Frameworks for Shared Indus/Transboundary Waters: A Multidisciplinary Dialogue

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On 26th and 27th of July 2019, the School of Law of the City University of Hong Kong (SLW) organized a two-day conference entitled “Frameworks for Shared Indus/Transboundary Waters: A Multidisciplinary Dialogue”.

This Conference aims to bring together key stakeholders – academics, practitioners and policy makers – to discuss current issues concerning the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) and the role of China as the upper riparian. These include: i) highlight the sub-national scale subjectivities relating to the IWT—especially of the contested region of Jammu & Kashmir; ii) take a multidisciplinary approach to understanding and perhaps mapping the future development of the IWT in the international context while considering its legal, technocratic, climatological, geographical, economic and socio-political aspects; and iii) take cognizance of national interests (of China, India, and Pakistan) against regional interests, and discuss competing approaches towards transboundary water cooperation.

The conference began with welcoming remarks given by Prof. Feng LIN (Acting Dean, SLW). Prof. Lin extended a warm welcome to all of our conference participants and wished this important conference a great success. Following the welcoming remarks, Dr. Daanish MUSTAFA (Reader of Human Geography, King’s College London) thanked organizing the conference and Dr. Fozia Nazir LONE (Coordinator and Associate Profosser, SLW) explained the background and objectives of this conference.
Eleven guest speakers conducted presentations addressing a wide range of topics relating to the Indus Waters Treaty and transboundary water sharing in Asia. The Conference consisted of four panels, each followed by discussion. The topics of the presentations are as follows (according to the order of presentation).

- **Revisiting the Regulation of the Indus – The 1960 Treaty and Beyond**  
  Prof. Philippe CULLET (Professor of Environmental Law, School of Law, SOAS University of London and Senior Visiting Fellow, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi)

- **Indus Water Treaty: Addressing Emerging and Common Concerns through Cooperation**  
  Prof. Shakil Ahmad ROMSHOO (Professor and Head, Department of Earth Sciences, School of Earth & Environmental Sciences, University of Kashmir, India)

- **Climate Change and Governance Challenges in the Indus Basin in Pakistan**  
  Mr. Ahmad Rafay ALAM (Environmental Lawyer and Activist, Pakistan)

- **Scalar water politics in transboundary river basins: what role for international water law? The case of the China’s role in the Mekong river basin**  
  Dr. Oliver HENSENGERTH (Senior Lecturer, Department of Social Sciences, Northumbria University New Castle, UK)

- **Geopolitical Imaginations of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanisms**  
  Dr. Raymond Yu WANG (Associate Professor, School of Government, Sun Yat-sen University, China)

- **Assessing the Role of Legal Documents in Transboundary Collaboration: A Comparative Analysis of the Water Supply Projects in Hong Kong and Singapore**  
  Mr. Chenlin ZHAO (PhD Candidate, Department of Public Policy, City University of Hong Kong,
Hong Kong)

- **Some Perspectives on China’s Approaches to International Law and Dispute Settlement**  
  Prof. Anthony CARTY (Professor of International Law, School of Law, Beijing Institute of Technology, China)

- **The Duty to Cooperate in the International Law governing Transboundary Waters – with a focus on China’s ‘soft-path’**  
  Prof. Patricia WOUTERS (Professor, School of Law, Xiamen University; Founding Director of the China International Water Law programme, Xiamen Law School; Founding Director of the Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science, under the auspices of UNESCO, University of Dundee, Scotland)

- **Climate Change and the Right to Escape from a Transboundary River Agreement**  
  Dr. Fan ZHANG (Lecturer of Public International Law, Wuhan University China Institute of Boundary and Ocean Studies, China)

- **Producing the Indus Basin? Examining the politico legal building blocks**  
  Dr. Daanish MUSTAFA (Reader of Human Geography, Department of Geography, School of Global Affairs, King’s College London, UK)

- **IWT and Himalayan Water Security - Perspectives on Potential Areas of Chinese Cooperation**  
  Dr. Fozia Nazir LONE (Associate Professor, School of Law, City University of Hong Kong)
Through discussion and debate, the Conference’s atmosphere was full of enthusiasm. While the speakers delivered excellent and insightful presentations, the audience actively participated in the discussions sessions, giving critical comments and putting forward challenging questions to
speakers. The Conference enhances the leading role of the CityU Law School as a major local and global actor in the field of legal education and research.