The International Community’s Response to Loss and Damage from Climate Change

Global climate change has the potential to cause serious harm to existing and future generations. Populations located in the developing world, due to their heightened physical and socio-economic vulnerability, are most vulnerable to such harm. Some of these harms will occur in the future if they are not prevented, some will occur because they cannot be prevented, and some have already occurred. Where experiencing such harms (which are referred to in the international climate change negotiations as ‘losses and damages’) goes beyond what is reasonable for a population to bear as part of their ‘common but differentiated responsibility’ to respond to climate change, a serious injustice arises. This paper explores the puzzle of how, if at all, the international community should respond to different types of loss and damage that go beyond what any population should be expected to bear without assistance from the international community. Taking a corrective justice approach as its starting point, my work in the project focuses on the normative principles that should guide measures seeking to address different types of losses and damages experienced by populations in developing states.