



**Oceania  
Environmental  
Law Conference  
2017  
Fiji**



# Prospectus

## **ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND THE PACIFIC ISLANDS**

March/April 2018

The people of the Pacific Islands are stewards of immense ecosystems, and they host an enormously precious share of the planet's biodiversity, both of which are vitally important for our globally shared future.

Pacific Island countries are in reality Great Ocean States, with vast exclusive economic zones covering over 40 million km<sup>2</sup>. Rather than separate them, the ocean has connected the people and cultures of the Pacific Islands for millennia, serving not only as a highway for the seafaring people of the Pacific, but also as a cradle for the emergence and growth of a diverse and distinct range of cultures, ecosystems and species.

The Moana Pasifika, the Pacific Ocean, is larger than all of the Earth's land area combined, and the value of the ecosystem services it provides for the planet are truly priceless - the oxygen for nearly every second breath we take; over 70% of the world's fishery catch; one of the main drivers of the planet's weather.

Nature is a central element of Pacific Island identity and society, providing the foundation of the social, cultural and economic livelihoods of people throughout the region. Natural resources across the Pacific Islands are often customarily owned, governed and managed by local communities, in partnership with government.

Pacific Island countries have been continually developing and improving their environmental law and governance systems. However limited resources, institutional capacity and expertise across the region create an ongoing challenge for the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of international and multi-lateral environmental conventions, and for national environmental legislation and regulatory frameworks, including the development and implementation of national planning and legislation. Traditional governance systems and customary law and land tenure provide both opportunities and challenges in the development and implementation of environmental laws at local, provincial and national levels.

Environmental law has a key role to play in conservation and sustainable development in the Pacific Islands, including in: Integrated ocean planning and management (including offshore and coastal fisheries management); Climate change migration and sovereignty; Land and reef reclamation; Territorial implications of rising sea levels; Public/private partnerships for green growth and renewable energy; Payments for ecosystem services; and Deep sea mining. Many of these issues have global implications and are at the leading edge of environmental law practice and theory.



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## CONFERENCE BACKGROUND

The inaugural Oceania Environmental Law Conference will be convened in Fiji by the IUCN Pacific Centre for Environmental Governance and by the Conference Partners, with the provisional dates set for March/April 2018. It will be preceded by training, workshops and network meetings, and followed by a field trip.

Partnering with governments, organisations and institutions both regionally and globally, and building from the success of the inaugural World Environmental Law Conference held in Brazil in 2016, the Conference will focus on the challenges and opportunities for strengthening environmental law in the Pacific islands, and on the opportunities to leverage legal tools and approaches to drive and scale-up conservation and development outcomes.

In 2017 the Fiji Government will be co-hosting the high level UN Oceans Conference and will also begin its Presidency of the UN Convention on Climate Change COP 23, and the key issues and outcomes of these events will be incorporated into the Conference.

Targeting both the Oceania legal fraternity and a global network of legal experts, the Conference aims to:

- Highlight and explore existing and emerging environmental law issues and trends in the Pacific Islands, drawing on cases involving environmental law and governance in practice
- Facilitate discussions and generate new thinking and ideas on opportunities for environmental law to tackle the conservation challenges in the Pacific Islands and globally
- Provide a professional development platform for environmental law practitioners and experts from the Pacific Islands and around the world to connect, share experiences and learn from each other





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## THEME: PEOPLE, NATURE, OCEANS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

With the goal of strengthening the environmental rule of law in the Pacific Islands, and leveraging environmental law to generate and scale up conservation and development outcomes, the Conference will explore:

The local and global context of leading edge issues including:

- Rising sea levels, climate migration and sovereignty
- Legal rights of nature and oceans
- Trade and the environment
- UN Oceans Conference and COP 23: summary and key issues
- Polluter pays: opportunities in law
- Land/reef loss and reclamation: territorial implications

The challenges faced by the Pacific Islands environmental law sector including:

