.D. degrees at the Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University. His Ph.D. thesis is titled “Africa’s Contribution to the Development of the Norm of Corporate Responsibility to Respect Human Rights.” Dr. Ogunranti writes and publishes in the business and human rights field, focusing broadly on corporate accountability relating to human rights, climate, and the environment. His research covers thematic issues involving global governance, international dispute resolution, international investment law, and conflict of laws.

Before joining Robson Hall, Akin was an Assistant Professor and Crawford Fellow at the Schulich School of Law. He joined the teaching faculty at Schulich Law as a professor in 2019. He taught first and upper-year courses, including contracts, professional responsibility, business and human rights, and legal ethics. He has received many awards, including the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia entrance scholarship, the Dean Ronald St. John MacDonald Graduate Fellowship in Law, the Schulich Fellowship, and the Crawford Fellowship.

SUMMARY REPORT

During the 2024-2025 academic year, the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University celebrated the 50th anniversary of its Marine & Environmental Law Program (MELP) and the 20th anniversary of its Marine & Environmental Law Institute (MELAW). As the *grand finale* to anniversary celebrations held throughout the year, MELAW hosted a 1½ day hybrid conference on *Marine and Environmental Law: Retrospect and Prospects* on May 20-21, 2025. The Conference, held in the Weldon Law Building, provided an opportunity to reflect on the origin story and journey of the MELP teaching specializations and MELAW as a research centre housed within the Schulich School of Law. The presentations inspired discussions on some of the novel but profound challenges which problematize the current legal framework on marine and environmental governance and encouraged deliberations on possible solutions through innovative approaches and inter-regime interactions.

The event featured many MELAW faculty, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students, and prominent alumni reflecting on the past, present, and future of marine law and environmental law, speaking in 8 panels on a variety of topics on marine and environmental law and a special lecture on maritime law. In a unique format, most of the panels attempted to capture the presentations of and conversation among three panellists - a prominent expert sharing their/her/his experience, a mid-career academic/ professional traversing the domain, and the voice of a young scholar.

Elizabeth Mrema, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and a Dal alumna (LLM '90), delivered the keynote address. She related extensively to her more than two decades of experience at the United Nations, playing a crucial role in global environmental law and policymaking, and the management and administration of multilateral environmental processes, while speaking on *The History and Future of Marine and Environmental Law in the Face of the Triple Planetary Crisis*. She advanced arguments in favour of turning commitments into actions and underlined the importance of international cooperation in implementation of environmental commitments.

Glimpses into the origin story and achievements of MELAW and MELP were offered by one of the founders of the Program, Professor Edgar Gold (recorded video message) and Professor Emerita Moira McConnell, first Director of MELAW (detailed testimonial of the achievements, read out by Professor Sara Seck, the Director of MELAW). Professors Gold and McConnell also graced the occasion by joining the event virtually. As a tribute to the memories and contributions of Professor Meinhard Doelle, his recorded reflections on the role and achievements of the Program, as shared by his family, were played. Reflections from Norman Letalik (LLM '80) on the original MELP founders invited interventions from several prominent alums, including Professor Emeritus Phillip Saunders.

The opening address was delivered by Dean Sarah Harding, Schulich School of Law, after the event was formally inaugurated by the Director and Assistant Director of MELAW, Professors Sara Seck and Sara Ross. The first panel, themed *Ocean Equity and Biodiversity*, featured presentations from panelists Sherry Pictou (Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Governance (Tier 2) and Associate Professor, MELAW), Vu Hai Dang (Expert at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam) and Olga Koubrak (Post-doctoral Fellow, MELAW). The importance of Indigenous knowledges, particularly Mi'kmaq legal revitalization, toward ensuring ocean equity was emphasized. An analysis of four regional seas programs: the Nairobi Convention (East Africa), OSPAR (North-East Atlantic), Barcelona Convention (Mediterranean), and the Cartagena Convention (Caribbean) to gauge their "potential effectiveness" vis-à-vis marine species protection unveiled the need for enhanced transparency, better integration of social, economic, and environmental dimensions, using ecosystem approaches and environmental impact assessments, and application of decolonial analysis. It was noted that implementation challenges might mar the prospects of the recent BBNJ Agreement of advancing equity for developing countries, and parallels were drawn to the inefficacies of the *deep seabed mining* regime – the theme on which the presentations of the second panel focused.

