

Conference and Workshop

ASSELLMU

7th MENA Environmental Law and Policy Scholars' Conference

THEME: ENVIRONMENTAL LAW IN THE DIGITAL AGE



**Monday 9 - Tuesday 10 February
9 am - 5 pm**



**Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi
Campus**

Sponsors:



Partners:



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
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Embassy of Switzerland to the United Arab Emirates
and the Kingdom of Bahrain

Summary

The Association of Environmental Law Lecturers in Middle East and North African Universities (ASSELLMU), and Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi (SUAD) warmly welcome you to the 7th MENA Environmental Law and Policy Scholars Conference.

The Conference is supported by the United Nations Environment Programme; Environment Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD), ICELIS Global, and the UNESCO Chair on Environmental Law at Hamad bin Khalifa University, Doha, Qatar.

This conference builds upon the achievements from the first six conferences held in Doha (Qatar) in 2018, Settati (Morocco) in 2019, Doha (Qatar) in 2021, Amman (Jordan) in 2023 Sohar (Oman) in 2024, and Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) in 2025.

This year's conference will bring together educators, university instructors, trainers, and practitioners with expertise in environmental law and policy, as well as computer and data science, to exchange knowledge and share experiences. The goal is to foster learning and collaboration in strengthening environmental law education and practice in the region, with a particular focus on the role of innovative technologies and digital tools, including artificial intelligence, in advancing sustainable development across the MENA region. A key focus will be placed on the concept of the "twin transition," which explores the possibility of addressing the ecological crisis while simultaneously advancing the spread of digital infrastructures across society.

In acknowledgment of the importance of innovative technologies to the teaching and practice of environmental law in the MENA region, the plenary session and workshops will provide an opportunity for sharing information and best practices.

In addition to the focused pre-conference roundtables, the conference will cover national, regional and international law aspects of five main substantive topics:

- **Teaching and Practicing Environmental Law in the MENA Region in the Face of the Digital Transition:** How and whether digital tools, technologies, and online platforms are reshaping the way environmental law is being taught, learned, crafted and implemented.
- **The Potential of Digital Technologies to Enhance the Integration of Environmental Considerations into Business Practices:** Whether and how digital technologies contribute to businesses' environmental stewardship across a broad range of sectors, including agriculture, industry and finance.
- **Legal Pathways to Harness the Power of Digital Technology for Sustainability:** Whether and how the law contributes to steering digital technology's development in ways that promote sustainability.
- **The Regulation of Emerging Technological Risks:** Definition and regulation of technological risks related to the growing digitalisation of environmental policies.
- **The Legal Status and Regime of Environmental Data:** Conflicting narratives over the legal status and regime of environmental data.

Sponsors and Supporters

Organisers

- Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- Association of Environmental Law Lecturers in Middle East and North African Universities (ASSELLMU)

Sponsors

- Environment Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD) - Abu Dhabi Environmental Research Network (ADERN)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- ICELIS Global

Partners

- Hamad Bin Khalifa University - UNESCO Chair on Environmental Law and Sustainable Development
- Embassy of Switzerland to the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Bahrain
- UNESCO Chair

Programme

Day 1: Monday 09 February 2026

Maître de Cérémonie (MC): **Arooj Zahra**, Master Student in International Law, Spaces and Sovereignty, Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi

08:30 - 09:00 am

Registration

09:00 am

Conference Opening Ceremony - Venue: Zayed Theater, SUAD Campus

09:00 - 09:20 am

Opening Remarks and Goodwill Messages

- Conference Inauguration and Opening by the Chancellor, Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, **H.E. Prof Nathalie Martial-Braz**
- **H.E. Mr Arthur Mattli**, Ambassador of Switzerland to the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain
- **Dr Richard John Obrien Perry**, Advisor - Environmental Information, Science, and Outreach Management, Environment Agency, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

09:25 - 09:40 am

Goodwill Message:

H.H. Dr Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Ali Al Nuaimi - Founder, The Green Sheikh Academy

