



Durham
University

Centre for Sustainable
Development Law and Policy

Inspiring the extraordinary

Durham University

Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy



Annual Report
2022-2023



Contents

About the Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy	04
Our Objectives	05
Our Principles	05
Foundation Phase: 2022-2023	06
Events, Initiatives and Projects:	07
1. Website and Social Media	07
2. Support for the SDG Group	07
3. Global Environmental Law in Dialogue with the Judiciary: Insights from Courts around the World	08
4. Global Stocktake Workshops with the Centre for International Law at the National University of Singapore	09
5. Memorandum of Understanding between the CSDLP and the CIL	09
6. COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh	10
7. CSDLP Launching Event: Expanding Boundaries – A multi-disciplinary exploration in support of the Sustainable Development Goals	12
8. Research Seminar	12
9. CSDLP Guest Seminar	12
10. CSDLP Guest Lecture	12
11. Book Launch	13
12. Subsidiary Bodies Conference in Bonn, UNFCCC, June 2023	13
13. Ambition on the Melting Ice: International Cryosphere Climate Initiative	14
14. Early Career Researchers Workshop on Cross Disciplinary Sustainability Challenges, June 2023	14
15. International Conference: The Global Stocktake and International Law – Paradigm, Process and Ambition, June 2023	15
16. Research-led Curriculum Innovation for Sustainable Futures: Durham-Uppsala Collaboration on <i>Intergenerational Preparedness</i>	15
17. International Environmental Law Masters Programme	16
18. Corporate Education on ESG: Duke CE	16
19. Uganda: Energy Transition	17
20. Paris Agreement Article 6	17
Going Forward:	18
1. Research and Impact	
2. Education	
3. Well-being	
4. Regular Events	
5. Next steps – Organisational	





The Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy is a new research hub that operates from within the Law School, across Durham University.

About the Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy

The Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy (CSDLP) is a new research hub that operates from within the Law School but across the University. We have over 45 members and each faculty has a lead within the Centre, in addition to departmental leads. The CSDLP has already been included in the institutional perimeters of the University's research landscape, alongside research institutes, including in the recent submissions to THE Impact ranking and the QS Sustainability ranking.

Our vision is to advance the understanding and to undertake research on the processes that are involved in sustainable development in all its dimensions: environmental, economic, social. Our research projects, policy work, convenorship and collaborative initiatives recognise, and go beyond, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as important milestones of Agenda 2030.

The Centre for International Law at the University of Singapore (CIL/NUS) is a key partner institution. The CSDLP has a Visiting Professor, Justice Brian Preston, Chief Justice of the Land and Environment Court of New South Wales. The International Research Advisory Board (IRAB) is linked to the CSDLP, and we are working towards establishing closer ties with colleagues involved in IRAB. Members of the CSDLP are collaborating closely with a range of external initiatives, for example, the International Cryosphere Climate Initiative (ICCI).

Collaboration is key for our work, and we are continuously striving to include a variety of perspectives and approaches and to nurture existing and build new partnerships.

The CSDLP aims at advancing sustainable development through research across intersecting thematic areas. We are adopting a global lens for our interdisciplinary research to integrate our work with that of our partners and other stakeholders, for the development and improvement of policy and law frameworks.

We understand *sustainability* as a continuous effort of the present generation to use resources without limiting the access of future generations to these resources, striving not to adversely impact the natural conditions of life that we need for the survival and well-being of the present and of future generations. We are committed to contribute to the creation and maintenance of conditions under which human systems and ecosystems can exist in harmony, now and in the future.

Sustainability in all academic dimensions of the CSDLP demands that we ensure that future generations have at least equal access to research, education and the relevant resources. We endeavour to improve conditions for future generations. Furthermore, sustainability in our research, teaching and collaborations aims at sharing the benefits of knowledge with the present and the future generations, in a transboundary perspective.



We are committed to contribute to the creation and maintenance of conditions under which human systems and ecosystems can exist in harmony, now and in the future.

Our Objectives

Our objective is to establish the CSDLP as a Centre of excellence in Durham University, to offer a platform for research integration, whereby we embed scientific research into our efforts to advance legal and policy frameworks at the local, regional and international level.

