



Volcanoes, Landscapes and Cultures

First World Conference

Catania 11 - 14 November 2009

An Innovative Approach

According to volcanologists, there are presently only a few dozens of truly active volcanoes on the Earth's surface. Many more are extinct, since long dormant, or just taking a nap. Countless, but fascinating are the submarine volcanoes often at the origin, in tropical seas, of atolls and coral reefs.

The shapes and behaviors of volcanoes are also surprisingly diversified; well beyond the familiar image of a cone headed with a trail of smoke... They are undoubtedly natural marvels and were since ever considered as such, and endowed with divine qualities by the peoples living nearby.

Some volcanoes and associated landscapes have been recognized by UNESCO's prestigious World Heritage Convention and List of properties of outstanding universal value, such as the Aeolian Islands off the northeastern coast of Sicily.

Nowadays in a world accelerating its pace towards a globalizing 'Knowledge Society', Nature and Culture become values of a paramount significance for everybody, everywhere.

The 'world of volcanoes' is participating with 'volcanic energy' in this process, attracting a vast array of old and new admirers and devotees – volcanologists and other geo-science specialists are putting to test the considerable advances of their disciplines; biologists are attracted by the astonishing biodiversity of the volcanic slopes; anthropologists and social scientists in turn explore the original and changing perceptions and behavioral patterns of communities living close to volcanoes; administrators and planners advocate protective measures for outstanding landscapes, while local communities seek to adjust their age-old risk management practices and sustainable development policies. Last but not least, volcanoes and their landscapes are becoming highly appreciated destinations for nature- and culture-oriented tourism.

This multifaceted reality, this rich and diverse world of volcanoes, has often been addressed from the perspective of a single discipline or from the sole standpoint of national or local interests.

The proposers of the present initiative strongly believe that the wealth represented by volcanoes belongs not only to the some 300 million people presently living on their slopes, but is both a tangible and intangible common heritage of humankind, worthy of being better known and appreciated. A capital that sensitively managed can contribute over the long term to the development and well-being of present and future generations.

The Conference, the first of its kind, will address from a holistic and multidisciplinary point of view the core aspects of the complex relationships between the world of humankind and life and the obscure turbulences of the mineral world.

Above all, the Conference invites all interested parties to brave the challenge offered by the new technological tools and scientific advances and identify promising areas for innovation and progress that can stem from the old alliance with Vulcan, the blacksmith of the Roman gods.



Organizing Committee

Centro Unesco Maria Elisa Brischetto
Via Canfora 135 - 95128 Catania - Italy
tel: +39 095 434887 - Fax: +39 095 809846



International Scientific Secretariat

Insula c/o MaB Unesco- 1, rue Miollis - 75015
Paris - France
tel: +33 0 1 45 68 49 01 - Fax: +33 0 1 45 68 58 04



Organizing Secretariat

OTIE - Via E. Amari, 38
90139 Palermo - Italy
tel: +39 091 6117527 - Fax: +39 091 3809828