09:45 - 10:05 am

Welcome Remarks

- **Prof Beatriz Garcia**, Associate Professor, Sustainability Officer, Law, Economics and Management Department, Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- **Prof Patricia Mbote SC**, Director, Law Division, United Nations Environment Programme
- **Elena Athwal**, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, ICELIS Global
- **Prof Damilola Olawuyi**, SAN, Professor of Law and UNESCO Chair on Environmental Law and Sustainable Development, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Doha, Qatar; President and Chair, ASSELLMU

Moderated by: **Prof Aude-Solveig Epstein**, Provost, Sorbonne University, United Arab Emirates, Associate Professor of Law

10:05 - 10:30 am

Tea / Coffee Break

10:10 - 10:20 am

Group Photo – All Presenters of the Opening Ceremony

10:30 - 10:50 am

Keynote Speech: Fostering Collaborations to Support the Twin Transition in the MENA Region

Speaker: **Prof Patricia Mbote SC**, Director, Law Division, United Nations Environment Programme

10:55 - 11:10 am

Invited Address: UAE Perspectives on the Twin Transition: Strengthening Environmental Research Networks

Speaker: **Mahra Saeed Abdulla Braik AlAmeri**, Analyst - Businesses & Organisations, Environmental Information, Science, and Outreach Management, EAD

11:15 - 11:45 am

Tea / Coffee Break

11:50 am - 12:50 pm

PANEL DISCUSSION: Teaching and Practicing Environmental Law in the MENA Region: Current Status and Future Direction

In this session, deans and senior academics from the region will discuss:

- Updates on progress made in incorporating environmental law and sustainability teaching in the MENA region
- What is the state of play of environmental law curriculum in their faculties, for example: how many courses and at which level are they offered and is environmental law obligatory or optional subject?
- How are digital tools, technologies, and online platforms are reshaping the way environmental law is being taught, learned, crafted and implemented in law schools in the region, and what are the emerging challenges?
- What are the existing areas of collaboration between the different law schools in the MENA region?
- Their vision for the future – what do the law professors / lecturers wish to change in the teaching of environmental law in their faculties?

Chair: **Prof Riyad Fahkri**, Professor of Law, Hassan 1st University, Morocco,
Vice Chair, ASSELLMU

Speakers:

- **Prof Giancarlo Anello**, Delegate of the Rector for International Relations with the Middle East, and Director of the Doctoral School for Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Parma, Italy
- **Prof Hasna Kaji**, Dean, Faculty of Law, Hassan 1st University of Settat, Morocco
- **Prof Susan L. Karamanian**, Dean, College of Law, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Doha, Qatar
- **Prof Khansaa Mohammed Jasim**, Dean of the College of Law, American University of Iraq, Baghdad
- **Prof Tenia Kyriazi**, Head of Law & Politics Programmes, Middlesex University Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- **Prof Enas Qutieshat**, Dean, Faculty of Law, Sohar University, Oman

12:50 - 01:15 pm

Questions and Answers Session

01:15 - 02:30 pm

Lunch Break - Venue: Oval Room, SUAD Campus

02:30 - 03:30 pm

PANEL DISCUSSION: *The Twin Transition Unpacked: Myths, Narratives, and Foundations of the Ecological and Digital – Transition & the EAD-ADERN Experience*

Session Description: Drawing on examples from international agreements, business practices, emerging regulatory adaptations, and experiences from the Sorbonne Center for Artificial Intelligence, the panel will analyse the legal, commercial, and institutional frameworks necessary to scale the twin transition globally, with particular attention to the Global South, and explore how these developments might transform intellectual property and international law while translating high-level principles into operational, legally robust AI tools for climate action.

