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Singapore's Transboundary Pollution Bill - Prospects and Challenges by Helena Muhamad Varkkey

Last June saw Singapore battling with its most severe episode of haze yet. During that period Singapore's Pollutant Standards Index hit the all time record high of 401. This event ignited a diplomatic row between Indonesia and Singapore, with Singapore's Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources , Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan almost immediately accusing Indonesia of not caring about the welfare of its neighbours. It was also around this time that Dr. Balakrishnan first revealed plans to table a Transboundary Pollution Bill that would provide for criminal and civil liability for any Singaporean or non-Singaporean entity causing or contributing to transboundary haze pollution in Singapore.

The Draft Bill

A draft version of the Bill has now been released, and the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources is seeking the views of the public on this draft. The consultation period will last until 19 March 2014, before the bill is reviewed and tabled at Parliament. Dr Balakrishnan hopes to have the Bill passed within the first half of this year.

The Bill is unique for its application of extra-territoriality; it covers the operations of all

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