

Foreword

Erika TECHERA

Professor of Law

University of Western Australia

(UWA Law School & UWA Oceans Institute)

Our changing climate continues to be a topic that generates significant research, heated debate and widespread concern. The impacts of climate change are being, and will continue to be, felt throughout the world. Nevertheless, it is clear that the effects are being experienced earlier, and/or more severely, in some places, linked to natural geographical situations and socio-economic circumstances. Island states are particularly vulnerable, due to their limited land masses and relative remoteness, yet frequently they have constrained resources to respond to the challenges. The search for climate change mitigation and adaptation responses is ongoing in these States and in other areas of the world, and yet sustainable solutions remain elusive. Not only must solutions be efficient, effective and responsive, they must also be fair, just and equitable. It is in this context that climate justice has a role to play, framing climate change around ethical and political issues, and linking socio-cultural and environmental concerns.

This special edition of the *Revue Juridique de l'Océan Indien* focuses on climate justice in the specific context of the Indian Ocean. The collection of papers brings together multi-disciplinary experts focused on addressing the climate change challenge and achieving just outcomes. Contributions include analyses covering international relations and securitization opportunities, legal and judicial systems, rights-based and regulatory approaches, trade and financing issues, energy, society and religion. The unique collection of papers in this special edition provides a valuable contribution to the climate justice literature and draws much-needed attention to the Indian Ocean region.

Significant academic focus has been given to climate change causes and effects over several decades, and many climate conferences have been held, drawing together experts from multiple disciplines. Yet relatively few events have focused on the specific issue of climate justice, and even less have been hosted by small island States. This is the background to the Climate Justice Conference 2019 that was hosted by the University of Mauritius and the Université de La Réunion. It was most fitting that the conference was held in Mauritius, an island State

vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and in the Indian Ocean which has received less research attention than other parts of the world. The focus of the conference was climate justice, crossing environmental and social matters.

I had the pleasure of attending and presenting at the conference. It was a rare opportunity to engage with colleagues from various human and social sciences, and many jurisdictions and cultural backgrounds, and to participate in positive and thoughtful discussions on the issue of climate justice. I thoroughly enjoyed the three-day event and feel privileged to have had the opportunity to do so. After the events of 2020, it may be that we never return to international conferences in quite the same way as in 2019, which highlights the significance of the event and provides a further rationale for this special edition of the *Revue Juridique de l’Océan Indien*.

As this volume demonstrates, climate justice discourse benefits from multiple voices, but it is also crucial that a diversity of readers can access the research produced. I am therefore very pleased to see that this special edition will be available as a free and open access publication. I recommend this special edition to anyone interested in the pressing issue of climate change, justice and the Indian Ocean. I have no doubt that the papers published here will contribute to further critical thinking, and future collaborations, on this vital topic.