Speakers:

- **Prof Mélanie Clément-Fontaine**, Professor of Law, Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- **Donya Fredj**, Deputy General Counsel, G42, United Arab Emirates
- **Prof Xavier Fresquet**, Executive Director, SCAI, Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- **Prof Julia Motte-Baumvol**, Chairholder of the Bridging Horizons Jean Monnet Chair, Associate Professor of Law, Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- **Dr Richard John Obrien Perry**, Advisor - Environmental Information, Science, and Outreach Management, Environment Agency, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Moderated by: **Prof Aude-Solveig Epstein**, Provost, Sorbonne University, United Arab Emirates, Associate Professor of Law

03:30 - 03:45 pm

Questions and Answers Session

03:45 - 04:15 pm

Tea / Coffee Break

04:15 - 05:15 pm

PANEL DISCUSSION: Resolving Legal Disputes and Mitigating Environmental Risks of Emerging Technologies

Session Description: The development and use of new digital tools, including AI tools, in environmental protection is resulting in a new wave of disputes relating to intellectual property, consumer protection, data privacy and human rights. This session explores new trends relating to environment-related disputes in a digital age, and the latest approaches for resolving them. Private and public international approaches, as well as the role of the judiciary, arbitrators and other justice stakeholders in advancing fair, timely and transparent resolution of such disputes are explored.

Chair: **Prof Youness Lazrak**, Professor of Law, Hassan 1st University of Settat, Morocco

Speakers:

- **Judge Dr Jaafar Deeb Abd Almaani**, The Jordanian Judicial Council, Jordan
- **Prof Hou Jiaru**, Director, Energy and Environment Institute, China University of Political Science and Law, Beijing, China
- **Dr Eduardo Pereira**, International Energy Law Training and Research Company, Brazil
- **Dr Biset Sena Güneş**, Senior Research Fellow and Head of the Centre of Expertise on Turkey, Max-Planck-Institut für Ausländisches und Internationales Privatrecht
- **Prof Mohammed Tawfiq Ladan**, Former Director General, Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies

05:15 - 05:30 pm

Questions and Answers Session

05:30 pm

End of Day 1

05:45 pm

Optional Tour of Abu Dhabi

08:30 pm

Dinner Reception Hosted at SUAD

Venue: Germaine Tillion Gardens, SUAD Campus

Day 2: Tuesday 10 February 2026

Maître de Cérémonie (MC): **Tawadud AlKatheeri**, Senior Associate, Regulation - Regulatory Affairs, TAQA Transmission

08:30 - 09:00 am

Registration - Zayed Theater, SUAD Campus

09:00 - 09:10 am

*Opening Remarks, **Dr Omar Khataibeh**, Member, ASSELLMU Executive Council*

09:10 - 09:30 am

Keynote Speech

Speaker: **Prof Ignacio Tirado**, Secretary General, International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT)

Moderated by: **Dr Omar Khataibeh**, Member, ASSELLMU Executive Council

10:05 - 10:15 am

Questions and Answers Session

10:15 - 10:30 am

Tea / Coffee Break

10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Panel A (Venue: Zayed Theater, SUAD Campus)

PANEL DISCUSSION: Environmental Law and Responsible Innovation

Session Description: Blockchains, data centres, artificial intelligence, and cloud computing are driving significant energy demand and environmental footprints, highlighting the need for sustainable solutions.

This session will explore how business enterprises are developing new artificial intelligence tools to measure, manage, and reduce carbon emissions, energy consumption, and other adverse environmental impacts more efficiently and accurately. The role of environmental law and education in ensuring the ethical, rights-based and effective deployment of such technologies will also be explored.

Chair: **Prof Walters Nsoh**, Associate Professor of Law, College of Law & International Relations, Al Faisal University, Saudi Arabia

Speakers:

- **Prof Abrar Wafa** and **Prof Omar AlOmeir**, Assistant Professors, Prince Sultan University, Saudi Arabia
- **Samuel Ngoga**, Founding Director, Center for Climate Justice, The Certa Foundation, Rwanda
- **Prof Othman Althawadi**, Assistant Professor of Marketing, Qatar University
- **Neeshad Shafi**, Manager, Policy & Stakeholder Engagement, Offset8 Capital, Dubai, UAE
- **Ipshita Chaturvedi**, Legal Consultant, International Law Chambers, Qatar
- **Dr Adenike Akinsemolu**, Founder and Director, Green Institute, Nigeria

