Along with two students from our environmental law clinic, Rhead Enion and I are traveling to Durban, South Africa today as observer delegates to the annual meeting of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Dan noted in a recent post that the Durban meeting has been largely flying under the radar of public attention, especially as compared with the UN Copenhagen meeting two years ago (which I am told was, for a brief moment, the most Googled subject in the world). But as Dan also explained, there's a lot at stake.

The central questions are, as always, about GHG reductions and about money. Will we continue to have international, legally binding emission reduction targets after the Kyoto Protocol commitments expire, in about a year? Or will the world transition to less formalized pledge-and-review commitments? Will the UN continue to be the locus of much of the international dialogue on this issue? And will developed countries make good on their significant pledges of financial support to assist developing countries with transitions to a clean economy, with adaptation efforts, and with losses and damage that occur because of climate change impacts?

We will be blogging from the meeting with updates and analysis. Our perspective will likely be informed by work our students have been doing this semester with Islands First, an NGO that assists delegations from a set of small island developing states to help ensure that their concerns are heard and addressed. Stay tuned–should be an interesting week.