In their presentations (second panel) Tony Puthucherril (Professor, O.P. Jindal Global Law School, India), Keith Edward MacMaster (Lawyer, Weldon McNinnis Barristers and Solicitors) and Devdatta Mukherjee (PhD Candidate, MELAW) pondered upon the history of deep seabed mining through a TWAIL (Third World Approaches to International Law) lens, sought to assess if its past and present trajectories could possibly advance deliberative democracy, and sifted the geopolitical and regulatory dynamics underpinning recent U.S. actions, particularly Trump's 2024 executive order on critical seabed minerals.

The third panel – *Rethinking Governance of the Marine Environment* – featured the presentations of David VanderZwaag (Professor Emeritus, MELAW) and Sara Seck (Professor, Yogis & Keddy Chair in Human Rights Law; Director, MELAW). Increased attention to the Central Arctic Ocean due to rapid sea ice loss and anticipated ice-free generates ample concern about the fact that the area is governed by a patchwork of global and regional legal regimes, raising questions about future environmental protection, resource extraction, and governance coordination. An innovative solution to such challenges, and others, might be adduced by relational legal analysis that offers a transformative way to reframe state, corporate, and individual responsibilities, highlighting interdependence and equity. In that context, it was stressed that greater attention must be paid to legal constructs of the human, the state, and the corporate actor, to enable meaningful solutions at the intersection of environmental sustainability and business practice.

The fourth panel, themed *Environment and the Changing Contours of Property and Personhood* featured a diverse range of topics and perspectives with underlying thematic connections. A case was made for the legal personhood of sea ice whilst centering Indigenous legal orders and values in regulatory responses. The conflict between individualistic property values and collective ecological responsibility in the context of Nova Scotia was framed through relational legal lens to advance environmental governance in the face of climate change and colonial land histories. The argument that industrial animal farming contributes significantly to climate change, public health risks, and environmental degradation was complemented with an emphasis on the need to embrace progressive property theory as a way to reorient law toward transparency, ecological responsibility, and social justice, as opposed to the criminalization of animal rights activism under traditional property law. The panel featured Sara Ross (Associate Professor, MELAW), Jodi Lazare (Associate Professor, MELAW; Associate Dean, Academic), and Kevin Berk (PhD Candidate, MELAW; Purdy Crawford Fellow).

On 21 May, the fifth panel on the theme *Multi-level Fisheries Governance and Food Security* featured the presentations of Stuart Kaye (Director of ANCORS at the University of Wollongong), Jamie Baxter (Associate Professor, MELAW), and Cecilia Engler (Post-Doctoral Fellow, MELAW). The deliberations included insights on transformation of multilateral fisheries enforcement brought about by remote sensing technologies (such as UAVs, aerial drones, and satellite systems), using the Pacific Island nations as a case study. Legal and policy aspects of land, farming, and food were delved into, and insights from a recent project on aquaculture regulation in Nova Scotia shared. Making a case for integrating broader international legal principles into fisheries law, the contours of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) and the role of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) in governing transboundary, straddling, and highly migratory fish stocks were revisited.

Panel six on *Ocean and Climate* witnessed presenters pondering upon climate finance law, particularly transformative mechanisms for renewable energy and marine resilience in least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS), arguing in favour of mainstreaming marine resilience into global finance law and negotiations of the Conference of Parties. Taking the argument one step further, a case was made for integrating ocean and climate concerns within the Paris Agreement framework, thereby heralding a new research agenda exploring institutional and legal mechanisms for bridging fragmented climate-ocean governance. The issue of forced migration at sea, and aggravation thereof due to climate induced disasters, attained focus while referring to the state and shipmaster responsibilities and responses, including in the context of the 2024 EU Migration Pact (effective 2026). The panel featured Patrícia Galvão Ferreira (Associate Professor, MELAW), Constance MacIntosh (Professor, MELAW) and Loveth Ovedje (PhD Candidate, MELAW).

