



University
of Basel



SOAS
University of London

Rounding the Cape – Storms or Good Hope for the Law at Sea?

Cape Town – 28-30 April 2025

1. Introduction

The Cape, at the southwestern tip of Africa, has, together with the coast that stretches eastwards up to Nelson Mandela Bay, a unique place in the maritime world. This is where the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean meet at the edge of the Southern Ocean, in arguably the most complex, powerful and unpredictable crucible of the marine environment. Outside of the Pacific Ocean, this remains the only natural and permanently-open sea passage between the East and the West, the use of which has immeasurable significance in world affairs.

It is apposite that one engages on its shores with a number of current developments produced by tensions largely unanticipated when the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was drafted. Many African States made a crucial contribution to the Convention coming into force thirty years ago and they have a vital stake, in the absence of any other constitutional framework at the global level, in the Convention remaining the foundation on which to adapt existing regimes and develop new regimes to meet the multifaceted challenges to which humankind is confronted.

2. Themes

The themes of the conference are as follows:

(a) Resource-related tensions

The half-day session will engage with the legal aspects of the tensions at sea between the right of peoples and nations to permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources, the right to development and the imperative of limiting the extent and impact of climate change as well as the extent and negative impact of the climate-related measures on humans and the natural environment.

(b) Safety, security and AI-related tensions

The half-day session will engage with the legal aspects of the maritime safety, maritime security and AI-related tensions between commercial interests or criminal motivations, on the one hand, and the imperative of protecting the public good, people at sea as well as the cultural and natural environments, on the other hand.

(c) Human rights-related jurisdictional challenges

The half-day session will engage with both the extent to which States have and use their legislative, executive and adjudicative ocean jurisdictions and the extent to which international courts have and use their respective jurisdictions, in order to protect people at sea.

(d) The future of the law of the sea and maritime law in Africa

The half-day session will engage with the legal challenges associated with reaching the objectives of Agenda 2063 of the African Union in the African maritime domain.

3. Organisation and funding

(a) The event will be held under the auspices of:

- the Australian Branch of the International Law Association;
- the Maritime Law Association of South Africa;
- Nelson Mandela University (Faculty of Law);
- the South African Branch of the International Law Association;
- the University of Basel (Faculty of Law);
- the University of Cape Town (Faculty of Law);
- the University of KwaZulu-Natal (School of Law); and
- the University of London (School of Oriental and African Studies).

(b) The members of the organising committee are:

- Dr Dusty-Lee Donnelly (University of KwaZulu-Natal);
- Prof Natalie Klein (University of New South Wales);
- Dr Ntemesha Maseka (Nelson Mandela University) (assistant to the chairperson);
- Dr Denning Metuge (University of Cape Town);
- Prof Irimi Papanicolopulu (School of Oriental and African Studies);
- Prof Anna Petrig (University of Basel); and
- Prof Patrick Vrancken (South African Research Chair in the Law of the Sea hosted by Nelson Mandela University) (chairperson).

(c) The organisation of the event and the attendance of some of the participants are made possible thanks to the funding of the South African National Research Foundation.

4. Registration and call for abstracts

4.1. The number of participants is limited to 50.

4.2. Priority will be given to participants who will either present papers or act as discussants.

4.3. Call for abstracts:

(a) The deadline for the submission of abstracts is the 15th of November 2024.

- (b) The abstracts must be between 250 and 500 words and each abstract must include an indication of the theme under which the abstract is requested to be considered (see above) as well as an indication of whether participation in the conference will be self-funded. If it will not and funding from the organisers is requested, the abstract must be accompanied by a detailed budget. Please ensure that the items that will be self-funded and those for which funding is requested are clearly indicated.
- (c) The abstracts must be submitted by email, in Word format, to LOS.Conf@mandela.ac.za and copied to ntemesha.maseka@mandela.ac.za and adele.visser@mandela.ac.za.
- (d) The organising committee undertakes to provide feedback, including whether the abstract has been accepted and any guidance for the finalisation of the presentation, by no later than the 25th of November 2024. Upon receipt of acceptance, the participants are expected to submit within 5 working days, at the email addresses in (c) above, a short bio of maximum 150 words and a personal photo.
- (e) The deadline for the submission of the full papers (between 6 000 and 12 000 words in Word format) is the 28th of March 2025.
- (f) The organising committee intends to facilitate the joint publication of part or all of the papers in a suitable format as soon as reasonably possible after the conference.
- (g) The authors of the abstracts that have been accepted will be automatically registered without any registration fee being due.

4.4. Call for discussants:

- (a) Each session will include a 15-minute contribution in reaction to the papers presented.
- (b) The deadline for expressions of interest in contributing as discussant is the 15th of November 2024.
- (c) The expression of interest must include an indication of the theme under which the expression is requested to be considered (see above) and must indicate why the expression should be preferred over the other expressions relating to the theme.
- (d) The expression of interest must be submitted by email, in Word format, to LOS.Conf@mandela.ac.za and copied to ntemesha.maseka@mandela.ac.za and adele.visser@mandela.ac.za.
- (e) The organising committee undertakes to provide feedback by not later than the 25th of November 2024. Upon confirmation of selection, each of the individuals concerned is expected to submit within 5 working days, at the email addresses in (d) above, a short bio of maximum 150 words and a personal photo.
- (f) The full papers will be forwarded to the relevant discussants upon receipt by the organising committee (see 4.3(e) above).
- (g) The organising committee intends to facilitate the joint publication of part or all of discussant contributions, together with the papers, in a suitable format as soon as reasonably possible after the conference.

