

The Arctic as a Distinct Legal Sphere for Promoting International Scientific Cooperation

Professor Akiho Shibata

Abstract

In this presentation, Professor Shibata will examine the new legally binding agreement being negotiated under the Scientific Cooperation Task Force (SCTF) of the Arctic Council (AC) and highlight its legal significance and remaining issues. Based on “informed speculation” of the draft agreement (the negotiating text is not publicly available), Professor Shibata will argue that this agreement will be epoch-making in the treaty-making exercise under the auspices of AC in that it may establish a distinct legal sphere for promotion of Arctic science, encompassing both land and sea, integrating relevant science both from and outside of the Arctic area, and (potentially) extending its benefits both to the Arctic and non-Arctic States and their scientists. He will situate this within the historical development from the establishment of International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) in 1990.