12:00 - 12:30 pm

Questions and Answers Session

12:30 - 01:30 pm

Lunch Break

01:30 - 03:00 pm

WORKSHOP: The Legal Status and Regime of Environmental Data: Conflicting Narratives Over the Legal Status and Regime of Environmental Data. (BREAK-OUT SESSION)

Session Description: This break-out session explores the legal status and regulatory regimes applicable to environmental data, highlighting the existence of competing and sometimes conflicting narratives. Speakers will explore emerging legislative developments in MENA countries, and how regulations on digital technologies and data-driven approaches from other world regions can inspire regulation in the MENA region.

Panel A (Venue: Zayed Theater, SUAD Campus)

Chair: **Prof Riyad Fakhri**, Professor of Law, Hassan 1st University, Morocco

Speakers:

- **Prof Nisrine Zerdoug**, Professor of Public Law, University Cadi Ayyad, Marrakech, Morocco
- **Abdullah Al-Shahri**, Senior Trainer, Ministry of Education, Saudi Arabia
- **Prof Ali Salim Al-Hammouri**, Assistant Professor of Law, Faculty of Law, Applied Science Private University, Jordan
- **Abd Alaziz Mohammed**, Certified Trainer, King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue, Saudi Arabia
- **Prof Muhammad Salman Afzal**, ESIA Regulatory PM Consultant, Royal Commission of Al Ula (RCU), Al Ula, Saudi Arabia
- **Prof Majed Ahmed Saleh Al Adwan**, Associate Professor of Administrative Law, Sohar University, Oman

Panel B (Venue: Richelieu Amphitheatre, SUAD Campus)

Chair: **Prof Beatriz Garcia**, Associate Professor, Sustainability Officer, Law, Economics and Management Department, Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates)

Speakers:

- **Dr S. Duygu Sever-Mehmetoglu**, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar
- **Dr Zeina Moneer**, Senior Research Fellow Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden
- **Prof Rahma Bentirou Mathlouthi**, Associate Professor, University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Western Switzerland
- **Dr Dmitry Erokhin**, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Laxenburg, Austria
- **Dr Mostafa M Naser**, Lecturer, School of Business and Law, Edith Cowan University (ECU), Australia

03:00 - 03:15 pm
Health Break

03:15 - 04:30 pm

WORKSHOP: Legal Pathways to Harness the Power of Digital Technology for Sustainability. (BREAK-OUT SESSION)

Session Description: The purpose of this session is to explore whether and how the law contributes to steering digital technology's development in ways that promote sustainability.

Panel A (Venue: Zayed Theater, SUAD Campus)

Chair: **Dr Omar Khataibeh**, Member, ASSELLMU Executive Council

Speakers:

- **Prof Abdeljabbar Arrach**, Professor of Law, Hassan 1st University, Morocco
- **Prof Abdullah bin Ali bin Salem Al-Shabli**, Associate Professor of Civil Law, Sohar University, Oman
- **Laila Touri**, Faculty of Law, Ain Sbaa, Hassan II University, Morocco
- **Dr Malika Askal**, Research Scholar, University Al Hassan, Settati, Morocco
- **Hana Abdulaziz Al-Othaim**, University of Hail - College of Sharia and Law, Saudi Arabia
- **Dr Ahmad Awad Albnian**, Faculty of Law – Zarqa Private University, Jordan

Panel B (Venue: Richelieu Amphitheatre, SUAD Campus)

Chair: **Prof Youness Lazrak**, Professor of Law, Hassan 1st University of Settati, Morocco

Speakers:

- **Mohammed Al Sulaiti**, Vice Chair, Early Career Focus Group, ASSELLMU
- **Nicole Weber**, Philosophy and Sociology, Student, Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi
- **Nguyễn Vũ Ngọc Mai**, Faculty of International Laws, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam
- **Josephine Ilesanmi**, PhD candidate and research associate, UNESCO Chair on Environmental Law and Sustainable Development, HBKU, Qatar
- **Dr Abdelsadok Kheira**, University of Law and Political Science, Algeria

04:30 - 05:00 pm

Closing Plenary and Presentation of Conference Certificates

Moderated by: **Prof Damilola Olawuyi**, SAN, Professor of Law and UNESCO Chair on Environmental Law and Sustainable Development, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Doha, Qatar; President and Chair, ASSELLMU.