- Capacity, resources and financing
- Enforcement and compliance
- Environmental and social impact assessments



## DRAFT PROGRAM

### Pre-Conference: Monday

Pre-conference training	Applied sessions for practitioners from the region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmental law: compliance and enforcement</li><li>• Environmental impact assessments</li><li>• Other</li></ul>
Pre-conference network meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pacific Island Environmental Law Associations</li><li>• Pacific Network of Environmental Lawyers</li><li>• Global Judicial Institute for the Environment</li><li>• Environmental Law Early Career Group</li></ul>

### *Welcome Cocktail*

### *Participants plus VIP Guests*

### Day 1: Tuesday

Welcome	Protocols; reflection
Conference opening: Keynotes	TBC

### *Photos and morning tea*

Plenary	Environmental law in the Pacific Islands and globally Regional and international speakers TBC
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### *Lunch*

Plenary	Panel session: Integrating traditional and modern governance systems. Speakers TBC
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### *Afternoon tea*

Breakout sessions	Panels, workshops and talanoas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Forestry and extractive industries</li><li>• Environmental, cultural and social impact assessments</li><li>• Access and benefit sharing</li><li>• Non-judicial remedies: conflict resolution, mediation, arbitration</li></ul> Speakers (TBC)
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### Day 2: Wednesday

Plenary	Recap of Day 1
Plenary	Keynotes: Oceans and Law - integrated Oceans planning and management Speakers (TBC)

### *Morning tea*

Breakout sessions	Panels, workshops and talanoas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UN Oceans Conference</li><li>• Marine pollution and waste</li><li>• Deep sea mining</li><li>• MPA's and Marine Spatial Planning</li><li>• Maritime boundaries</li></ul> Speakers (TBC)
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### **Lunch**

Plenary	Key notes/panel: Fisheries - Sustainability and equity Speakers (TBC)
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### **Afternoon tea**

Breakout sessions:	<p>Panels, workshops and talanoas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offshore fisheries: compliance and enforcement</li> <li>• Coastal fisheries: integrating traditional and modern governance</li> </ul> <p>Speakers (TBC)</p>
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### **Day 3: Thursday**

Plenary	Recap of Day 2
Plenary	Keynotes: Climate Change - Law and justice Speakers (TBC)

### **Morning tea**

Breakout sessions:	<p>Panels, workshops and talanoas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COP 23</li> <li>• Climate migration and sovereignty</li> <li>• Paris agreement: Loss and damage</li> <li>• Renewable Energy: public/private partnerships</li> </ul> <p>Speakers (TBC)</p>
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### **Lunch**

Plenary	Key notes/panel: The future of environmental law Speakers (TBC)
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### **Afternoon tea**

Breakout sessions	<p>Panels, workshops and talanoas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polluter pays: opportunities in law</li> <li>• Legal rights of nature</li> <li>• International trade regulations and the environment</li> <li>• UNCLOS: Land and reef reclamation</li> </ul> <p>Speakers (TBC)</p>
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Plenary	Conference summary; presentation of the Conference Tapa; Close
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### **Closing Gala Dinner**

**Participants plus VIP Guests**

### **Post-Conference: Friday**

Field trip	Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area (FLMMA) Visit to locally managed marine areas and marine protected areas in the Mamanuca islands (TBC)
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The IUCN Pacific Centre for Environmental Governance, a unit of IUCN Oceania, is a regional think tank on environmental governance in development and conservation, based in Suva, Fiji.

Operating as a knowledge and practice hub, the Centre provides world class advice and support to Pacific Island leaders and decision makers and to IUCN programmes, with a focus on leadership, environmental law, natural resource economics and social policy.

Using a rights based, multi-disciplinary and collaborative approach to environmental governance, the Centre's work is underpinned by IUCN's regional and international experience, knowledge and networks.

For any queries regarding the Conference and to discuss partnership opportunities, please contact:

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