

COOPERATION FOR SUSTAINABLE SAFETY OF MEDITERRANEAN URBAN AREAS

by
*GIUSEPPE LUONGO**
and
*ARMANDO MAURO***

SUMMARY

At the beginning of the Third Millennium, the importance of setting up actual policies for environment protection, resource valorisation, risk prevention and sustainable development promotion in the Mediterranean region assumes a strategic role.

In the near future half of the people from the Mediterranean will live in cities and the vulnerability of urban systems seems forced to raise. The main focus of any effort towards **sustainable safety** should be put on urban systems: where highly concentrated human, cultural and economic resources are exposed to large and dangerous instabilities with potentially heavy effects for the path towards sustainable development.

Urban systems of the Mediterranean are strongly exposed to risk and instabilities of different nature. Each year earthquakes, floods, severe storms, landslides, wildfires, tsunamies, drought and desertification, industrial accidents, etc. call for large losses in human life and socio-economic assets.

At the same time, rural environments are more and more exposed to degradation, producing progressive instabilities which can be responsible for risks and emergencies affecting very large portions of coastal and inner lands, pushing people to migrate towards already unstable urban areas.

To tackle with the relevant socio-economic menaces, an increased co-operation is a fundamental need, for at least three basic reasons:

1. prevention and intervention issues should involve the co-ordination of various international/regional technical networks (telecommunications, transports, scientific and technical research, engineering, fast relief medicine, supplies, etc.);
2. to be efficient all kind of intervention should be planned by anticipation; this supposes an adequate concertation at the institutional level;

* Director, *Department of Geophysics and Volcanology*, UNIVERSITY OF NAPLES "FEDERICO II";
President, INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE STOP DISASTERS.

** Director of Programmes, INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE STOP DISASTERS.

3. the price of all interventions, including research, is so high that it overflows the possibilities of a given nation; co-operation is a matter of necessity as well solidarity.

Taking into consideration such needs, the participants in the EUROMED-SAFE '99 International Conference, which gathered in Naples and Ravello over 250 participants coming from 11 countries, issued a final document that proposed to promote and establish a **Permanent Multidisciplinary Co-operation Platform ("Network of Networks") for Sustainable Safety of Mediterranean Cities.**