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The Global Monsoon across Time Scales: Mechanisms and Outstanding Issues

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Abstract

The present paper addresses driving mechanisms of global monsoon (GM) variability and outstanding issues in GM science. This is the second synthesis of the PAGES GM Working Group following the first synthesis “The Global Monsoon across Time Scales: coherent variability of regional monsoons” published in 2014 (Climate of the Past, 10, 2007-2052). Here we introduce the GM as a planetary scale circulation system and give a brief accounting of why it exhibits regional structure. The primary driver of the GM is solar insolation, and the specific features in the underlying surface, such as land-sea distribution, topography, and oceanic circulations, are mainly responsible for the differences among regional monsoon systems. We then analyze the monsoon formation mechanisms, together with the major processes that drive monsoon variations at various timescales, including external forcings and internal feedbacks. On long time scales external forcings often induce variability on a global scale, whereas short-term variability in regional monsoon systems is usually caused by internal feedbacks within the climate system. Finally, a number

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