

Policy Roundtable Report

REFORMING CLIMATE GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

International & Regional Visions

ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM

In October 2025, Fiker Institute, in collaboration with the Climate Governance Commission, co-hosted a public symposium titled “Reforming Climate Global Governance: International & Regional Visions.”

The symposium convened leading experts and policymakers to examine the urgent need for a renewed global governance architecture capable of addressing the climate crisis. Discussions explored how climate change intersects with broader systemic challenges, from conflict to institutional fragility, emphasizing the importance of an upgraded international rule-of-law framework to ensure accountability, equity, and sustainability in global climate action.

SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS

Anastasia Kantzelis, Public International Law Consultant and Associate Member of Six Pump Court Chambers

Anastasia Kantzelis is a public international law consultant and an Associate Member of Six Pump Court Chambers. Her expertise lies in international environmental and natural resources law. She holds a BA/LLB from La Trobe University, GDLP from the Australian National University, and an LLM from the University of London.

Joe Battikh, Research Fellow at the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy

Joe Battikh is a Research Fellow at the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy working to advance climate diplomacy. He specializes in climate-related security threats and how institutions can mitigate their risks. Mr Battikh holds a Masters of Environment and Business and a Doctorate in Sustainable Management from the University of Waterloo.

Li-Chen Sim, Assistant Professor at Khalifa University and Associate Fellow at the Middle East Institute

Li-Chen Sim is an Assistant Professor at Khalifa University and an Associate Fellow at the Middle East Institute. Her expertise lies in domestic and foreign policy implications of energy in the Middle East, Asia, and Russia. Ms Sim holds a Bachelors in European Studies from the National University of Singapore, a Masters from the London School of Economic and Political Science (LSE), and a Doctorate from the University of Oxford, focusing on Russian politics.

Ivano Alogna, Senior Research Fellow in Environmental and Climate Change Law at the British Institute of International and Comparative Law

Ivano Alogna is the Senior Research Fellow in Environmental and Climate Change

Law at the British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL). He co-leads the Climate Litigation Cluster for the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) World Commission on Environmental Law and serves on several international expert bodies. A licensed attorney and academic, he teaches environmental and climate law at universities including the Sorbonne, Bologna, and Lyon.

Mannat Jaspal, Director & Fellow for Climate and Energy at ORF Middle East

Mannat Jaspal is the Director & Fellow for Climate and Energy at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) Middle East, where she leads research and policy engagement at the nexus of geopolitics, geoeconomics, and climate and energy policy. Her expertise spans climate finance, transition finance, carbon markets, MDB reform, and energy transitions. She holds a Master's in Economics and International Finance from the University of Warwick.

Andrew Mackenzie, Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Innovation at Middlesex University Dubai

Andrew Mackenzie is a Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Innovation at Middlesex University Dubai and Head of the Institute of Sustainable Development at Middlesex University, where he focuses on environmental management, ESG strategy, and sustainability education. He is a member of the American Marketing Association, the Chartered Institute of Marketing, and the Professional Association of Workplace Coaching.

Maja Groff, Convenor & Executive Director of the Climate Governance Commission

Maja Groff is an international lawyer based in The Hague and Convenor/Executive Director of the Climate Governance Commission. She serves as Co-Chair of the Coordinating Committee for the International Anti-Corruption Court (IACC), Senior Treaty Advisor at Integrity International Europe, and has worked extensively on multilateral treaties and global governance initiatives. Ms Groff has held positions at international criminal tribunals and has taught at Leiden University/The Hague Academy of International Law.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Session I: Climate and a Renewed International Rule of Law Package

Speakers: Anastasia Kantzelis, Joe Battikh, Li-Chen Sim

In the first session, speakers outlined a “rule of law package” designed to restructure and strengthen international institutions such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in order to address the growing complexity of global energy and climate governance.

With a focus on multilateral approaches, the session discussed efforts to enhance existing legal institutions to better address ongoing disputes and challenges. The session also tackled the potential of forming new institutions, such as an International Anti-Corruption Court and an International Court for the Environment.