- **Prof Nathalie Martial-Braz**, Chancellor, Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, UAE
- **Prof Haider Al-Mara**, President of Al-Bayan University, Iraq
- **Prof Patricia Mbote SC**, Director, Law Division, United Nations Environment Programme
- **Prof Torki Abdullah Alshubaiki**, Dean, Assistant Professor of Law, College of Law & International Relations, Al Faisal University, Saudi Arabia

05:00 pm

End of Conference

07:00 - 09:00 pm

Closing Dinner Hosted by the Swiss Embassy of Switzerland to the UAE and Bahrain

ASSELLMU Early Career Forum

On the sidelines of the 7th ASSELLMU Conference

Summary

To stimulate awareness and interest in environmental protection in the next generation, this year's conference will feature an Early Career Forum which aims to bring together early career professionals, educators, university instructors, trainers, and practitioners with expertise in environmental law and policy.

Day 2: Tuesday 10 February 2026

Theme: *Legal-Tech Innovation & Youth Leadership for Climate Justice*

Lead / Partner: *ICELIS Global*

Venue: *Marie Curie Amphitheatre, SUAD Campus*

Programme

08:30 - 09:00 am

Registration & Digital Ice-Breaker (Slido Poll)

Venue: Marie Curie Amphitheatre, SUAD Campus

10:30 - 11:00 am

Opening Remarks

- **Prof Damilola S. Olawuyi**, SAN– UNESCO Chair on Environmental Law & Sustainable Development, HBKU; President of ASSELLMU
- **Prof Patricia Mbote**, Director, Law Division, UNEP
- **Prof Aude-Solveig Epstein**, Provost, Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi
- **Elena Athwal**, Founder & CEO, ICELIS Global; Chair, ASSELLMU ECFG

Lead / Partner:

ICELIS Global, ASSELLMU Early Career Focus Group (ECFG), Sorbonne AD, UNEP, The Certa Foundation

11:00 - 11:30 am

Keynote Speeches

- **Hon. Dr Dahiru Muhammad Hashim**, Kano State Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
- **H.E. Shaikh Fawaz Al Sabah**, Former Assistant Undersecretary, Government of the State of Kuwait
- **Talal Al Ajmi**, Founder & CEO, VI Markets

11:30 - 11:50 am

FIRESIDE CHAT 1: Youth, Digital Power, and Transformative Change in the GCC

Speaker: **Saad Al Tami**, Founder & President, The Diwan

Moderator: **Josephine Ilesanmi**, Research Associate, UNESCO Chair; Secretary, ASSELLMU ECFG

Lead / Partner:

The Diwan, ASSELLMU Early Career Focus Group (ECFG)

11:50 am - 12:30 pm

ROUNDTABLE DIALOGUES 1: Youth in Environmental Diplomacy, Research & Policy

Speakers:

- **Eng Mohammad Al Refaei**, CEO, Kuwait Innovation Center
- **Waleed Al Saqabi**, Executive Manager, Corporate Communications, Boubyan Bank
- **Abdullah Al Dereai**, Founder & CEO, LAVAL Consultations; Director of Advisory Services, AGPCA
- **Vlad Mukhachev**, Founder, Green Republic; Advisory Board Member & Lead Consultant, Laval Consultations
- **Dr Meshari Al Kulaib**, Doctoral Candidate, University of Manchester

