

## Decoding the IPCC for Lawyers

17 April 2023

4:00 PM to 5.45 PM SGP/ 10:00 to 11:45 AM CET (Online)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was created in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme to provide periodic assessments regarding the scientific basis of climate change, impacts, future risks, and opportunities for adaptation and mitigation. The first IPCC assessment was published in 1990 and the sixth assessment in 2023. In addition, there have been special reports released upon the invitation of the UNFCCC Conference of Parties on various topics such as the ocean and cryosphere, climate change and land, and global warming of 1.5°C, among others.

These assessments provide a synthesis of scientific findings related to climate change conducted by hundreds of scientists nominated by their governments and are essential to informing governments, policymakers, negotiators, and the public on the state of scientific findings on climate change. Art. 13 of the Paris Agreement provides that national inventory reports provided by Parties should follow good practice methodologies accepted by the IPCC and agreed upon by the Conference of the Parties. By identifying the strength of scientific agreement in various areas on climate change, Parties are able to be guided by the best available science when undertaking climate action.

Recently, IPCC assessments have also been used in climate lawsuits and have been relied upon by judges to establish attribution. For instance, the Germany Federal Constitutional Court which struck down Germany's climate law for being inadequate described the IPCC reports as "reliable summaries of the current state of knowledge on climate change." However, researchers have found that the evidence used by lawyers do not reflect up-to-date climate science that could potentially strengthen their case and further climate action at the national level. In addition, there are three international advisory opinion requests being brought before the International Court of Justice, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the Latin American Court on Human Rights on climate change. These cases will need to present up-to-date scientific findings on climate change in a comprehensible manner to the respective courts and tribunals.

This webinar aims to provide legal experts with an understanding of the language of the IPCC assessment reports and their importance to better enable effective application of science to legal briefs, writings, research, teaching, policymaking, and legislation.

### Speakers:



**Srivatsan Raghavan (Deputy Director, NUS Tropical Marine Science Institute)**

<https://www.tmsi.nus.edu.sg/sriraghavan/>

Dr. Srivatsan Raghavan joined the Tropical Marine Science Institute, NUS, in 2008, after obtaining a PhD from the University College London (UCL). Currently, he holds a Joint Appointment with the Dept. of Geography, NUS, where he teaches courses related to weather/climate change. He is also a Core Researcher at the Centre for Nature-based Climate Solutions at NUS. He has been the Lead Climate Modeller for several climate change projects commissioned to TMSI, notably the Vulnerability Study-Phase I (NEA, 2007) and Risk Map Study (BCA, 2010). Apart from climate research, Dr. Srivatsan has also been involved in climate impact studies over Southeast Asia (eg: hydrology, crop modelling, food security).



**Petra Minnerop (Director, Durham University Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy)**

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/staff/petra-minnerop/>

Professor Petra Minnerop is the Academic Lead of Durham University for UNFCCC engagement and climate change and the founder and current Director of the Durham Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy. She previously also served as the Co-Director of the Global Policy Institute. Petra has published widely on liability in international environmental law, climate protection agreements, human rights law, the classification/status of states under international law and on EU citizenship. She is a co-author of “Filling the Evidentiary Gap in Climate Litigation” published in the Nature Climate Change journal in 2021 as well as various articles discussing the importance of climate science in the practice of law.



**Elizabeth WU Zhiqing (Legal Consultant, ClientEarth)**

<https://law.nus.edu.sg/apcel/people/elizabeth-wu-zhiqing/>

Elizabeth WU Zhiqing is a Legal Consultant at international environmental NGO ClientEarth. ClientEarth uses the law, backed by science and economics, to protect people and the planet. Elizabeth works with the private sector, civil society and government regulators on climate-related risks and opportunities in Asia and leads on initiatives that explore the role of corporate law and investment and trade law to facilitate the transition to a net zero carbon economy. Her research covers the intersection and alignment of international climate and environmental law with international investment and trade law, with a particular focus on ASEAN-relevant multilateral and bilateral treaties.

**Moderator:** Railla Puno (<https://cil.nus.edu.sg/profile/?user=206>)

**Programme:**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
Welcome Remarks	Nilufer Oral
Introduction to the IPCC, overview of AR6 and guide on decoding the language of the IPCC	TBC
Translating climate science to policy	Srivatsan Raghavan
Role of climate science in international law	Petra Minnerop
Perspectives of the private sector on the importance of climate science	Elizabeth WU Zhiqing
Round-table Discussion	All speakers
Q&A	All speakers
Closing Remarks	Railla Puno