Mr Battikh discussed current multilateral efforts on climate action. Addressing the root causes of pressing environmental concerns, he argued that global population growth will lead to an increase in the scarcity of shared resources, which in turn will exacerbate the detrimental effects of nature degradation. The rising numbers in internationally displaced people as a result of weather-related disasters, and the resulting economic losses, all point to the multi-sectoral consequences of climate change that require urgent attention. The gap in humanitarian disaster responses will continue to expand as the frequency and intensity of natural disasters rise, an issue that will be both economically and socially challenging for developing countries in specific.

Mr Battikh stressed the need for integrating the private sector in disaster management efforts, while mitigating the risks associated with providing more agency to profit-driven actors to ensure wider accountability and alignment with government-led plans. On the role of private sector actors, Ms Sim spoke about the importance of improving and strengthening current environmental standards for energy companies. She recommended working with banks that fund said companies and implementing stricter environmental survey assessments to build up better climate governance frameworks. She also highlighted the role of port regulations in enforcing stricter standards when it comes to environmental maritime challenges.

Addressing the role of multilateralism and the ICJ in climate governance, Ms Kantzelis pointed to the fact that states and other stakeholders want and need multilateral rules and institutions, even though they constrain their choices. Multilateral approaches remain valid despite the number of nations backsliding on climate commitments and threatening to withdraw from treaties, in addition to the growing backlash against inter-governmental organizations and the rule of law itself. An example is Vanuatu and other states' request for an advisory opinion from the ICJ on climate change in March 2023, which marked a turning point in climate governance debates. She argued that the Court's opinion offers states guidance on the kind of conduct that will trigger their obligations under international law. The ICJ found that climate protection is already a duty for all states, meaning they cannot simply withdraw from climate change treaties to escape legally binding obligations.

While the ICJ has played a growing role on climate issues, the question on the need to create new institutions and frameworks to address the climate crisis continues to be an ongoing debate. According to Mr Battikh, there is limited benefit of additional organizations, while Ms Li pointed to the value of establishing new climate institutions

to uphold progress and funding. Ms Kantzelis referred to traditional institutions as long-running policy experiments that must adapt to global challenges. All the speakers highlighted other forms of cooperation, including minilateral initiatives and organizations like BRICS, as playing an important role in the coming phase, and encouraged a greater sense of urgency towards establishing more bilateral climate agreements between states.

On the growing role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the national priorities of states, climate governance efforts face a difficult balance due to data centers' dependency on large amounts of energy and water. The speakers focused on the importance of harnessing the benefits of AI, rather than working against it. Mr Battikh acknowledged that AI will continue to be a priority for countries, but the primary area of focus going forward should be to ensure this technology is accessible across countries to ensure better equity. On the other hand, Ms Sim pointed to the benefits that AI can bring to the environment as it could advance energy efficiency and data collection. Ms Kantzelis noted that while AI has significant potential to improve lives and support climate solutions, its rapid prioritization and large-scale build-out—drawing on public resources such as energy systems, data, and shared knowledge—is unfolding with minimal oversight. Her concern is not AI's growth itself but a trajectory that risks concentrating benefits narrowly and leaving society exposed to wider systemic and even existential risks in the absence of adequate guardrails.

Session II: Climate Governance Commission Near-Term & Medium-Term Proposals

Speakers: Ivano Alogna, Mannat Jaspal, Andrew Mackenzie

The second session covered the potential and feasibility of forming an international environmental court. Emphasizing the importance of corporate and localized points of view, the session also provided insights into current environment policy trends in the private sector and how their role can be better harnessed for climate governance.

The idea of establishing an international environmental court has circulated among jurists and diplomats since the 1980s. Mr Alogna gave insights into how such a court should look and emphasized the reasons behind its importance. He highlighted three primary gaps that urge its creation. Firstly, a gap of coherence, as existing courts only address environmental issues indirectly. Secondly, a gap of access in reference to victims of environmental harm, indigenous communities, and corporations seeking legal certainty. Thirdly, a gap of enforcement, as even where obligations are clear, compliance mechanisms are weak, meaning the planet, rather than the polluter, faces the consequences of non-implementation. The goal of the court would not be to replace existing bodies, but to provide a specialized and authoritative forum to interpret, harmonize, and enforce environmental obligation globally.

