



A New Direction in Intellectual Property Treaty-making? Winning Against the Odds for Human Rights, Equity, and Indigenous Peoples

Thursday 8 May - Friday, 9 May 2025

Call for Papers

(Expression of Interest by Friday, 7th February 2025)

Abstract (maximum 250 words) by Friday 28th of February

The **School of Law, University of Leeds**, is hosting a two-day international conference on “A New Direction in Intellectual Property Treaty-Making?” **on 8 – 9 May 2025** at the University of Leeds campus. The conference is part-funded by the **Society of Legal Scholars**.

Theme:

Since the World Trade Organization introduced the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) in 1995, global intellectual property (IP) standards have elevated significantly, often favouring rights holders from high-income countries. This conference will focus on two major post-TRIPS treaties negotiated under WIPO: the 2013 Marrakesh Treaty and the 2024 WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property Rights, Genetic Resources, and Associated Traditional Knowledge. These treaties represent a departure from traditional IP norms that predominantly benefit corporations in the Global North. By expanding the scope of non-infringing activity or re-balancing rights with the interests of vulnerable groups, they promote fundamental legal change in favour of the (hitherto) unfavoured.

This conference aims to contribute to global discussions on IP treaty-making, enhance synergies between intangible property and sustainable human development, and explore how marginalised groups, such as Indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities, can successfully influence treaty outcomes.

Key Questions to be Addressed:

- Why and how were these treaties adopted despite significant opposition from economically and politically powerful interests?
- What lessons from previous IP global negotiations facilitated their successful adoption?

- Are these treaties outliers, or do they represent a broader trend toward more equitable IP standards?
- What can academics do to influence the creation of international IP norms to serve the interests of people experiencing poverty and exclusion?
- How has the Marrakesh Treaty influenced the advancement of disability rights within international human rights frameworks? What lessons can be drawn from its implementation to improve access to knowledge and cultural participation for persons with disabilities in future international treaties?
- What expectations are realistic for the 2024 WIPO Treaty in terms not just of transparency but enhancing fair and equitable relations between Indigenous peoples, businesses, and governments?

Submission Guidelines:

The organisers invite submissions for panel papers addressing the conference theme and key questions. We encourage contributions from a range of disciplinary perspectives, including legal, social, economic, and cultural analyses. Submissions from early-career researchers and postgraduate students are particularly welcome.

Panel participants should expect to speak for 20 minutes, followed by a 10-minute Q&A session.

Please submit a brief abstract (maximum 250 words) outlining your proposed paper and a 100-word biography to Email: g.m.dutfield@leeds.ac.uk by Friday 28th of February.

Additional Information:

An edited collection of selected papers from the conference is planned for publication. **UK-based travel and accommodation costs will be provided for some selected applicants.**

For further information or queries, please contact **Email: g.m.dutfield@leeds.ac.uk .**

Conference Organising Committee:

Graham Dutfield, School of Law
Subhajt Basu, School of Law
Ioanna Lapatoura, School of Law
Cesar Ramirez Montes, School of Law
Rebecca Moosavian, School of Law
Igor Szpotakowski, School of Law
Amaka Vanni, School of Law