

Climate Change and Developing Countries (Advances in Global Change Research)

Nijavalli H. Ravindranath, Jayant A. Sathaye

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Among global environmental issues, climate change has received the largest attention of national and global policy makers, researchers, industry, multilateral banks and NGOs. Climate change is one of the most important global environmental problems with unique characteristics. It is global, long-term (up to several centuries) and involves complex interactions between climatic, environmental, economic, political, institutional and technological pressures. It is of great significance to developing countries as all the available knowledge suggests that they, and particularly their poorer inhabitants, are highly vulnerable to climate impacts. The projected warming of 1. 4 to 5. 8° C by 2100 and the related changes in rainfall pattern, rise in sea-level and increased frequency of extreme events (such as drought, hurricanes and storms) are likely to threaten food security, increase fresh water scarcity, lead to decline in biodiversity, increase occurrence of vector-borne diseases, cause flooding of coastal settlements, etc. Recognizing the potential threat of severe disruptions, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was organized in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to begin to address ways to reduce these impacts, which led to the formulation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. This Convention and the subsequent Kyoto Protocol recognize "the common but differentiated responsibility" of developing and industrialized countries in addressing climate change. Developing countries thus have a unique role to play in formulating a sound, reasoned, and well informed response to the threat of climate change.



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