- (h) The selected discussants will be automatically registered without any registration fee being due.

4.5. Registration and participation:

- (a) Individuals other than the authors of papers and the discussants (see 3.3 and 3.4. above) who wish to participate in the conference either at the venue or online are invited to express their interest to do so by filling the form accessible at [here](#).
- (b) As from the 1st of December 2024 and provided that there are still seats available, the organising committee will provide the details necessary for payment of the registration fee required for participation at the venue (see (c) and (d) below).
- (c) Unless any exemption applies (see e.g. 4.3(g) and 4.4(h) above), the registration fee is as follows:
 - until the 28th of February 2025: ZAR 3 000-00; EUR 150-00; or USD 150-00; and
 - from the 1st of March 2025: ZAR 6 000-00; EUR 300-00; or USD 300-00.NB: 50% rebate for registered students.
- (d) Please note that a seat will only be secured upon receipt of the fee. This means that the communication described in (b) above does not constitute a confirmation that a seat has been set aside.
- (e) The organising committee reserves the right to waive the fee requirement either *mero motu* or upon application emailed to LOS.Conf@mandela.ac.za and copied to ntemesha.maseka@mandela.ac.za and adele.visser@mandela.ac.za.
- (f) The information necessary for online participation will be emailed to the participants concerned shortly before the event.

5. Language and venue

The conference will be conducted in English.

The venue is the Faculty of Law, Kramer Law Building, Middle Campus, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, Cape Town (-33.957620849521696, 18.465210559515672).

6. Travel to and from Cape Town

- (a) Participants from outside Southern Africa need to be aware that the two main international airports in South Africa are the Cape Town International Airport (IATA: CPT) and the OR Tambo International Airport (IATA: JNB) in Johannesburg.
- (b) If flying into South Africa in Johannesburg, participants need to ensure that there is enough time for them to: (i) pass through passport control; (ii) collect their luggage; (iii) pass through customs; (iv) hand their luggage back at the domestic check-in counters; (v) pass through security; and (vi) reach the relevant gate in order to board their domestic flight from Johannesburg to Cape Town, a flight which takes about 2 hours.

- (c) If exiting South Africa by means of a flight taking off in Johannesburg, luggage does not normally need to be worried about in Johannesburg (please confirm when checking in for the domestic and international flights in Cape Town). It takes 10 minutes to walk from the domestic terminal to the international terminal, where one needs to go again through security and, obviously, passport control. Thereafter, it takes at most 10 minutes to reach a boarding gate.
- (d) In Cape Town, there is basically no way to avoid the traffic on the N2 highway between the airport and the areas at the foot of Table Mountain, including the CBD and the area where UCT is located. There are traffic jams on working days from 06:00 to 10:00 (towards the city) and from 15:00 to 19:00 (towards the airport). If traffic on the highway flows freely, it takes at most 30 minutes from the UCT area to the airport. Please note that Monday the 28th of April 2025 and Thursday the 1st of May 2025 will be public holidays in South Africa.
- (e) Most flights between Europe and South Africa take between 10 and 12 hours, with departure in the evening and arrival the next morning. Flights between Europe and South Africa via the Middle East and flights between South Africa and other continents often take longer, with departure and arrival at a variety of times of the day. It is often not possible to fly into South Africa from abroad early enough in the morning to be at the venue at the start of a full-day event nor to fly out to a foreign destination late enough in the evening to be able to stay at the venue until the end of a full-day event.
- (f) Time in South Africa is **UTC+2** during the whole year. There are no tropical diseases in most parts of South Africa, including Cape Town, and, therefore, no need to take any specific health-related precaution (see https://www.iata.org/contentassets/76cd3a9471144df19ddce92650b378e0/wocfa-2024_south-africa-visa--travel-requirements.pdf and note that the submission of the traveller declaration is voluntary at this stage).
- (g) It will be early autumn in Cape Town at the end of April. The mostly dry and hot summer will have ended and, while the weather will still be warm, showers are possible. Because Cape Town is located on the coast in the region where the waters of the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean and the Southern Ocean mix with each other, wind and weather can change very quickly. While this often does not have too much of an impact at sea level, it has a direct impact on the conditions on top of, and immediately around, Table Mountain, the summit of which is at about 1.000 metres above sea level. The result is that, should you have time for some tourism either before or after the conference, it is unfortunately often either impossible to get to the top of the Mountain or pretty much worthless to do so due to a lack of visibility (see <https://www.tablemountain.net/> with an almost live webcam at <https://tablemountain.panomax.com/>).
- (h) Infrastructure and facilities in Cape Town are similar to those one would expect in any leading world city, except, to a large extent, public transport. Uber is fast, safe and inexpensive (but obviously affected by the road traffic status at any given time). While there are often type C plugs available (with two round pins, as used in most of western continental Europe), the standard electricity plug is **type D**, which has three round pins in a triangular pattern (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SANS_164). South Africa operates on a 230V supply voltage and 50Hz. Most financial transactions take place by means of debit or credit cards (e.g. Visa and Mastercard). Cash can also be used in most cases. While South Africa has 12 official languages, everybody in Cape Town is able to, and will gladly speak at least basic English.

- (i) South African cuisine is extremely varied with, in the main tourist centres, a mainly “Western” basis. There are many videos on Youtube giving a foretaste of what to expect.

7. Contact

Should you have any query, please contact Dr Ntemesha Maseka at ntemesha.maseka@mandela.ac.za, copied to adele.visser@mandela.ac.za.

15 October 2024