Geophysical Research Abstracts
Vol. 14, EGU2012-80, 2012
EGU General Assembly 2012

An Interface between Law and Science: The Climate Change Regime

Y. Kuleshov (1), M. Grandbois (2), and S. Kaniaha (3)

(1) National Climate Centre, Bureau of Meteorology, Melbourne, Australia (y.kuleshov@bom.gov.au), (2) School of Law, The University of the South Pacific (USP), Port Vila, Vanuatu (grandbois_m@vanuatu.usp.ac.fj), (3) Vanuatu Meteorological and Geohazards Department and Vanuatu National Advisory Committee on Climate Change, Port Vila, Vanuatu (skaniaha@meteo.gov.vu)

Law and Science are jointly building the international climate change regime. Up to date, international law and climate science have been unable to take into consideration both regional law and Pacific climate science in this process. Under the International Climate Change Adaptation Initiative (the Australian Government Initiative to assist with high priority climate adaptation needs in vulnerable countries in the Asia-Pacific region) significant efforts were dedicated to improve understanding of climate in the Pacific through the Pacific Climate Change Science Program (PCCSP) and through the Pacific Adaptation Strategy Assistance Program (PASAP). The first comprehensive PCCSP scientific report on the South Pacific climate has been published in 2011. Under the PASAP, web-based information tools for seasonal climate prediction have been developed and now outputs from dynamical climate model are used in 15 countries of the North-West and South Pacific for enhanced prediction of rainfall, air and sea surface temperatures which reduces countries' vulnerability to climate variability in the context of a changing climate. On a regional scale, the Meteorological and Geohazards Department of Vanuatu is preparing a full report on Climate change impacts on the country. These scientific reports and tools could lead to a better understanding of climate change in the South Pacific and to a better understanding of climate change science, for lawyers and policy-makers.

The International climate change regime develops itself according to science findings, and at the pace of the four scientific reports issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In return, Law is a contributing factor to climate change, a structural data in the development and perception of environmental issues and it exerts an influence on Science. Because of the dependency of law on science, the PCCSP and PASAP outcomes will also stimulate and orientate developments in law of the Pacific Island countries, as well as it could increase countries' contributions to the future of international environmental law. Vanuatu is pioneering this process in the Pacific and could make a leading contribution to the development of Nationally appropriate mitigation actions by developing country Parties, according to the Bali action Plan and to participate actively in the negotiations of a successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol. In studying and transposing the national climate change report, Vanuatu would also sensibly improve its own environmental laws in response to climate change.

By building a bridge between law and science in the Pacific, we are training scientists to climate change law, and training lawyers and policy-makers to climate change science; increasing the collaborative process and the cooperation between scientists and lawyers, in drafting national environmental laws and in negotiating international climate change agreements; and enhancing the contribution of small vulnerable islands to the development of the international climate change regime, as it regards to law and to science. Training for climate scientists and for lawyers and policy-makers on climate change science and law will be provided through the USP Course on climate change international law and climate change science - the first course on this type in the Pacific.