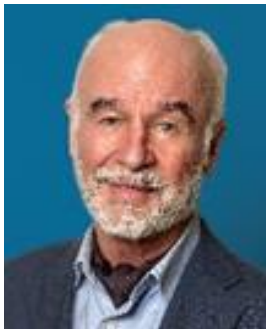


2023 Annual HRDD Forum Conference: The implications of mHREDD laws for the financial and legal sectors

Speaker Biographies



Stéphane Brabant
Trinity International

Stéphane Brabant is the Senior Partner of Trinity International AARPI (Trinity Paris) and Head of the firm's Business and Human Rights practice. Prior to joining Trinity Paris in 2021, Stéphane was a partner at Herbert Smith Freehills and held global key roles, including co-Chair of the Africa practice, Chair of Global Mining, Co-head of Business and Human Rights group and Head of the Crisis Management group for Africa.

Stéphane has over 30 years of experience as a projects and transactional lawyer. He has built a strong practice advising businesses on their environmental, social and governance (ESG) strategies and how they can align their activities with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He was one of the experts advising John Ruggie (former UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises) on the human rights capacity building obligations and responsibilities of States and multinationals. He has also built a strong understanding of Blockchain and its value in enabling traceability in supply chains.

Stéphane is a member of the Advisory Board of the Business & Human Rights Project of the American Bar Association's Center for Human Rights, the chair on the IBA drafting group for the Updated Guidance on BHRs for Business Lawyers and a member of BHRs Law Association. He is also a member of the Social Impacts, Project Affected Communities and Indigenous Peoples organisations of the Chamber of the Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Council and a former co-Chair of the International Bar Association's CSR work group.



Ryan Brightwell
Banktrack

Ryan Brightwell is Director of Research and Communications for BankTrack and leads its human rights campaign work. He has been working at the intersection of finance, human rights and sustainability for over 15 years in both civil society and private sector roles. Ryan joined BankTrack in 2012, before which worked as a specialist in ethical finance with The Co-operative Bank in the UK, and is also a board member at the Customer Union for Ethical Banking and at the development-finance-focused non-profit Recourse.



Clare Connellan
White & Case

Clare is a Partner based in White & Case's London office and works with the International Arbitration and Construction and Engineering Groups. She advises companies, state entities, contractors, owners and operators on the resolution of complex disputes, with a particular focus on disputes within the construction and engineering industry.

Clare has been involved in arbitrations under the ICC, LCIA, LMAA and CRCICA rules, as well as ad hoc arbitrations, including under the UNCITRAL rules. Clare also advises on alternative dispute resolution, including mediation, and is a CEDR-accredited mediator. She has spent time on secondment to the LCIA as counsel.

Clare is also Head of White & Case's Business & Human Rights Specialty Practice and also sits on the on the core team of ESG & Sustainability Speciality Group and on the Firm's Responsible Business Working Group . She is consulted in relation to issues involving the UNGPs, SDGs and UN Global Compact; the UK Modern Slavery Act compliance and statements; human rights governance, risk assessments and reputational issues; supply chain governance and risk assessments; corporate disclosures and sustainability reporting; and human rights training.



Dr. Rebecca DeWinter-Schmitt
Investor Alliance for Human Rights

Dr. Rebecca DeWinter-Schmitt is the Associate Director of the Investor Alliance for Human Rights, connecting institutional investors and their allies with the tools and strategies to promote human rights and responsible business conduct.

Rebecca is an expert in business and human rights whose two-decade career spans key consulting, advocacy, and academic roles to promote corporate respect for human rights. Prior to joining the ICCR team, Rebecca resided with her family in Berlin where she supported public and private sector organizations, to include the German government. She has advised companies in various industries on identifying and addressing their human rights impacts and co-founded a risk management consultancy specializing in helping organizations mitigate human rights risks associated with operating in complex environments. She has contributed extensively to standard setting in the private security industry.

Until August 2019, she directed the Human Rights in Business Program housed at American University Washington College of Law's Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law. Before joining the Center, Rebecca was an Assistant Professor at the School of International Service, where she taught courses on human rights and corporate social responsibility. Rebecca earned her PhD at the SIS for research pertaining to the anti-sweatshop movement.



Lara Douvartzidis
International Bar Association

Prior to joining the Legal Policy & Research Unit (LPRU) at the International Bar Association Lara Douvartzidis was a solicitor and Pro Bono coordinator at Johnson Winter & Slattery, and secondee at Australia's Public Interest Advocacy Centre. During her time in private practice, she advised and acted for corporate and pro bono clients with expertise in environment and planning law, dispute resolution and class actions, ESG and modern slavery law obligations and transitional issues faced by clients in these emerging areas. She is passionate about strategic climate litigation trends, First Nations justice, just transitions, and ESG related risk management and compliance.

