
Wishful and Fearful Thinking about International Law and Climate Engineering

Presentation

[Speech](#)

Date

18 - 21 August 2014

Location

Berlin, Germany

Speech

[Dr. Ralph Bodle, LL.M.](#)

At the international Climate Engineering Conference from 18 to 21 August 2014, Dr. Ralph Bodle, Senior Fellow at Ecologic Institute, was a speaker and panelist on international law and governance of climate engineering and related research.

The conference was organised by the Institute of Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS). More than 300 participants from the research, policy and civic communities discussed the highly complex and interlinked ethical, social and technical issues regarding climate engineering.

Climate engineering or 'geoengineering' refers to the deliberate intervention in the climate system to counter the effects of climate change without reducing emissions, e.g. by blocking/reducing solar radiation in the upper atmosphere or by enhancing the uptake of carbon dioxide through 'ocean fertilization'. With global efforts to mitigate greenhouse gases still insufficient, options for climate engineering are receiving increasing attention. Possible drawbacks include uncertainty about environmental impacts (e.g. changing rainfall patterns) and a considerable potential for international conflict since a unilateral deployment of climate engineering technologies may affect other countries.

In his presentation and the following panel discussion on international law on geoengineering, Ralph Bodle outlined how "Wishful and fearful thinking about international law and climate engineering" affect policy and governance debates on climate engineering in practice. He analysed problems arising from assumptions, expectations and fears of non-lawyers regarding international law in terms of their knowledge and approaches. Such misconceptions across disciplines are to some extent normal, but could also lead to or entrench a more fundamental divide between scientific and legal/political rationalities, mindsets and approaches.

In a different session on the international governance of climate engineering research, Ralph Bodle presented specific governance proposals from a study by Ecologic Institute for the German Federal

Environment Agency (UBA). The session was convened by UBA and moderated by R. Andreas Kraemer, Director of Ecologic Institute. Participants discussed in small groups key questions of regulating climate engineering research. The [study](#) is available for download.

Event

[Climate Engineering Conference 2014](#)

Organizer

[Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies](#) (IASS), Germany

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