

Global change and the coastal challenge

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Climate change is being given a great deal of attention in both scientific and political discussions concerning sustainable coastal development. However, there is a further dimension to factors that will influence the health and productivity of coastal systems and the welfare of coastal peoples and that is Global Change. Global change incorporates changes to climate and changes to terrestrial and ocean systems created through human development. For example, the building of dams over 15 metres in height over the past hundred years has resulted in a 700% decrease in freshwater, sediments and energy entering coastal systems. This Keynote talk will explore some of the major factors associated with global change and the challenge of moving towards more sustainable use of coastal ecosystems and associated human development.

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