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ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION
VOLUME III

EPMR-2002
Prof. Dr. Hüseyin GÖKÇEKUŞ *Editor

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY
Lefkoşa, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
12-15 APRIL 2002
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FOREWORD

In April 2002, a four-day International Conference on the Environmental Problems of the Mediterranean Region was held in Lefkoşa, Northern Cyprus organized by the Near East University. The Conference received 500 articles presented by about 1000 scientists from over 60 countries at 7 halls and in 62 sessions.

The Conference covered a large spectrum of topics in an attempt to bring together all concerns on the environment. Namely, the topics were:


At the end of the Conference, the Scientific Advisory Committee summarised the following conclusions as a gist of the papers presented.

1. In the Mediterranean Region water resources should be managed in an integrated way considering both the quantity and quality for different uses (drinking, agriculture, and industry). Special attention should be paid to coastal zones where land and water interrelate.

2. Groundwater overexploitation should be prevented especially in coastal zones where it might produce seawater intrusion and land subsidence problems.

3. Biodiversity is the key global concern for preserving life on earth as it influences climate. Anthropogenic impacts reduce biodiversity and the functioning of the ecosystem together with the self-regulation of our planet. Biodiversity should be fundamental in drawing up sound socio-economic policies.

4. Coastal zones are fragile ecosystems, which can easily be jeopardized by surface and groundwater run-off and discharges such as agricultural, industrial, oil and wastewater.

5. Management of coastal zones should be based on ecological information and considerations. Establishment of ecological inventories should be encouraged.

6. Synergy between international programs for introducing and strengthening integrated coastal management in the Mediterranean Region and the work of the academic community needs to
be improved. Lessons learned from these efforts should be shared regionally and accumulated so that to create the Mediterranean practice of integrated coastal management.

7. Water quality management practices should be improved by adopting integrated measures for controlling contamination, setting appropriate standards, effective treatment systems and broad monitoring programs.

8. The Conference calls for the full implementation of land based resources protocol. Proper management of solid and hazardous wastes is needed.

9. Public awareness and education are prerequisites for effective environmental management.

10. Governmental and non-governmental efforts aiming at protecting the environment should be strengthened and supported.

11. The gathering of meteorological and hydrological data developed in databanks is recommended so as to disseminate results to all the riparian countries of the Mediterranean.

12. Natural disasters may cause major environmental damages so that integrated action plans should be made compulsory in all countries.

13. Used water should be treated so as to achieve good quality conditions by applying PP technologies taking into consideration EIA studies. Wastewater treatment and reuse should be developed considering ecological engineering technique such as natural microorganisms, phytoremediation, etc.

14. Agro-ecological zones should be defined in the Mediterranean Region keeping in mind the minimum technology impact implying indigenous technical knowledge with special emphasis on irrigation methods.

15. A new paradigm offering to view water not as unique but as a commodity so that an internal market structure could be created to achieve an auto-integrated water management system for all the stakeholders was recommended for promotion and further research.

16. The major rules and principles of environmental law, which differ from the traditional branches of the law, and recognized at the universal level should be both adopted and properly implemented to protect all the components of the environment. Through the application of the precautionary principle special attention should be paid to remove or at least minimize the risks concerning the issue of "scientific uncertainty", and arising from newly developed technologies. Effective precautionary measures should particularly be taken to protect the rich genetic resources and biodiversity of the Mediterranean Region in the face of possible adverse effects of genetically modified plants. And an efficient "civil liability" type should be adopted
for such a sensitive issues as well as mining activities that cause severe destruction in the land
ecosystem.

Limited by the size of its special, we could only publish selected papers from the conference in this
special issue. The criteria for selection of the papers were in accordance with the publication policy of
the journal. The foregoing brief description is intended to provide the readers with a general idea
regarding the conference. You are welcomed to obtain further information on any specific topic by
emailing a request to ghuseyin@neu.edu.tr

We are indebted to the editor Dr. Shahamat U. Khan for giving us the opportunity to publish the
selected papers from the conference in this special issue of Journal of Environmental Science and
Health, Part A.

Prof. Dr. Hüseyin GÖKÇEKUŞ
Chairman of the Technical & Organizing Committee
Conference on the Environmental Problems of the Mediterranean Region
16.08.2003

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