Preface

This book developed from discussions on International Law, Natural Resources and Sustainable Development at the University of Warwick¹ as well as from contributions to a special edition of the *International Journal of Law in Context*.² The objective of these discussions and subsequent journal collection was to consider national and international approaches to the regulation of natural resources in developing countries and the impact of such approaches on sustainable development and on the evolution of international law.

Both initiatives brought together academics, policymakers and campaigners to examine and assess the legal and regulatory regimes pertaining to the governance of natural resources in developing countries. The centrality of natural resources to global economic growth has meant that the ownership and control over natural resources have been at the forefront of legal, territorial and political disputes between states, particularly between the north and south. At the same time, the links between natural resource depletion and environmental degradation, impoverishment and human rights violations mean that the governance and management of natural resources remains a critical arena for local and transnational contestation.

All the chapters in this collection highlight the fact that the international governance and management of natural resources has become an important area for international research, law and policymaking in the coming years as the contestation and conflict over their use become more acute. It is critical that these issues be addressed in a comprehensive and holistic manner with prominence given to voices from the south, where these tensions and conflicts are realised in the most acute and often devastating ways. These tensions will only be resolved if the international

¹ Workshop on International Law, Natural Resources, University of Warwick, 11–13 September 2013: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/research/clusters/international/devconf>

² *International Journal of Law in Context* 11 (2) on 'International Economic Law, Natural Resources and Sustainable Development', Faundez, J and Tan, C (eds) (2015).

community establishes a comprehensive and equitable legal framework for the regulation of natural resources. Such a framework should take into account all the economic, social and political interests at play, without privileging the interests of foreign investors. We hope that the essays in this collection will make a contribution towards securing this important objective.

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