This objective encompasses our contribution to establishing Durham University as a globally leading hub for just transition solutions. We aim to expand our interdisciplinary capacities for in-

depth research and its application for country-specific transitions to net zero carbon economies. This entails working as a team to turn research and expertise across the University into joint endeavours.

At the educational level, we aim to develop novel modules, programmes and training courses, both at Durham University and with our international partners. This includes lecture series, summer schools, engaging multiple stakeholders in knowledge sharing events and consultancy.

Thereby, the CSDLP will contribute to supporting colleagues, departments and the University in seamlessly integrating sustainability in all dimensions of academic life. To that end, CSDLP serves as laboratory for the development of new ideas and ways of working. This includes creating a workspace where we can experiment with ideas, conduct world-leading research and create a lasting impact beyond academia.



We embed scientific research into our efforts to advance legal and policy frameworks.

Our Principles

- We critically engage with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in our research, teaching, convenorship and collaborative projects.
- We provide opportunities for our students and early career researchers, and integrate colleagues from across the University into the Centre and its projects.
- We increase the awareness and knowledge of the SDGs, their benefits and potential for tensions, for this critical decade, as well as the urgency for climate action, biodiversity and environmental protection and restoration.
- We are committed in our research, engagement and action, to benefit society and the environment.
- We integrate sustainability in our decision making, in terms of the use of resources, research projects and work-related emissions.

Foundation Phase: 2022-2023

The CSDLP was founded in May 2022, based on previous work around engagement with the Conference of Parties (COP) within the UNFCCC processes.

Funding from the University's Strategic Priorities Fund gave us the opportunity to create a platform for interdisciplinary exchange around sustainability.

We are seeking to integrate our research into international governance frameworks, such as the climate change regime, through actively participating in conferences of Parties (COPs) and related events and meetings.

The responsibility for the CSDLP's organisational work rests on the Director, the two Co-Directors and the faculty and departmental leads. Support through our Research Associates is critical for the support of our regular meetings, guest lectures and other events. Important information is shared at our regular meetings, including with colleagues from Estates who are leading the important work of the Greenspace Movement.

The CSDLP welcomes PhD students and involvement of Masters and Undergraduate students. Our students are involved in our work, projects and events.

Collaboration is key for our work, and we are continuously striving to include a variety of perspectives and approaches.



Events, Initiatives and Projects:

The following lists our activities, in chronological order. Some projects are ongoing.

1. Website and Social Media

The CSDLP has its own website and social media accounts. Links can be found to the right of this text.

We are present on LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram. Material to advertise the new International Environmental Law Masters Programme has been developed and a video clip is available on our website (Study with us).

Visit our website:



2. Support for the SDG Group

Our Research Associates (RA) support the work of the UN SDG Group that operates across the University.

The SDG Group has an advisory function for the Global Strategy Group (GSG) which advises the University Executive Committee.

Visit our social channels:



3. Global Environmental Law in Dialogue with the Judiciary: Insights from Courts around the World

A Global Environmental Law Lecture Series was convened in the academic year 2022-2023, with Justices from leading courts around the world.

2022 was the year of anniversaries of various significant international declarations and multilateral environmental agreements that address environmental issues at the global level and set forth fundamental principles and legally binding obligations of states.

These anniversaries included the Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment of 1972, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development of 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of 1992, the Convention on Biological Diversity of 1992 and the Law of the Sea Convention of 1982.

The aim of the series was to explore the complex environmental issues that are addressed in these declarations and agreements; to understand the developments that have taken place since these instruments were adopted; and to examine the role they have played in judicial decision-making around the world. In a series of lectures, leading Justices from a variety of jurisdictions offered insights into the normative framework of Global Environmental Law.

