



Delft University of Technology

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Editorial

As incoming Editors-in-Chief of Environmental Development, Prof Jill Slinger and Dr Neville Sweijd feel it appropriate to introduce ourselves and share something of our vision for the development of the Journal.

First, however, we wish to acknowledge the sterling role of Dr Natarajan Ishwaran, who served as Editor-in-Chief of Environmental Development from January 2018 until December 2021. Under his leadership, the journal achieved an impact factor of 3.4 and grew in popularity with a submission rate of almost 1000 manuscripts per year. Dr Ishwaran remains involved in the journal as an advisor to the new team of Editors-in-Chief and as an experienced reviewer. We thank him for his ongoing contribution.

Indeed, the set of papers that appear in Issue 42 of Environmental Development provide a good example of what the journal aims to accomplish. As an inter- and transdisciplinary journal we have, as usual, a broad range of papers that deal with globally relevant environmental and development issues at a range of scales, from the local and community level through to the regional and even national levels. Importantly, many of the contributions to this issue are based in the lived experience of people dealing with environmental and development challenges at each of these scales and drawing upon their perspectives and traditional knowledge in the issues they face. Moreover, we are pleased that the role of enterprises, such as tourism, agriculture, industries and businesses, in achieving resilience and co-generating situation specific solutions is also addressed by the set of papers in this issue.

As a newly appointed team of Editors-in-Chief, we have revisited the Aims and Scope (among other elements) of the journal and wish to bring this to your attention. We intend that the journal should publish “bold and innovative research applications, methods and practices that balance the need for development with the long-term needs of society and the natural environment. This includes adaptation and mitigation strategies to address the impacts of climate related trends, and developmental responses to the problems of over-consumption or failures to manage the impacts of economic activities with due regard to the long-term implications for society and the natural environment. New insights and approaches to environmental development that contribute to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are welcomed. The journal seeks to provide a platform for scientific and experiential knowledge exchange among environmental scientists, development practitioners, policy professionals, communities of practice and research beneficiaries. With its interest in research and practices that contribute to globally relevant environment and development issues at local and regional scales, the journal offers a forum for international research, communication, discussion and global action on environmental development”. The full, updated description of the Aims and Scope of Environmental Development, can be found [here](#).

Finally, before we indulge in a little more about our backgrounds and interests, we must also acknowledge that this issue appears at a precarious time in world history. The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change has now published Working Group I, II and III Assessment 6 Reports on the science, the assessment of impact, and the mitigation of climate change. Also the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) was concluded in Glasgow, in November 2021. To cite the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, speaking at the *Economist* Sustainability Summit ([‘chief warns against’, 2022](#)), “Well, there is no kind way to put it, the 1.5-degree goal is on life support. It is in intensive care. And we must tell it like it is. The world emerged from Glasgow with a certain naïve optimism. Yes, we saw some progress at COP 26. Commitments to end deforestation. To reduce methane emissions. To encourage International Financial Institutions to consider climate vulnerabilities in their support, including Special Drawing Rights. To finally close the Paris rule book with agreement on carbon markets and transparency. To mobilize private finance through the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero – even if, let’s face it, some companies continue to take decisions that favour fossil fuels. But the main problem was not solved – it was not even properly addressed. And that main problem is the enormous emissions gap. The science is clear. So is the math. Keeping 1.5 alive requires a 45 per cent reduction in global emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by mid-century. That problem was not solved in Glasgow. In fact, the problem is getting worse”. Mr Guterres also noted that

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the world is just emerging from the global Covid-19 pandemic and is now having to deal with devastating conflict in Ukraine, among many other issues, and he spoke about the environmental consequences of these challenges. This is the challenging situation that faces the editorial team of Environmental Development as we invite you to continue to grow the knowledge base upon which decision making can draw and to contribute your insights to the academic and practitioner discourse on potential responses and solutions.

At Environmental Development we feel that our contribution to addressing these challenges is a small, yet important one, and we are motivated to ensure that the journal achieves just that and more!

As it happens, both Dr Neville Sweijd and Prof Jill Slinger share a South African background. Dr Sweijd, who lives in Cape Town, South Africa, is a marine scientist by training and works in the area of earth systems science, co-ordinating a research programme and conducting his own research on the effects of extreme climate events in various sectors of the economy.

Prof Slinger, who now lives in The Netherlands, works at the science-policy interface. First in her role as an environmental scientist and policy advisor at CSIR in South Africa, and currently as researcher and teacher in environmental systems modelling, water and coastal engineering, and policy analysis at Delft University of Technology. She holds an honorary visiting professorship at Rhodes University in South Africa and advisory positions on national councils in the Netherlands. Her research activities focus on using ecosystem-based design knowledge to support transdisciplinary interactions between people, science and policy in river and coastal systems – a co-design approach to planning and management.

Finally, we thank our contributors, our readership, our editorial team and colleagues at Elsevier and hope you both learn from and enjoy reading Issue 42 of Environmental Development.

Reference

UN chief warns against 'sleepwalking to climate catastrophe'. 21st March 2022. Secretary-General's remarks to Economist Sustainability Summit. Accessible at: <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1c/k1caka4eie>.

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