She served as the Associate to the Honourable Chief Justice Kourakis of the Supreme Court of South Australia. She holds an Advanced Masters in European and International Human Rights Law (Ad. LLM) from Leiden University in The Netherlands and a double degree in Law (LLB) and Environmental Policy and Management (BEnvS) from the University of Adelaide, South Australia. She co-chairs the Business and Human Rights Subcommittee of the Australian Lawyers for Human Rights and was listed as an Australasian Rising Star in 2021, a Finalist in the Australian Lawyers Weekly 30 Under 30 Awards for Planning, Native Title and Environment Law in 2021, and a Finalist in the Women in Law Awards for Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year in 2020 and 2021.



Gabrielle Holly
Danish Institute of Human Rights

Gabrielle Holly is a Senior Adviser in the Business and Human Rights Department of the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR). She is a business and human rights specialist and an experienced commercial disputes practitioner having practiced over a decade at Magic Circle firms in Australia and the UK. She leads the work at DIHR on legal and regulatory developments relevant to fostering business respect for human rights.

Prior to joining DIHR, Gabrielle was a researcher in business and human rights at the British Institute of International and Comparative Law and has published research on human rights due diligence in supply chains, mandatory due diligence laws and implementation of the "smart mix", and the role of transnational tort in providing access to remedy under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Gabrielle is an Australian qualified lawyer and holds a Master of Laws with Distinction from the London School of Economics and Political Science and a combined Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Arts with Honours from the University of Western Australia.



Musonda Kapotwe

Mayer Brown

Musonda Kapotwe is a partner in the London office of the global law firm Mayer Brown LLP. Her role includes advising financial institutions and corporates on financial services regulations that impact their business and operations. A significant part of her practice involves advising on the nascent environmental, social and governance (ESG) regulations implemented to facilitate the transition to a net zero, expand green financial markets and embed sustainability into supply chains.



Dr. Alessandra Lehmen

Brazilian Bar

Alessandra Lehmen - Environmental and climate lawyer admitted in New York and Brazil. Partner, Juchem Advocacia. President, Brazilian Bar Environmental Law Commission, Rio Grande do Sul State Chapter. Member, National Commission on Climate Change and Natural Disasters, Federal Council of the Brazilian Bar. Postdoctoral Laureate, Make Our Planet Great Again Program, Presidency of France/CNRS/Aix-Marseille Université. Ph.D, International Law, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. W50 Leadership Scholar, London School of Economics and Political Science. LL.M., Environmental Law & Policy, Stanford Law School. Stanford Woods Institute Rising Environmental Leaders Fellow. Certificate in ESG Investing, CFA Institute. Law Professor, Caxias do Sul University, Brazil. Member, IUCN World Commission of Environmental Law.



Prof. Robert McCorquodale

UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights

Robert McCorquodale is a member of the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights, a five-member group of independent experts. He is Emeritus Professor of International Law and Human Rights at the University of Nottingham, and a barrister and mediator at Brick Court Chambers in London. Robert was the Director of the British Institute of International and Comparative Law for 10 years.

Robert has over 30 years of experience working in business and human rights, has published widely in this area, including through empirical research, and has advised business of all sizes and assisted governments and civil society around the world. His work has included capacity building, legislative proposals and training, as well as interviewing and qualitative research. He has appeared as an advocate before the International Court of Justice and the United Kingdom Supreme Court, and as a legal expert before United Nations bodies.



Paula-Ann Novotny
Webber Wentzel

Paula-Ann Novotny has experience in conducting environmental due diligence investigations and legal compliance audits, as well as contractual drafting and drafting legal opinions on a range of procedural, substantive and regulatory queries. In addition, she has assisted clients engaged in environmental permitting applications, prosecutions and appeal proceedings. She also compiles informative pieces and client alerts on legislative amendments and regulatory updates in environmental regimes, and has drafted textbook chapters and contributed environmental knowledge to various institutional platforms. Her experience extends to advising clients on ESG-related impacts, risks and opportunities, such as opining on dedicated environmental and climate change related laws, advising in support of project development and strategic M&A activity, establishing governance systems and procedures, and regulatory mapping. In 2022, she spent six months at Linklaters LLP in London on a secondment to their ESG team.



Letícia Perrone Campos Mello
**Secretary-General of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the
Brazilian National Bar Association**

Letícia Perrone Campos Mello is a dual-qualified lawyer in England /Wales and Brazil, the Partner of ESG and Climate at Wald Law Firm, Brazil, and the Representative of the Brazilian National Bar Association at COP26, 27 and 28. Secretary-general of the Permanent Foreign Affairs Committee and Former Chair of the Committee for the Defense of Sustainable Development of the Brazilian National Bar Association With over 15 years of progressively responsible experience as Senior Legal Counsel and Partner, she has led legal teams and outside counsel in first-chair disputes, complex arbitration and litigation matters, as well as in contractual matters, on behalf of major international and Brazilian corporations. Throughout her career as a lawyer at Tier 1 legal firms in Brazil and Europe, she has built solid success in managing strategic and high-profile cases in real estate, infrastructure, and trade finance sectors.