The lectures were delivered throughout the year, either online or in person, by:

Professor Dr Andreas Paulus,
Former Judge of the German Federal Constitutional Court, Professor of Public and International Law, University of Göttingen

Dr Emmanuel Ugirashebuja,
Former President of the East African Court of Justice, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Republic of Rwanda

Justice Nambitha Dambuza,
Supreme Court of Appeal of South Africa

Justice Hima Kohli,
Supreme Court of India

Justice Michael Wilson,
Supreme Court of Hawaii

Justice Suntariya Muanpawong,
Vice Chief Justice of the Court of Justice Region 5 of Thailand

Justice Sapana Pradhan Malla,
Supreme Court of Nepal

Justice Brian Preston,
Chief Judge of the Land and Environment Court of New South Wales

Justice Michelle Weekes,
Supreme Court of Barbados

Professor Antonio Benjamin,
National High Court of Brazil



2022 saw the anniversaries of significant international declarations and agreements that address environmental issues at the global level.

4. Global Stocktake Workshops with the Centre for International Law at the National University of Singapore

In October 2022, two online workshops on the Global Stocktake, a key ambition raising mechanism under the Paris Agreement, were held with our partners of the Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore.

The Durham workshop focused on the international law elements, and the Singapore workshop

addressed the role of the oceans and the ocean dialogue within the Global Stocktake.

These workshops formed the basis for our work on the written submission to the Technical Dialogue phase of the Global Stocktake.

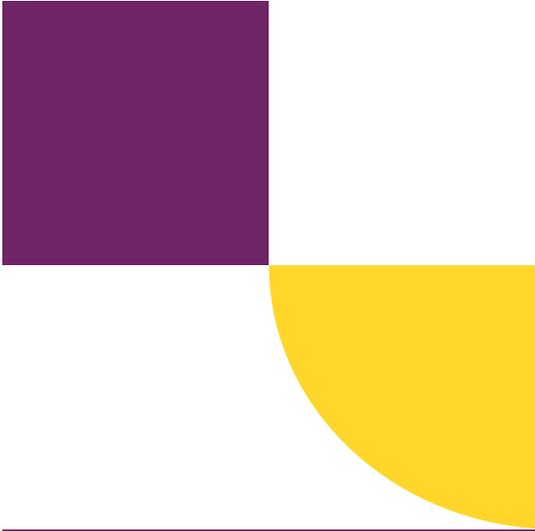
5. Memorandum of Understanding between the CSDLP and the CIL

On the 4th November 2022, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for academic cooperation was signed between the Durham University Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy and the Centre for International Law at the National University of Singapore.

Durham University's Vice-Chancellor Karen O'Brian, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Global) Claire O'Malley, Professor Petra Minnerop, Director of the CSDLP, and Dr Joe Mulhern, International Partnership Manager, had the pleasure to be received by the Director of the Centre for International Law - National University of Singapore, Nilufer Oral.

A meeting with President Tan of the National University of Singapore was part of the schedule.

This visit was a great opportunity to celebrate the existing collaboration between the two Centres and to lay the foundation for future projects. The MoU builds upon the work in previous years, including the "On the Road to COP26 Preparatory Lecture Series" and the series of two workshops held in October 2022 on the Global Stocktake.



Signing of the MoU with CIL - an opportunity to celebrate the existing collaboration between the two Centres and to lay the foundation for future projects.



6. COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh

Four members of the CSDLP attended COP27 in Egypt (Professor Chris Stokes, Professor Laura Marsiliani, Professor Ashraf Osman and Professor Petra Minnerop). We successfully applied for a side event at the Climate Education Hub. The event was live streamed, with over 61,000 viewers online.

The theme of the event was “Collaboration in Climate Change Education and Research: The Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy”. The delegation established new links with other Centres, including in Bhutan. New foundations for collaboration with the International Cryosphere Climate Initiative were established.

Speakers at the event were: Chris Stokes, Ashraf Osman, Nilufer Oral from the Centre for International Law at the National University of Singapore (CIL/NUS), Danielle Yeow, CIL/NUS, and Amir Sokolowski, Director Global for Climate Change at CDP (Industry Partner) and Petra Minnerop.

The event was officially advertised in the UNFCCC programme for the Hub, it was live streamed on youtube, facebook and X (formerly twitter) and the recording can be found on our website.

The Ambassador of Peru to Egypt, Jose J. G. Betancourt Rivera, attended the event and he messaged afterwards:

“The Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy of Durham Law School is an outstanding example of responsibility and dedication of the bonds between Public International Law and the need for nature and environmental protection. Also, I would like to express my appreciation to the Education Hub at COP27. In my opinion, they did an excellent job of disseminating the relevance of education in the creation of a conscience for the defence and protection of the environment and planet Earth. For that reason, I wish you all the best in your current position and your future projects.”