Despite its growing complexity and myriad challenges, the emerging field of climate litigation remains pertinent, as supported through reflections exploring key global climate cases (published in a collaborative

research project that was extensively referred to in the presentation). While climate litigation remains far from a panacea, it has, nevertheless and *inter alia*, elevated climate discourse, prompted judicial recognition of science and Indigenous law, and contributed to evolving legal and regulatory norms. Therefore, at the seventh panel, on the theme of *Climate Litigation*, a detailed overview of human rights-based climate change litigation in Canada was offered, focusing on Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms-based claims. Recent developments were traced, doctrinal hurdles reflected on, and emerging pathways beyond the Charter, often led by the youth and Indigenous communities who bear disproportionate climate burdens were highlighted. Adducing a theoretical revisit, a systemic critique of traditional governance mechanisms in managing climate change and environmental commons was offered in another presentation, advocating for a reconceptualization of litigation not just as dispute resolution, but as a governance tool. This panel featured Erin Dobbelsteyn (Schulich Fellow 2024-2025, Research Associate, MELAW; PhD Candidate, University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law), Camille Cameron (Professor, MELAW), and Kolawole Abiri (PhD Candidate, MELAW).

The eighth panel, themed *Business in the Marine Environment: Normative Adaptations and Inclusivity* featured Jay L. Batongbacal (Professor, University of the Philippines College of Law; Director, Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea of the U.P. Law Center), Mohamad Alikhani (Research Fellow, MELAW) and Akinwumi Ogunranti (Assistant Professor of Law, University of Manitoba). A proposed framework of “ecological social justice”, highlighting how legal and regulatory mechanisms must address not only environmental protection but also equity, participation, and distributional fairness, was analysed in the context of the North Wind Bangui Bay project, the first wind farm in the Philippines. Shifting the focus homeward and arguing for an integrated, inclusive, and enforceable regulatory system capable of balancing Canada’s climate, biodiversity, and development goals in the context of Canada’s emerging offshore wind sector, the importance of policies rooted in ecological sustainability and informed by marine spatial planning was highlighted. Finally, the legitimacy crisis that is being experienced by the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group (OEIGWG), discussing the development of a treaty to protect rightsholders against corporate human rights and environmental abuses, was deliberated upon, contemplating avenues beyond the United Nations.

A special address on *A Retrospect of Canadian Maritime Law and Implications for MELP’s Mission* was delivered by Professor Aldo Chircop (Professor, MELAW). He recounted how, over the past half a century, international maritime law has developed, often with significant Canadian inputs, into arguably one of the most effective fields of international law, and how Canadian maritime law experienced a total transformation from institutions still carrying a colonial heritage to a body of modern federal maritime law emulated by other jurisdictions. The address reflected on potential future legal development and implications for MELP’s education mission.

An interactive learning session on Mi’kmaw Law, Language and Art was also scheduled. The session, led by Naomi Metallic (Associate Professor, MELAW; Chancellor’s Chair in Aboriginal Law and Policy), and Cheryl Simon (Assistant Professor, MELAW) exploring Mi’kmaq legal revitalization through storytelling, language, and land-based practice.

Pre-recorded congratulatory video messages were sent over by David Wright (University of Calgary) and Max Westhead (Director, Marine Affairs Program). Messages celebrating the Program and the Institute, reminiscing collaborations over the years, were shared by Lisa Mitchell (East Coast Environmental Law), the International Oceans Institute, and Scott Coffen-Smout (Co-editor, Ocean Yearbook).

TWO DAYS AT A GLANCE

20 May 2025

8:30 am – 9:00 am	Breakfast
9:00 am – 11:30 am	Welcome address, Panels 1 and 2
11:30 am – 11:45 am	Coffee break
11:45 am – 12:45 pm	Panel 3
12:45 pm – 1:45 pm	Lunch
1:45 pm – 3:45 pm	Panel 4, Interactive Learning Session
3:45 pm – 4:00 pm	Break
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Keynote address
5:00 pm – 5:15 pm	Break
5:15 pm – 6:00 pm	Early days of MELP, Special Address
6:00 pm –	Reception

21 May 2025

8:30 am – 9:00 am	Breakfast
9:00 am – 11:00 am	Panels 5 and 6
11:00 am – 11:15 am	Coffee Break
11:15 am – 12:15 pm	Panel 7
12:15 pm – 1:15 pm	Lunch
1:15 pm – 3:00 pm	Panel 8, Closing
5:00 pm –	Ferry to Dartmouth
6:00 pm –	Dinner at Wooden Monkey

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MELAW20 & MELP50 ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

MARINE AND
ENVIRONMENTAL LAW:
RETROSPECT AND
PROSPECTS

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