



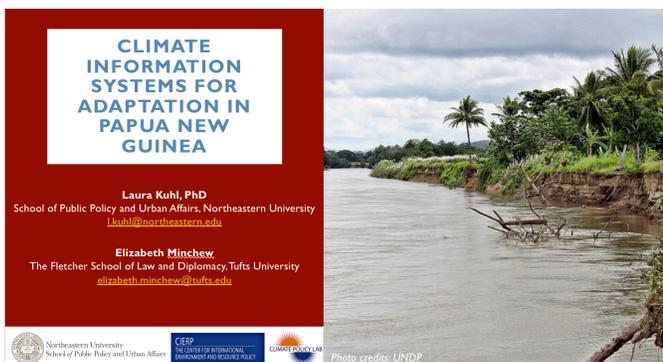
5th INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE
ADAPTATION CONFERENCE

CAPE TOWN
SOUTH AFRICA 18-21 JUNE 2018

From June 18 to 21, I had the incredible opportunity to attend and present at the fifth Adaptation Futures international conference series on global adaptation. The conference aimed to facilitate dialogues for solutions between key actors from diverse perspectives and regions and attracted over 1300 scientists, practitioners, business leaders and policymakers from around the world.



I was not only an attendee at the conference. Along with Laura Kuhl, an assistant professor at Northeastern University and graduate of Fletcher's MALD and PhD programs, I presented research I conducted in the summer of 2017 while interning with UNDP in Papua New Guinea. We are currently working on a paper that discusses the role of climate information systems in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction policy. This is a very dynamic topic, and my research in PNG provides an interesting and critical backdrop to the ongoing debate over whether climate information is even an appropriate tool for both types of policies.



The most gratifying takeaway from the conference was the amount of support we received for sharing our critical perspective on climate information. The conference had six focus areas that aimed to drive attendees towards introspection on their own work and engage in dialogues to develop alternative approaches, or solutions. Our topic fit in perfectly with this model, and we made numerous valuable connections with colleagues working on exactly the same issue around the world.

PRESENTATION OPENING SLIDE.

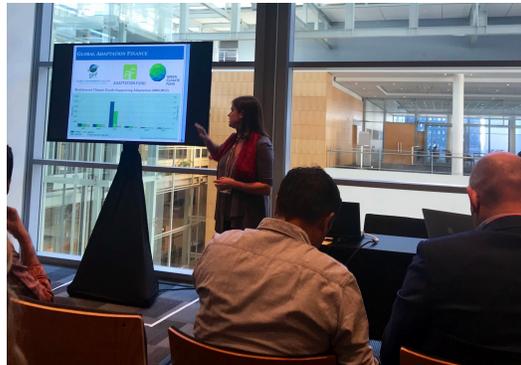
Another important product of attending the conference was the opportunity to re-connect with old colleagues I met from previous work or having attended COP22 and COP23. I truly felt as if I belonged at the conference due to my ability to recognize certain target audiences as well as reconnect with previous colleagues.

I left the conference with many new business cards and potential contacts for continued collaboration. I even received requests for copies of my presentation as it aligned with people's work who I did not have the opportunity to meet in person. As Laura and I work to publish our findings, it's vital to have people affirm the relevance of our work as well as demonstrate interest in supporting it in the future. This visibility added huge value to our research, and opened some potential career doors for me as well.

The conference was also valuable in its focus on the African region, particularly southern Africa. The Western Cape has been experiencing severe water shortages stemming from a climate-change induced drought starting in 2015. In February 2018, the government asked citizens to limit consumption to 50 liters per person per day. They anticipated "Day Zero" - the day that taps would be turned off at homes and businesses and people would have to go to communal water taps - arriving in conjunction with the conference. This day has now been pushed back, thanks to the city's water saving campaigns



CLOSING PLENARY



LAURA KUHL PRESENTING

and the enthusiastic response from Capetonians.

On the last day of the conference, the mayor of Cape Town announced that the city had halved its water usage over the past several months, and that there was no reason to go back to previous

consumption levels. This is an exceptional example of adaptation to climate change, and was a powerful undercurrent to the conference. It also provided a learning opportunity for other nations struggling with water shortages, by demonstrating how people are capable of responding to and adapting to climate change.

In addition to attending the conference, making solid connections, and witnessing the power of climate adaptation responses, I was able to explore Cape Town and the Western Cape in the weekend leading up to the conference. I always find it valuable to familiarize myself with a region even if I am traveling for work. The flora and fauna of the Western Cape are incredibly unique and adapted to living in a harsh environment. Overall I had an incredible time sharing my research and demonstrating my

skills learned at Tufts while thoroughly enjoying a new part of the world.

EXPLORING CAPE TOWN.

FROM L>R: SIMON'S TOWN PENGUIN COLONY, CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, VIEW FROM TABLE MOUNTAIN, AND DOWNTOWN CAPE TOWN.