Dr. Irene Pietropaoli
British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL)

Dr. Irene Pietropaoli is a Senior Fellow in Business and Human Rights and joined BIICL in October 2018. She conducts research on corporate human rights due diligence, other aspects of implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on business and human rights, and legislation on modern slavery in supply chain. Irene is also leading BIICL's work on Artificial Intelligence and its links with business and human rights.

Prior to joining BIICL, Irene worked with international organisations and NGOs in different countries of Europe, Latin America, South and Southeast Asia in the area of business and human rights. For three years, she was based in Yangon, Myanmar, where she worked as a business and human rights consultant for both Amnesty International and FIDH. Previously, she was a Senior Researcher at Business & Human Rights Resource Centre. She also worked for the legal programme of ECPAT International in Thailand and for the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in Costa Rica. At the beginning of her career Irene was a legal practitioner in Madrid, Spain.

Irene has published regularly in international human rights law journals, books, and newspapers. Her monograph 'Business, Human Rights and Transitional Justice' was published in May 2020 by Routledge.

Irene holds a PhD from the school of Law of Middlesex University, London. Her thesis is on remedies for corporate human rights abuses in transitional justice contexts. She has a first class honours LL.M in International Human Rights Law from the Irish Centre for Human Rights and first degrees in Law from the University La Sapienza of Rome and from the University of Barcelona.



Vaidehee Sachdev
Aviva Investors

Vaidehee Sachdev is the Social Lead in the Sustainable Outcomes Team at Aviva Investors. She provides thematic expertise for the Social Transition Fund and on Aviva's work on human and labour rights. Vaidehee worked in the NGO sector prior to joining Aviva Investors. This included developing a corporate reporting framework for workforce and labour practices at ShareAction, and delivering research on human rights abuses, corruption and minority groups for environmental and human rights organisations.



Lise Smit
British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL)

Lise Smit is Senior Research Fellow in Business and Human Rights, and joined BIICL in March 2015. She conducts research on corporate human rights due diligence and other aspects of implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Prior to joining the Institute, Lise was a practicing advocate at the Cape Town Bar in South Africa. She has worked on business and human rights issues for the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre and the UN Global Compact Office. She was also law clerk to the Chief Justice of South Africa, Pius Langa, at the South African Constitutional Court. She has authored various publications in the area of business and human rights, including on human rights litigation against companies.

Lise has an LLM in human rights law from the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, and a Masters in International Law and Economics from the World Trade Institute in Berne, Switzerland.



Suzanne Spears

Paxus LLP

Suzanne Spears is the Founder & Principal of Paxus LLP. Suzanne is recognised globally for her expertise in international law, international arbitration and business and human rights. Prior to founding Paxus, she spent twenty years practicing in these areas with leading global law firms in London and New York. Most recently, she was a Partner in the Litigation, Arbitration & Investigations Group at Allen & Overy, where she co-headed the Global Business & Human Rights Practice and co-founded the ESG Group.

Suzanne advises and represents governments, international organisations and private clients on a wide range of contentious and non-contentious issues arising under public international law. She regularly acts as counsel before international commercial and Investor-State arbitration tribunals (including under the ICC, UNCITRAL, ICSID, PCA and other rules) and she has experience in transnational tort litigation, State-to-State arbitration and proceedings before the International Court of Justice.

In addition to being a lawyer, with a J.D. from Columbia University School of Law, Suzanne is a political and social scientist, with a master's from Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs, and a bachelor's in International Relations from Tufts University. She was a U.S. Fulbright Scholar in Spain and has held positions with the United Nations (in New York and Colombia), the Council on Foreign Relations and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights.



Junko Watanabe

Nishimura & Asahi

Junko has been advising companies in dealing with sustainability-related matters from a global legal perspective, including international human rights law, international labor law, EU/Asian laws and regulations on human rights, environment and other sustainability-related issues. Based on her experience working on a wide range of domestic and international corporate matters including various matters in Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries for more than seven years and overseas study and business experience in the UK for three years, she has been engaged in supporting Japanese companies in dealing with sustainability issues, while collaborating in various legal fields and jurisdictions including M&A, labour law, trade law, risk management, European law and Asian law etc.

She has been a consultant to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) since 2021 and was a key leader in the development of the "Guidelines for Responsible Corporate Behaviour in the Textile Industry" established by the Japan Textile Federation in July 2022. She is a member of the Sustainability Advisory Board of Sumitomo Corporation, a member of the Advisory and Mediation Committee of the Japan Center for Engagement and Remedy on Business and Human Rights, and a managing member of the Business and Human Rights Lawyers Network in Japan.