

## **BEYOND SUSTAINABILITY**

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This paper argues the case for a global strategy to protect the coastline from the worst effects of climate change and resultant rising sea levels. The Precautionary Principle, although potentially instrumental in providing such protection, cannot currently be viewed as a rule of international law and the best-intentioned statutory protection still relies on regional buy-in to ensure effective enforcement. Because of the extreme risk of uncontrollable and irremedial pollution from land based sources, it is vital that a global perspective is adopted, ratified and enforced.

The current international legal framework is examined to determine its fitness for purposes of environmental protection.

Issues to be discussed include

- The potential conflict between economic imperatives and the need for environmental protection
- The traditionally reactive nature of legislation compared to the need for proactive measures with legal status and statutory power
- The importance of indigenous peoples in guiding the development and interpretation of environmental law in different legislations, with particular reference to coastal management.

The relative approaches of three countries( New Zealand, Canada and the UK) are compared and examined for their suitability as international models. The histories of both Canada and NZ have been characterised (and still are) by the particular attributes of their respective indigenous peoples. In addition, both Canada and NZ have longstanding territorial interests in the Arctic and Antarctica respectively. These regions are worth mentioning in that, in the light of anticipated climate change, the effective management of their coastlines is of international concern and requires an international commitment.