

## Abstract

# Sustainable Development Challenges in Asia after the Tsunami

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The December 2004 tsunami was one of the most devastating natural disasters in terms of human, environmental, and economic impacts in the coastal areas of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, southern India, and Thailand. Beyond the substantive loss of life and population displacement, environmental and infrastructure damage, and significant economic losses and setbacks, the tsunami highlighted the underlying coastal vulnerabilities caused by tremendous population pressures and the related environmental stresses and poor management and development. Coastal areas are of critical importance as they account for a relatively high proportion of the population of these countries as well as foreign exchange earnings but also with regard to pollution and threats to environment, especially marine biodiversity.

The tsunami has alerted the planners and the public in the coastal areas to move beyond the rhetoric of coastal development and management. As in most parts of the world, coastal areas in South Asia are over developed, over crowded and over exploited. There is rampant pollution and degradation that threatens coastal ecosystems and marine biodiversity. Development and management practices tend to focus on economic issues with relatively little consideration of the long term ecological sustainability

This paper discusses the priority issues and integrated actions towards achieving sustainable development of the coastal areas in South Asia. The paper is divided into four sections focusing on,

- Coastal Development: Population, Culture and Livelihoods, Physical Infrastructure, Economy and Tourism
- Coastal Management: Agriculture, Fisheries, Industry, Service, Mangroves and Coral Reefs, Pollution and Degradation
- Coastal Communication: Early Warning and Response Systems
- Coastal Sustainability: Integrated Sustainable Development and Management