

Springer Climate

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Stewardship of Future Drylands and Climate Change in the Global South

Challenges and Opportunities for the
Agenda 2030

 Springer

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The world has entered a period of unprecedented change, as conveyed by the Great Acceleration. Our planetary life support system has the potential to be overwhelmed by the combined forces of climate change, declining biodiversity, pollution and social unrest or more positively to chart a course to a sustainable future that pacifies these forces for coming generations. Equally positively, in 2015, the world came together to endorse Agenda 2030 with its set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a remarkable agreement among all nations of the world as to the form of the future we want.

Nowhere are the challenges and opportunities more evident than in the drylands of the world. Drylands are the ‘canary in the mine’ for human disruption due to global change. The dependence of a billion of their inhabitants’ livelihoods on ecosystem services means that dryland peoples are among the first to be affected by widespread changes such as land degradation, climate change and undermined water cycles. Not surprisingly, many of the world’s refugee movements can be linked to resource pressures in drylands. Yet in the past, their challenging environments also made them a source of many social and technical innovations; and this continues today, with persisting traditional linguistic and cultural diversity. Thus, there is hope.

But this hope will only be realized through systematic efforts to entrain research and local knowledge towards an understanding of how to support the drylands better, as well as the implementation of this understanding. This book is a first major product of a relatively new network, RISZA, focused on collective learning about the sustainability of the drylands of the Global South. It builds on advances in drylands thinking over the past two decades, including the evolving Drylands Development Paradigm, but is the first to frame this effort in conjunction with the SDGs.

The contributors to the book frame the challenges of drylands as guiding complex adaptive social-ecological systems, looking through various sectoral lenses but with the whole framework of the SDGs in view. Parts of the book emphasize the potential for alliances at all scales from local transdisciplinary engagement to regional alliances, like the Agadir Platform, and global networks, like RISZA itself, as well as alliances across disciplines and technologies and even in to the arts and

74 humanities that are so important for framing the cultural norms and messaging
75 through which the world views drylands.

76 I look forward to see the fruits of the discussions and partnerships which have
77 taken root through the development of this book and which are so important for the
78 future of the drylands and their inhabitants.

[\[AU\]](#)

79 Canberra, ACT, Australia
80 May 2019

Mark Stafford Smith

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