

The Hague Environmental Law Facility (HELF) Lecture

"Oil and Gas in the Marine Arctic: the Rights and Responsibilities of States and Peoples"

26 May 2015

Speaker: Prof. Rachael Lorna Johnstone, University of Akureyri, Iceland

As the ice retreats in breadth and depth, the Arctic Ocean and surrounding seas are garnering increasing attention from oil companies, news agencies and environmental NGOs alike, each of which are alert to the opportunities and risks of offshore hydrocarbon development from a hitherto inaccessible sea-floor. Notwithstanding many contemporary accounts of the High North as an untamed frontier – both in the sense of being an uninhabited wilderness and in the sense of being unregulated by law – resource extraction in the Arctic is already extensively governed by international law.

In her recent monograph, *Offshore Oil and Gas Development in the Arctic under International Law: Risk and Responsibility*, Professor Rachael Lorna Johnstone explored the international legal framework for offshore hydrocarbon development in the Arctic. In her presentation, she will discuss the main findings of this book, with an emphasis on: the sovereign rights of Peoples; the no-harm principle in international environmental law; human rights and the rights of indigenous inhabitants of the High North; the precautionary approach; the duty to conduct an environmental impact assessment and monitor activities; and the consequences if States do not exercise due diligence or if damage is incurred.

Rachael Lorna Johnstone is Professor of Law at the University of Akureyri, Iceland. She has published widely on international law, including articles on Polar Law, human rights law, international environmental law, state responsibility and Scotland's place in international affairs.

Date: Tuesday 26 May 2015

Time: 15.00 - 17.00

Venue: T.M.C. Asser Instituut (R.J. Schimmelpennincklaan 20-22, The Hague)

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