Moderated by: **Micaiah Bell**, Master's Candidate, University of Oxford

Lead / Partner:

Kuwait Innovation Center, Boubyan Bank, Laval Consultations, Green Republic, Abu Dhabi Investment Office

12:30 - 01:00 pm

FIRESIDE CHAT 2: AI, Big Data & the Next Era of Environmental Justice

Speaker: **Frank Samuel Matinou**, Coordinator, Research & Policy Development Program, Center for Law & Innovation, The Certa Foundation

Moderator: **Dr Mohammad Rashid Al-Sulaiti**, Advisor to the Undersecretary, MoECC, Qatar; Vice President, ASSELLMU ECFG

Lead / Partner:

The Certa Foundation, ASSELLMU ECFG

01:00 - 02:00 pm

Networking Lunch with "Mentor Tables" (Rotating Experts)

Lead / Partner:

ALL

02:00 - 02:30 pm

OPENING INSPIRATION: Youth, Stewardship & the Spirit of Intergenerational Environmental Leadership

Speaker: **H.H. Dr Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Ali Al Nuaimi**, Founder, The Green Sheikh Academy

Moderated by: **Cristina Rubino**, Politics, Media & Communications Officer, DAFG

Lead / Partner:

The Green Sheikh Academy, DAFG

02:30 - 03:10 pm

ROUNDTABLE DIALOGUES 2: Youth Solutions for the SDGs: Legal, Policy & Innovation Pathways

Speakers:

- **Sulaiman Al Aleeli**, Sustainability Advisor, The Green Sheikh Academy; Clean Hydrogen Engineer, DUTCO Group
- **Eissa Al Mannaei**, AI Researcher, TRENDS
- **Hadi Al Hamlan**, Youth Speaker, University of Birmingham

Moderator: **Abdullah Al Mulla**, Project Management Officer, CITRA Kuwait

Lead / Partner:

The Green Sheikh Academy, KEO International Consultants, TRENDS, NAHJ, MISK, CITRA

03:10 - 03:30 pm

FIRESIDE CHAT 3: Turning Climate Promises into Action

Speaker: **Dr Umar Saleh Anka**, Executive Director, Ministry of Environment & Climate Change, Kano State

Moderator: **Samuel Ngoga**, Founding Director, Center for Climate Justice, The Certa Foundation, Rwanda

Lead / Partner:

MOECC (Kano State), The Certa Foundation

03:30 - 04:00 pm

Lightning Talks / Paper Presentations

Speakers:

- **Sara Faraj** – Bridging the Digital Divide for Environmental Justice: A Human Rights-Based Legal Approach to Digital Sustainability in the MENA Region and Beyond
- **Elena Athwal** – Digital Environmental Governance in the MENA Region: Leveraging Emerging Technologies for Climate Accountability and Legal Reform
- **Emmanuel Akande** – The Role of Digital Technologies in Corporate Environmental Stewardship and Operational Efficiency

Moderated by: **Brock Locnikar**, MPhil Candidate, Cambridge Judge Business School, University of Cambridge

Lead / Partner:

ICELIS Global

04:00 - 04:15 pm

Early Career Youth Session: Closing Remarks & Certificates

Speakers:

- **Prof Damilola S. Olawuyi**, SAN – UNESCO Chair on Environmental Law & Sustainable Development, HBKU; President of ASSELLMU
- **Prof Patricia Mbote SC**, Director, Law Division, United Nations Environment Programme
- **Prof Beatriz Garcia**, Associate Professor, Sustainability Officer, Law, Economics and Management Department, Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi
- **Samuel Ngoga**, Founding Director, Center for Climate Justice, The Certa Foundation, Rwanda

Moderated by: **Elena Athwal**, Founder & CEO, ICELIS Global; Chair, ASSELLMU ECFG

Lead / Partner:

ALL

04:30 - 05:00 pm

Rejoin Main ASSELLMU Closing Plenary and Presentation of Conference Certificates

Venue: Zayed Theatre, SUAD Campus