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# ADVOCATE

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Lewis & Clark Law School

## IELP Supports Most Vulnerable Countries at Climate Change Negotiations

The International Environmental Law Project (IELP), Lewis & Clark Law School's international environmental clinic, traveled to Cancun, Mexico, in December to participate in the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the U.N. Framework Agreement on Climate Change. Currently, the 192 parties to the climate change agreement are negotiating a sequel to the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012, as well as a new agreement that prescribes mitigation commitments for both developing and developed countries, including the United States.

IELP spent weeks in advance of the meeting and long hours during the two-week conference in collaboration with Islands First, a nongovernmental organization based in New York City, supporting the interests of Pacific island

countries during the negotiations. The Pacific islands are likely to suffer some of the earliest and most extreme consequences of climate change, up to and including complete obliteration as sea levels rise. The countries that inhabit these islands are, consequently, on the frontlines of the climate change debate. They have everything to lose, but these nations are also some of the least developed in the world and thus have limited capacity to engage effectively in the climate change debates.

This is where IELP comes in. IELP Professors Chris Wold '90 and Erica Lyman '05, along with a team of six students, served as a pro bono legal team for the Pacific island countries. The students—Karen Barnett LL.M. '11, Amanda Caffall '11, Jenny Keatinge '12, Amelia Linn '12, Danielle Shaw '11, and

Grant Wilson '12—and professors drafted legal briefings on key agenda items in advance of the meeting, drafted briefings on issues as they arose during the negotiations, analyzed and drafted text for the countries as new versions of various documents were released, attended meetings as rapporteurs, and participated in brainstorming and strategy sessions. Delegates praised the work of the students and frequently observed how helpful the clinic's contributions were to the Pacific Island countries.

Perhaps most important, the students were provided with an unparalleled opportunity to witness and participate in international lawmaking at the ground level. As Caffall notes, "Having the opportunity and ability to practice law at the climate change negotiations and being able to see my work truly

make a difference to the countries most at risk is what makes Lewis & Clark Law School special."

IELP also continued its work on the World Heritage Convention and climate change. Linn, Shaw, and Barnett put together a handbook on the subject for low-lying island countries, identifying the ways in which the World Heritage Convention could be a useful tool for addressing the rising sea levels. Barnett was able to introduce the handbook and give a copy to the president of Kiribati, Anote Tong. "Being able to hand-deliver and discuss my work with the president of a country that has taken one of the strongest stances in the climate change fight is an experience that I will never forget. Not many law students have that kind of opportunity." ■