

# The Climate Crisis, Global Land Use, and Human Rights Conference

September 27, 2019  
9:00am – 5:00pm  
Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice

## Agenda

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This conference is organized by the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment (CCSI), Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia Law School, Landesa, New York City Bar Association International Environmental Law Committee, and Wake Forest Law School. We are grateful for the financial support from the Ford Foundation.

The climate crisis threatens to dramatically alter people's relationships with the land on which they rely. Meanwhile, many climate solutions are themselves land-intensive, including solar and wind energy, carbon dioxide removal, and finding places for people displaced by climate change to live and grow food, thus potentially increasing competition for land.

This conference will analyze the critical role that land plays in achieving climate solutions, the degree to which climate change may reshape regional abilities to support sustainable ecosystems, and the ways in which these land and climate interactions might affect land rights, human rights, and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In particular, the conference will focus on:

- The necessity of land for many climate solutions, such as renewable energy, metals for energy efficient solutions, and carbon storage and sequestration;
- The increasing tension between insecure land tenure for communities reliant on land and climate solutions tied to land, as well as the potential for climate solutions to increase socially inclusive land uses;
- The consequences of climate-driven land scarcity and climate-solution land demands; and
- Sustainable and equitable solutions to some of the most challenging land-centric climate change issues, such as relocation of displaced persons and activities

9:00 – 9:30 **Arrivals & coffee**

9:30 – 10:00 **Introductory Keynote: The Land-Climate Nexus: Mike Gerrard**, Sabin Center

10:00 – 11:15 **Session 1: Land Tenure and Land Users: understanding the people at the center of land**

*Goal:* To explain the degree and scope of tenure insecurity around the globe, particularly for lands likely to be needed for climate solutions; to highlight the particular vulnerability of Indigenous peoples and women; to discuss why tenure security matters in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation; and to explore potential solutions for strengthening tenure rights while also advancing climate solutions.

*Topics might include:*

- The global demand for land, including for climate solutions, and how that demand affects the people who live or otherwise rely on it
- Understanding tenure insecurity – constrained or insecure land access, use, ownership, decision-making and transfer – and its compounding effects on climate vulnerability
- Legal and human rights frameworks around land tenure and Indigenous peoples rights, as well as policy implications and relevant political issues
- Implications of tenure insecurity and human rights for global, national, and local efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change:
  - Tenure rights are critical for ensuring a just transition to a low-carbon future; otherwise, land-based climate solutions risk dispossessing people around the world from the land and resources on which they rely, with devastating consequences.
  - In weak tenure states, a failure by governments or companies to address tenure insecurity or to engage meaningfully with land users risks setting back climate solutions at the time they are most needed
- Solutions for strengthening tenure rights while also advancing climate solutions
- Roles/responsibilities of governments, civil society, communities, private sector (and lawyers)

Moderator: **Sam Szoke-Burke**, Legal Researcher, Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment

Panelists:

- **Karol Boudreaux**, Chief Program Officer, Landesa
- **Taiko Lemayian**, Executive Director, Kenya Community Based Tourism Network
- **Jane Meriwas**, Founder, Samburu Women Trust
- **Rukka Sombolinggi**, Secretary General, Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago

11:15 – 11:30 **Break**

11:30 – 12:45 ***Session 2: Carbon Sequestration, Biofuels, Renewable Energy and Land Use***

*Goal:* To investigate in more detail the land demands of climate solutions, related challenges, and some potential work-arounds for achieving climate solutions given these demands and constraints.

*Topics might include:*

- Carbon sequestration: the science of soil and forest sequestration and meeting the Paris Goals; land demand and secondary impacts of direct air capture/technology-based approaches to carbon sequestration; and land rights/justice implications (who should be paid? Etc.)
- Mining demands tied to renewables, and land-related implications
- Biofuels, e.g. what can we learn from the Indonesia palm oil and deforestation catastrophe, and relevance of land governance and tenure
- What are the land demands, infrastructure and legal processes and protections, e.g. access to information and justice, needed to support land reforms (e.g. Green New Deal) for rapid deployment of utility-scale renewables such as solar and wind?
- Roles/responsibilities of governments, civil society, communities, private sector (and lawyers)

Moderator: **Michael Burger**, Executive Director, Sabin Center

Panelists:

- **Mark Lutes**, Senior Advisor, Global Climate Policy, World Wildlife Fund
- **Barron Orr**, Lead Scientist, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; Professor and Geospatial Extension Specialist, University of Arizona
- **Katharina Rall**, Researcher, Human Rights and Environment Division, Human Rights Watch

12:45 – 1:45 **Lunch**

1:45 – 3:00 ***Session 3: Displacement and disruption of land-based systems by climate change***

*Goal:* To understand how climate change will likely displace people and disrupt how they use land, and to explore how we can better prepare for those outcomes.

*Topics might include:*

- Climate-induced displacement of agriculture
- What are the pressures and drivers?
- Where will these people go? What are likely impacts? (Conflict, etc?)
- How will this change land use and what are tenure rights implications?
- What will happen to biodiversity conservation approaches?
- How prepared are systems, states, and the global community to address these imminent challenges (e.g. disaster risk management; land use planning &

- resettlement; voluntary vs. forced migration; compensation and valuation)? What is needed to prepare better?
- Roles/responsibilities of governments, civil society, communities, private sector (and lawyers)

Moderator: **Ama Francis**, Climate Law Fellow, Sabin Center

Panelists:

- **Natasha Lycia Ora Bannan**, LatinoJustice Puerto Rico Legal Defense Fund
- **Alex DeSherbinin**, Center for International Earth Science Information Network (Columbia University)
- **Dina Ionesco**, Head of the Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC) Division at the UN Migration Agency (IOM)
- **Satyendra Prasad**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations

3:00 – 3:15     **Break**

3:15 – 4:30     ***Session 4: The Big Picture: Solutions and Next Steps***

*Goal:* To explore concrete solutions to address the myriad challenges arising at the nexus of climate and land, and to reflect on next steps in light of the day's conversation

*Topics might include:*

- Bigger picture opportunities and/or challenges that may constrain best practice, such as potential impact of international investment law in stymieing important government policies/practices
- Lessons learned from past mitigation and adaptation efforts, as well as from analogous situations (e.g., land-based investment for other types of projects)
- Solutions for the solutions: concrete steps to integrate into different types of land-based climate solutions to support equity, justice, and rights
- Specific examples that have worked, and efforts to support (e.g., equitable arrangements for renewables projects? The Right Energy Partnership with Indigenous Peoples?)
- What governments, civil society, communities, private sector (and lawyers) should be doing right now, and in the future, to address land/climate challenges; ideas for concrete next steps.

Moderator: **Kaitlin Cordes**, Head of Land and Agriculture, Lead on Human Rights, Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment

Panelists:

- **César Rodríguez-Garavito**, New York University School of Law
- **Cynthia Rosenzweig**, Senior Research Scientist, Head of Climate Impacts Group, NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies; Co-chair, New York City Panel on Climate Change (NPCC)

- **Gerald Torres**, Professor of Law, Cornell University Law School
- **Janene Yazzie**, Co-founder, Sixth World Solutions LLP; Sustainable Development Program Coordinator, International Indian Treaty Council; Co-Convener, Indigenous Peoples Major Group for Sustainable Development (IPMG)

4:30 – 4:45     *Closing remarks*