

Hot & Bothered: Advancing Public Policy in a Warming World

Robert Sandford (Institute for Water, Environment and Health , United Nations University, Hamilton, Canada)

A global crisis is emerging at the nexus of water, food, energy and biodiversity to which policy makers at national and sub-national levels have been slow to respond. Population and economic growth, massive land-use and land cover changes, resource development and alterations we have made to the composition of the Earth's atmosphere have in tandem energized the global hydrologic cycle. Our warmer atmosphere now carries more water vapour which has triggered more frequent and far more intense extreme weather events. Precipitation patterns are changing altering the extent and duration of winter snowfall widely. While much is understood of these matters in the scientific community, we are only now beginning to realize the extent to which our social, economic and political stability regionally and globally are dependent upon relative hydrological predictability. This presentation will offer observations on the critical importance of successfully translating scientific research outcomes from networks like INARCH into language the average person can understand and that decision-makers can use to craft timely and durable public policy. By exploring obstacles that face evidence-based policy evolution of water and water-related climate issues globally and outlining the latest global developments aimed at addressing these problems, this presentation will put into relief how to make science more immediately relevant in the global public context.