Ambassador Jose J.G. Betancourt Rivera, Ambassador of Peru to Egypt

In addition, the Durham University delegation attended negotiations on various topics, including the Cover Decision, the Global Stocktake, Article 6 and Loss and Damage.

For example, Chris Stokes (Geography) was involved in the Cryosphere Pavilion which was run by the International Cryosphere Climate Initiative (ICCI). The Cryosphere Pavilion focused on the implications for timing and scale of implementation of the Paris Agreement, especially impacts of overshoot, and served as a strategy hub for those Parties and Observers concerned with the Cryosphere.





As a Chair of the N8-AUDA NEPAD Steering Group, Ashraf Osman (Engineering) co-organised a side event at the African Pavillion in collaboration with the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), as part of their ongoing collaboration with the N8 universities. The universities of the N8 Research Partnership are Durham, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield and York. The event addressed strategic aims around strengthening capacity in key areas such as energy and food security, infrastructure and climate change adaptation.

The event addressed strategic aims around key areas such as energy and food security, infrastructure and climate change adaptation.

The event showcased innovative research capabilities and world-class interdisciplinary, collaborative, translational research programmes. The event represented a platform for engagement with stakeholders and a discussion forum for transforming the innovative research carried out in the N8 universities into policies and development plans in Africa, particularly mountain and low-lying nations and regions.

7. CSDLP Launching Event: Expanding Boundaries - A multi- disciplinary exploration in support of the Sustainable Development Goals

On 25th January, we celebrated the official launching of the CSDLP.

The event was led by Dr Adefolake Adeyeye in collaboration with Dr Jessica Lehman and Petra Minnerop.

It was very well attended by colleagues across the University, opened by PVC (Global) Professor Claire O'Malley, and it led to new collaborative links across departments and faculties. Justice Preston attended in-person.

We established new collaborative links at COP27, including with the International Cryosphere Climate Initiative and other research Centres.

8. Research Seminar

Jia Wang presented her research in a research seminar.

Everyone enjoyed learning about the intersection of sustainability and 3D printing, and the we will continue to expand on our research seminars initiative.



9. CSDLP Guest Seminar

Organised by Dr Rozemarijn Roland Holst, the CSDLP hosted Natalie Dobson (Utrecht University, Utrecht Centre for Water, Oceans and Sustainability Law) for a guest Seminar on 'Interest balancing in international climate law: in search of authority'.

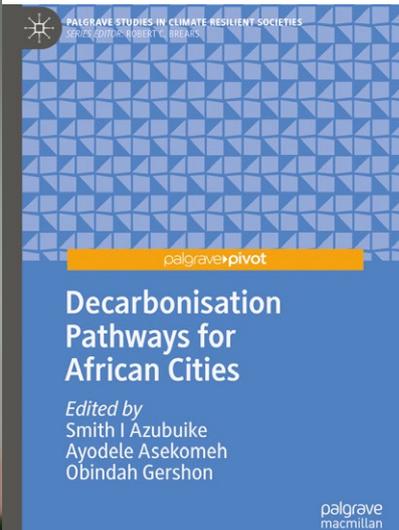
The event was held in hybrid format at Durham University and online, and attended by colleagues from across departments.

10. CSDLP Guest Lecture

Justice Brian Preston delivered a guest lecture in the Climate Change Law and Policy module.

The lecture was very well received by our students and Justice Preston will deliver the lecture again in the course in 2023/24.





11. Book Launch

Dr Smith Azubuikwe (lead editor), Ayodele Asekomeh and Obindah Gershon (co-editors, Robert Gordon University and Covenant University Nigeria) launched their edited book – *Decarbonisation Pathways for African Cities* – published by Palgrave Macmillan.

The hybrid event was very well attended, with many international colleagues joining online.



12. Subsidiary Bodies Conference in Bonn, UNFCCC, June 2023

Petra Minnerop attended the SB58 conference in Bonn and presented the poster that was based on the written submission of CSDLP/CIL/ICCI to the Technical Assessment phase of the Global Stocktake.

