



# PREFACE

In 1992, in Montevideo, Uruguay, eleven countries of the Americas signed an agreement to establish the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) as a way of recognizing the enormous scope of global change issues and the need to address them as a collective of countries, and not individually.

We all know that the IAI is an important collaborative mechanism for building the capacity of the Americas to address the pressing challenges of global environmental change. This is especially evident by the fact that through its collaborative networks, the IAI conducts research on a regional basis that no one nation could undertake on its own.

Now, supported by 19 member countries throughout the Americas, the IAI is building the scientific capacity of the region through international cooperation and the open exchange of scientific information on global environmental change phenomena and their socio-economic implications.

As members of the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research, countries benefit in many ways. The IAI enhances regional relationships between countries; affords new institutional arrangements between countries; fosters an open exchange of scientific data and information generated by the Institute's research programs between countries; and enables countries to participate as both teacher and student in the Institute's Training and Education Programs.

The IAI Executive Council and Conference of the Parties was convened at Montreal, Canada in May of 2005 to discuss the issues facing global change research throughout the Americas plus holding a science symposium titled *Building the Adaptive Capacity to Global Environmental Change*. The international symposium, and this collection of peer-reviewed papers from that symposium, is one step in building our adaptive capacity, that is, our ability to respond to changes in the global environment and reduce our vulnerability to the negative consequences.

The Symposium featured presentations from leading scientists working in the fields of atmospheric change impacts and adaptation, with an emphasis on climate change. Topics covered included environmental prediction, global change and the biosphere, biodiversity, the bio-based economy, global change and threats to human health and communities.

We hope that you enjoy this collection of peer-reviewed papers. The papers are organized in this book around the themes of environmental prediction; climate change and biodiversity; scientific partnership approaches; and mainstreaming adaptation science for decision-making.

As the head organizers of the symposium, we wish to thank the speakers, the attendees, the IAI staff, as well as Indra Fung Fook and Serge Nadon of Environment Canada who handled the logistics. We also wish to thank those who diligently peer-reviewed each paper in this book. We hope that you enjoy this book, and hope that the papers may stand as a continuing contribution to our attempts collectively to build our adaptive capacity to global environmental change.

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