

Special Session SS-6-6

▪ Title

Charting a Path to 2030 and Beyond: exploring how convergent rules of international law contribute to enhanced transboundary water cooperation

▪ Organiser

Organisation: International Water Law Academy

Representative: Patricia Wouters

E-mail: pkwouters@aol.com

▪ Co-organiser

1. Organisation: School of Law, Chongqing University

Representative: David J Devlaeminck

E-mail: djdevlaeminck@live.com

▪ Potential Presenter

1. Presenter: Owen McIntyre

Affiliation: Professor

Organisation: School of Law, UCC College Cork

2. Presenter: Lingjie Kong

Affiliation: Professor

Organisation: China Institute of Boundary and Oceans Studies, Wuhan University

3. Presenter: Otto Spijkers

Affiliation: Lecturer

Organisation: Leiden University College, the Netherlands

4. Presenter: Ana-Maria Daza Clark

Affiliation: Lecturer

Organisation: School of Law, University of Edinburgh

5. Presenter: Bernadette Araba Ajdei

Affiliation: Deputy Director

Organisation: Legal and Monitoring Department, Water Resources Commission, Ghana

6. Presenter: David J Devlaeminck

Affiliation: Associate Professor

Organisation: School of Law, Chongqing University

7. Presenter: Patricia Wouters

Affiliation: Director

Organisation: International Water Law Academy

- **Alignment with Congress**

- 6. 6. Innovation for Water Governance and Management

- **Session description**

The peaceful management of water, especially in the context of growing existential challenges, requires concerted efforts across all areas of international law. This special session explores the rich domain of international law to identify rules in various fields such as biodiversity, climate change, trade, human rights and investment, that contribute to increased opportunities for transboundary water cooperation, especially in the context of the UN SDGs. Partly codified and progressively developed in the two global water conventions (1992 Water Convention and 1997 Watercourses Convention), international water law provides a framework of rules through which States cooperate on their transboundary water resources. The future of this area of international water law, however, remains uncertain, given the dearth of international water law agreements across the globe, exacerbated by the growing complex water-related problems such as global climate change, economic challenges and changing international relations. Thus, international water law must be considered in this broader context. The notion of ‘convergence’, overlaps and interaction between different areas of law, offers a unique opportunity to identify the relevant rules of international law that can enrich transboundary water cooperation. This session provides an overview of how ‘convergence’ can contribute to developing international water law, explored through the Academy’s four broad inter-related but distinctive research areas and one special initiative, described in more detail below. The International Water Law Academy, established in 2019 at Wuhan University, aims to contribute to improved transboundary water cooperation through world-class research, graduate programme, responsive executive training, and interactive outreach activities in international water law in all of its dimensions around four research interest areas and one special initiative: 1. Climate Change, Environment and Natural Resources Law, 2. Multi-Level Water Resources Governance, 3. International Economic Law and Water Resources Management, 4. The System of International Law 5. Emerging Scholars Initiative – a Forward-Looking Platform Each of these research areas and initiatives, directed by an Affiliate of the Academy and listed as panelists in this submission, provides unique perspectives on the current status and future trajectory of international water law and its role in the governance of transboundary watercourses. Through a panel discussion with the proposed Academy Affiliates, this 90-minute special session seeks to first introduce the International Water Law Academy, elaborate its approach to ‘convergence’ and explore international water law through convergent rules of international law across the four Research Interest Area and its Emerging Scholars Initiative. This will be followed by an open discussion with the leaders of these research areas/initiatives on the current status and future of international water law. Topics for discussion include, but are not limited to: - ‘Convergence’ – an opportunity to explore relevant rules of international law that contribute to enhanced transboundary water cooperation. - Water-related challenges for transboundary water cooperation connected with climate change, environment, and natural resources through the lens of international law. - Exploring the fundamental structures of international water law and how it contributes to the peaceful management of transboundary watercourses. - How international water law and international economic law converge in this field. - Implementation of international water law across multiple levels of water resource governance, from the international, regional, transnational, national and local. - The role of young scholars in furthering our understanding and the implementation of international water law. Through this panel discussion, participants will be briefed on the function of international water law, as well as its the importance of interaction across legal regimes such as climate change, economic law, human rights law, and more. This panel discussion is meant to engage the audience, and participants will have the opportunity to interact with the panellists.