Aiming for 1.5°C:
Science, Law & the Global Stocktake

Strengthening intersecting cryosphere science & law in interpreting the Paris Agreement's temperature thresholds
Emphasising the role of academic research in developing the GST as a legal process

<p>The Scientific Urgency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current trajectory of GHG emissions will lead to irreversible impacts because of the cryosphere's long-term response & the potential to cross critical thresholds for each increment above 1.5°C. Thawing permafrost emissions & sea level rise, triggered by global warming, pose a real threat to intergenerational equity. Ocean-based mitigation & adaptation could play a big role in achieving the 1.5°C goal and addressing climate impacts to marine biodiversity & coastal communities. 	<p>The Legal Implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COP/CMA decisions can constitute authentic means of treaty interpretation (Art. 31(3)(a) 1969 VCLT). COP 26 & 27 decisions emphasising the scientific urgency suggest a common understanding among Parties that 1.5°C is the target that should be pursued. Scientific evidence forms the basis of evolving case law that climate targets in countries taking a leadership role should be modelled in accordance with the 1.5°C target.
---	--

Policy Alignment for 1.5°C: The Global Stocktake

- Domestic policy & law frameworks & climate targets should be aligned with the **1.5°C temperature limit** especially in countries that take a leadership role.
- The Ocean Dialogue indicates that clear mandates & ocean-specific assessment tools & targets are needed in the GST to fully account for Parties' **ocean-based actions & needs** under NDCs.
- Interdisciplinary academic research, such as on cryospheric limits, is a **key part** of supporting the GST as a **robust international, legal process**.

Role of Academia

- Academia-country collaboration** should be supported & recognised as a means to develop best practices in achieving country-specific transitions to a low-carbon economy.
- Cooperating** with academics can help provide clarity of the nature of the mechanism in operationalising the link between the GST & NDCs.

Scan the QR code to access the full GST submission

13. Ambition on the Melting Ice: International Cryosphere Climate Initiative

Chris Stokes and Petra Minnerop attended two workshops that were led by the ICCI and attended by government representatives of the 18 Member States of the Ambition on the Melting Ice (AMI).

Chris Stokes presented his research on glaciers and the Director of the ICCI, Pam Pearson, participated as speaker in the CSDLP's conference on the Global Stocktake (see below). Chris Stokes successfully secured ESRC IAA funding for the attendance of future COPs and Subsidiary Bodies conferences.

14. Early Career Researchers Workshop on Cross Disciplinary Sustainability Challenges, June 2023

The workshop was led by Rozemarijn Roland Holst.

The aim is to make this early career researchers event a regular occurrence in our event calendar. The workshop provided a platform for early career researchers, including post-docs, PhDs students and advanced post-graduate research students who work on sustainability challenges and/or themes pertaining to sustainable development. The workshop was an informal and constructive setting for early career researchers to present their work, receive feedback from, and build connections with, research communities across relevant disciplines.

We published a call for abstracts and received applications from around the world, including the UK, Netherlands, Hong Kong and Sweden. Based on the selected abstracts, participants were allocated to a panel and matched with a discussant who provided in-depth feedback and reflections, and lead the general discussion after each panel.

This event led to the involvement of colleagues from a range of departments, including from outside the CSDLP's fellows. The CSDLP will publish a policy brief based on insights from work presented at the workshop.

A constructive setting for early career researchers to present, receive feedback and build connections with others.



15. International Conference: The Global Stocktake and International Law - Paradigm, Process and Ambition, June 2023

The international conference was led by Petra Minnerop and was the first of a series of two conferences that are jointly organised between the CSDLP and the CIL.

The conference explored the legal and political components of all phases of this first Global Stocktake and its potential to inform nationally determined contributions (NDCs). The event addressed the role of collaboration between all stakeholders, including academia and negotiators in shaping this mechanism, both to enhance ambition and as a template for future stocktakes.

Around 30 participants signed up for in-person attendance, and 145 for online participation. Speakers included leading academics and professionals in the field, with representation from India, China, the Caribbean, the US, Australia, Brazil and Europe. The event covered a range of topics, including trade, over two full days. The second part of the conference series will be convened in Singapore, after COP28 in Dubai has brought the first Global Stocktake to a conclusion. A policy report that summarises the key findings of the conference is available on our website.



