FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During my time as a climate change campaigner we invented the slogan “Face up to Climate Change!” which featured on buttons, sand bags which formed a dyke at an important international climate conference (COP6 in the Hague), T-Shirts and umbrellas. I still think this slogan should be stuck on every wall. Working on this book has made me realise again just how fragile the system we call climate is – and just how quickly we are destroying a balance which we barely understand.

While this is a legal analysis – a book on international law – I cannot and do not want to hide the fact that I am biased. I firmly believe that preventing climate change damage, especially injury to those most vulnerable (including ecosystems worldwide) is a moral obligation. I also believe that spelling out the legal responsibilities of States will help us become more conscious of what we are doing to the planet. We cannot continue depleting the world’s fossil fuel resources as if there is no tomorrow – in the literal sense. I hope therefore that this book not only enriches the legal debate but that the ideas enshrined in it will also provide food for thought for those with decision-making power.

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This book is dedicated to my little daughter Flora and her generation.

Roda Verheyen, April 2005