

# CCC Statement



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- *Chairman of the Second Delta State Committee, the Netherlands 2008*
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The Dutch take the impact of climate change seriously. We cannot do otherwise; we are living in a vulnerable low-lying deltaic country:

- Our deepest polder with human settlements lies 6.5 m below mean sea level,
- Our national airport (fourth largest of Europe) is located 4.5 m below mean sea level,
- Several trillion Euros of capital investments in flood prone areas are at risk.

Our reference points are two large flooding disasters in the last century: 1916 and 1953. The recovery from these two events took several decades. Nowadays, we assess the impacts of climate change and we realise that responding needs extra vigilance, additional overarching, integrating institutional arrangements and the creation of reserve funds.

Is this acute, no, is it urgent, yes.

This need of urgency must be shared with the inhabitants of one of the most densely populated coastal countries.

As Chairman of the 'Second Delta State Committee – Outlook for the Netherlands in 2100: safe and sustainable', I choose to include a worst-case climate change scenario of 1.3 m sea level rise in the 21<sup>st</sup> century - why? Because we, in the Netherlands, know that preparing long-term measures takes many years, whilst their execution takes many decades. Dutch society needs to know, whether there is a need to change fundamentally our present strategy for dealing with the risks associated with living in a flood prone delta. The good news is that even the worst-case scenario can be handled, both technically and economically.

We propose mostly no-regret, win-win adaptive responses. Implementation should begin immediately and intensified as soon as the signals for an accelerated, irrevocable change are clear.

One of the examples of a no-regret, resilient measure, is to defend our coast from sea level rise and increased storminess, by using the flexible approach of sand nourishment on our sandy coasts. We have been gaining experience with this economically viable and effective coastal engineering method since the 1990s.

An example of a win-win solution is to increase significantly the storage-capacity of our largest fresh water Lake IJsselmeer, by raising the water level and the surrounding dikes with 1.5 m. This will improve the supply of fresh water, and help counteract the much drier summer seasons anticipated in the future. Raising these dikes, including the 1932 Afsluit Dijk (Enclosure Dam) also provides a higher level of security against the increased risk of flooding.

Some of the proposed solutions are required anyway, for other reasons. Strong economic growth, increase in capital investment and population necessitates a thorough review of risks and new safety standards for our dune and dike systems.

We have gained experience over many centuries how to cope with the sea and the rivers, which are often a friend but sometimes, a foe. We are preparing for the impacts of climate change and are learning how to plan and implement timely adaptive measures. Our experiences have been shared with other low-lying countries. We have seen that international cooperation is mutually beneficial. We look forward to exchanging our practical experiences with you, through this "Climate of Coastal Cooperation" - publication.