Speakers were Leaders in the field, with representation from India, the US, the Caribbean, China, Australia, Brazil and Europe.

16. Research-led Curriculum Innovation for Sustainable Futures: Durham-Uppsala Collaboration on *Intergenerational Preparedness*

Funding was secured in collaboration with Uppsala University to develop a new educational programme between the two institutions. This exciting project will see us working closely with colleagues to develop relevant modules from an interdisciplinary perspective.

The topic of the application is: Research-led Curriculum Innovation for Sustainable Futures: Durham-Uppsala Collaboration on *Intergenerational Preparedness*.



17. International Environmental Law Masters Programme

A new Masters Programme in International Environmental Law was developed over the course of the year and will be launched for the academic year 2023/24.

The programme will cover the international climate change regime, biodiversity and general principles of international environmental law. It will provide insights into the role of the intersection between science, policy and law, for the development of the relevant international agreements and their implementation at the domestic level.

For the new Masters programme, a dedicated place on the website, with a short video clip and a flyer for the programme were developed. We are looking forward to welcoming our International Environmental Law students in October 2023.

18. Corporate Education on ESG: Duke CE

The CSDLP has taken the first steps in the collaboration with Duke CE. We are excited to explore new options of teaching and training, and how corporate education may benefit our undergraduate students.





19. Uganda: Energy Transition

A team of the CSDLP works with the National Petroleum Authority of Uganda on the integration of climate change considerations into national policies and regulations.

The work involved a workshop in Entebbe, hosted by the National Petroleum Authority and the Ministry for Energy and Mineral Development of Uganda.



20. Paris Agreement Article 6

We are currently writing a policy report on the new market based instruments under Article 6 Paris Agreement.

In addition, we are outlining how Nature-based Solutions can be integrated into the work programme under Article 6 para. 8 Paris Agreement.

Going Forward

On the 27 June 2023, we held our annual strategy meeting to discuss ideas, strategy and objectives going forward.

Our Objectives comprise:

1. Research and Impact

- Fostering a positive and productive environment for generating ideas, research and impact activities
- Using a variety of methodological approaches
- Exploring new research narratives on global challenges
- Supporting all colleagues in their research activities and individual career progression
- Developing and delivering cross-cutting and world-leading joint research projects
- Facilitating engagement and impact related activities beyond academia
- Developing research-led capacity building projects that contribute to learning and training

2. Education

- Advancing cross-disciplinary curriculum development on sustainability
- Conducting research into education and programme development to foster learning and teaching for sustainable futures
- Supporting student led research projects, internships and sustainable actions on campus

