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Coastal urbanization: challenges and opportunities for resilience Coastal urbanization: challenges and opportunities for resilience

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Resilience is establishing itself as a key term in policy and academia yet with only limited reflection on its meaning and implications for sustainable development policy. Dominant interpretations of resilience emphasize the capacity of systems to resist external stress or return to a pre-disturbance state, yet this denies the progressive potential of the term. An alternative conceptualisation sees resilience as a pathway to change - as a transformative concept. The stresses of climate change and urbanization mean that coastal cities will either be forced to change structure and functions, or can proactively choose a transformative path. This paper examines the nature of resilience and then applies this to examine the specific challenges and opportunities for moving towards a transformative vision of resilience for urbanizing coastal zones, and megacities in particular. The paper is an initial product of a review of global knowledge on urbanization and coasts undertaken by LOICZ and other partners for the IGBP and provides an opportunity for feedback and participation.

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