Complementing the legal perspective, Mr Mackenzie provided insights into the corporate point of view on upholding climate obligations. He highlighted that despite the US federal government's pushback on climate, private institutions and governors have stepped up on the matter, with states like California committing to international institutions. Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards continue to be prominent in the corporate sphere as companies seek to make sustainability profitable. The European Union (EU) was highlighted as a key driver on this issue, providing a model with its taxonomy on sustainability. Mr Mackenzie also predicted that in the next three or four years, the requirements for sustainability reports from large corporations in the Gulf will rise, signaling the importance of the issue.

Providing a more localized view on climate action, Ms Jaspal drew on the importance of governance mechanisms being adaptable to be able to contextualize the challenges that local communities face. She highlighted the role of the private sector in leading these efforts, arguing that it is crucial for companies to transform their economic models to adapt to better climate risk models, internal carbon pricing, and move investments to greener sectors.

Notably, Ms Jaspal emphasized the reality that fossil fuels will likely remain prevalent in the coming years despite net zero frameworks. The role of governments should be to aid climate-affected communities, highlighting vulnerable groups including children, through the creation of fairer solutions and to establish ecosystems that support the private sector to move capital towards equitable investments. Additionally, Ms Jaspal highlighted how multilateral development banks such as the new BRICS Development Bank have the power to leverage their capital with greater risk-taking investments to make a real change.

Notably, there was a general consensus among the speakers on the importance of leaders in multiple sectors such as civil society, NGOs, and international organizations across the world in pushing forward international law on the topic of climate. According to Ms Jaspal, minilateral and bilateral agreements remain crucial and beneficial in creating consensus on a global scale.

Session III: UN Charter Reform: Way Forward

Speaker: Maja Groff

The third session covered how the United Nations (UN) might be reformed to reflect the geopolitical realities of the 21st century, including global governance challenges highlighted by climate risks, insecurity, humanitarian crises, and corruption.

Ms Groff recognized the milestone of the 80th anniversary of the UN, highlighting the achievement of creating unified processes at the international level, a relatively

new phenomenon in global history. Nevertheless, there remains a lot of space for improvement to ensure states are represented fairly at the UN with modern standards of governance legitimacy and more effective monetary processes to channel capital for climate finance and human development issues.

In this light, the international community is busier than ever with a surplus of multilateral challenges and a deficit of truly multilateral solutions, an issue the UN has not been able to tackle adequately due to numerous budgeting and funding-related issues, amongst other challenges. Ms Groff argued that the world is at a watershed moment due to the novelty and holistic nature of climate and broader ‘Earth system’ destabilization issues today (see, e.g. the latest [Tipping Points Report, 2025](#)). This challenge will require new breakthroughs on the international governance level by strengthening and upgrading existing institutions.

There have been global efforts to create proposals that offer options for reform. Ms Groff highlighted her work with the Climate Governance Commission and beyond on several proposals, including a proposition for a parliamentary assembly to act as a consultative body to the UN General Assembly, and an international anti-corruption court to divert funds and governance capacity to address ongoing climate and socio-economic challenges. Other efforts globally include the EU’s attempt at establishing supranational legal standards and structures that have provided important lessons for climate change, ‘Earth system’ risks, and governance opportunities.

Addressing questions from the panel, Ms Groff pointed to the appetite for standard-setting processes with support from leaders in the private sector that should be strengthened. She highlighted the need for enabling policies to support these efforts to avoid greenwashing and free riding. She argued that it is important for companies that are leading and innovating in the sustainability space to be able to compete on a level playing field and to flourish within the new sustainable economy within planetary boundaries. Governments must implement enabling policy to make the transition fast and effective.

The statements made and views expressed are solely the responsibility of the speakers, and do not represent Fiker Institute.

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