

# Message from

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More than sixty percent of the world's population lives within 60 kilometers of the coast. The world's coastal zones represent a precious resource. They are vital to international trade, habitation, wildlife, travel, recreation and energy capture. Economic development, social development and protection of the environment are equally important.

The management of coastal resources is quite a challenge. Many coastal zones are placed under intense pressures. Nations and communities must balance the benefits of short-term resource exploitation with long-term resilience. Adaptation to climate change has become a priority policy issue around the world.

As State Secretary of Infrastructure and the Environment, I am responsible for water policy in the Netherlands. A fascinating job! The Netherlands is a dynamic and densely-populated delta. It has a long tradition of water management; our ancestors have been 'water managers' for almost one thousand years. Given its vulnerable position in a low-lying delta, coastal zone management and flood protection are of the utmost importance to the Netherlands. We have chosen an adaptation strategy in which we look one hundred years into the future. Our Delta Programme identifies appropriate policies to protect the country from high water and secure its freshwater supply for today and the future.

We have learned how to keep our feet dry with infrastructure and engineering. And we have learned to find solutions in which Mother Nature lends a helping hand. An eye-catching example is the so-called Sand-Engine (see photo). We are depositing millions of cubic meters of sand in the shape of a large hook, extending from our coast. Wind and waves will spread this sand along the coast, making it stronger. With this approach, the Netherlands is a front runner.

Together delta countries can find better answers to the great challenges they are facing. We recognise the need to share information, experiences and knowledge. Therefore, we are a driving force behind intensifying international cooperation. Important in this respect are:

- The Netherlands Water Partnership. An umbrella organization for the public sector, companies, knowledge institutions and non-governmental organizations that aims to increase international exchange of knowledge and technology.
- The Delta Alliance. An international knowledge-driven network aiming to improve the resilience of the world's deltas.

This 'Climate of Coastal Cooperation'-publication is meant for anyone interested in coastal zone management. It contains a wealth of experience on coastal processes obtained through programmes and projects in Asia and Europe. Many of these projects were planned and executed with the support of the Dutch government and Dutch companies and universities.

I hope this production will strengthen the exchange of experience and will encourage the planning of adaptive measures to address the strongly changing conditions in the world's coastal zones.