3. Well-being

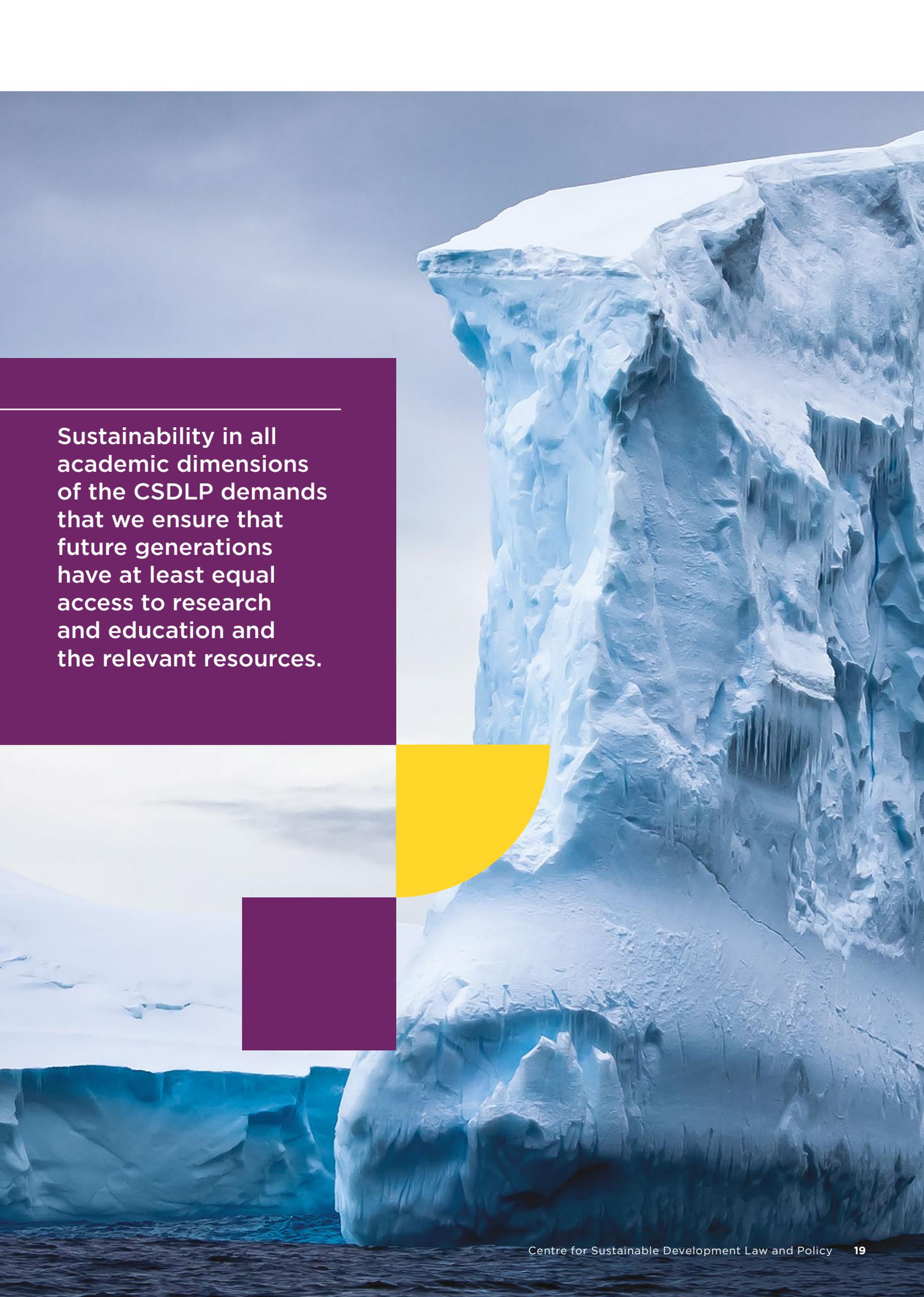
- Contributing to the well-being of students and colleagues through mutual support
- Convening regular social events with students
- Expanding networks and include ECRs into existing networks
- Providing informal mentoring and support

4. Regular Events

- Annual Themed Conference (June)
- Career events for Students (February)
- Welcome lunch with Masters Students (October)
- ECR workshop with Uppsala (April)
- Summer school (July/August)
- Lectures and Workshops (throughout the year), with relevant student societies and co-convened with the Colleges
- Event-related blogposts

5. Next steps – Organisational

- Raising awareness within the School of Social Sciences and Health and beyond, including on COPs
- Offering a preparatory event on COP28
- Establishing an events email list
- Establishing an events blog
- Link on the website to potential for green projects – greenspace
- Involvement in IUCN and UKELA
- Developing events for Sustainability Careers
- Co-sponsored events with other Centres/institutes
- Student ambassador
- Brown bag lunches (ad hoc)
- Co-sponsored events
- Continue applying for grants

A large iceberg floats in the ocean under a cloudy sky. The iceberg's surface is textured with various ice formations and cracks. The water is dark, and the sky is a pale, overcast blue. The image is overlaid with several geometric shapes: a large purple rectangle on the left, a yellow semi-circle in the middle, and a smaller purple rectangle at the bottom left.

Sustainability in all academic dimensions of the CSDLP demands that we ensure that future generations have at least equal access to research and education and the relevant resources.



Durham
University

Centre for Sustainable
Development Law and Policy

Inspiring the extraordinary

Contact details

**Centre for Sustainable
Development Law and Policy**
Durham University Law School
Palatine Centre, Stockton Road
Durham, DH1 3LE

csdlp@durham.ac.uk

