

# Marine Plastic Pollution and the Rule of Law

## APCEL Book Launch Marine Plastic Pollution and the Rule of Law

20 October 2021

Marine plastic pollution is a severe transboundary environmental problem, which has worsened in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. On 20 October 2021, the Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law (APCEL) hosted the official launch of a new book, *Marine Plastic Pollution and the Rule of Law*. It is published in collaboration with the University of Cebu School of Law and the Korea Legislation Research Institute, with the generous financial support of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. APCEL's Senior Research Fellow, Dr. Linda Yanti Sulistiawati, and University of Cebu School of Law's Professor Rose-Liza Eisma-Osorio are the editors of this book.

*Marine Plastic Pollution and the Rule of Law* is a collection of eleven chapters focusing on the best practices and challenges of combating marine plastic pollution in the Asia-Pacific. It serves as a resource for academics, policymakers, and civil society on legal responses to the marine plastic pollution crisis. In particular, it examines how the law can be deployed to mitigate marine plastic pollution, and the challenges to implementation and enforcement at the international, regional and domestic levels.

Three contributors to the book spoke at the book launch.

Dr. Alice Palmer spoke about 'Regional Solutions: Export Measures for Plastic Recyclables to Reduce Marine Plastic Pollution in the Pacific'. Dr Palmer and her colleagues' research focused on the challenges faced by the 22 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) by examining the entire lifecycle of plastics from the point of entry into countries, their management within countries and, where available, the point of exit. Dr. Palmer highlighted how the 'lifecycle approach' tackles the reality that plastic management is a process and that suitable measures should be tailored to each stage of the plastics lifecycle. She also drew attention to the gaps in international and regional plastic management regimes, and proposed how the lifecycle approach can be integrated into regional cross-border solutions.

Ms. Peixuan Shang introduced her detailed exploration of 'Marine Plastic Governance through International Law in China: International Commitment and State Practice'. Therein, she identifies the three main challenges that China faces in the implementation of international legal obligations to marine plastic pollution: the rapid increase in domestic consumption, the high volume of imported plastics, and the mismanagement of plastic waste. While China has not undertaken or fulfilled a number of relevant international obligations, Ms. Shang argues that China is making concrete contributions 'at its own pace' through 'iron-handed' laws

against imported plastic waste, which produces the same outcome of restricting transboundary plastic waste movement.

Mr. Roger Joseph Guzman discussed the international and national legal instruments used to address marine debris from Abandoned, Lost or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG). Mr. Guzman noted that despite being one of the most serious threats to marine ecosystems and fisheries, the ALDFG does not receive as much regulatory attention as it should, especially in the Asia-Pacific. Within the region, there are also a slew of implementation challenges, such as the lack of proper waste management infrastructure, robust policies and technical capacities. Mr. Guzman advocated for the creation of a clear, overarching circular economy framework on marine litter that can trigger behavioural and systemic changes.

During the live 'Q&A' segment, the panellists addressed questions from the audience such as how marine plastic pollution regulations can play a key role in litigation and enforcement measures, and practical suggestions for how countries should share best practices.

The ebook can be downloaded [HERE](#).



**APCEL Book Launch : Marine Plastic Pollution and the Rule of Law Group Photo**

(From top left : Stefan SAMSE, Peixuan SHANG, Jiyeon CHOI

From middle left : Rose-Liza EISMA-OSORIO, Roger Joseph GUZMAN,Alice PALMER

From bottom left : Jolene LIN, Linda Yanti SULISTIAWATI)