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Preface

This book contains the papers presented at the Second International Conference on the Management of Natural Resources, Sustainable Development and Ecological Hazards, which was held in the Cape, South Africa. The Conference name has been shortened to “The Ravage of the Planet” to emphasise the urgency of the problems under discussion.

Like the first conference held in Patagonia, Argentina, this meeting was prompted by the need to take stock of the continuous deterioration of our planet and to formulate a constructive programme and policies for the immediate future.

The success of the first Conference led to the idea of reconvening the meeting in Africa which is a vibrant continent of invaluable natural and human resources. This makes Africa a key player in the world. The engagement of Africa in global change trends culminated at the World Summit on Sustainable Development that took place in Johannesburg. Africa is fully dedicated to Millennium Development Goals, namely alleviation of poverty and child mortality, promotion of basic education and gender equality, fighting disease epidemics and improving maternal health, establishing a global partnership for development through the implementation of environmental sustainability principles.

In the strive for sustainable development, Africa faces challenges like water scarcity and access to sanitation, energy supply and transfer of renewable technologies, food security, health issues with particular focus to children, rapid urbanization and housing, conservation of biodiversity and vulnerability to climate change.

Thanks to its geographic position spanning over two hemispheres and nearly all climatic zones, low carbon emissions, pristine ecosystems and endemic biodiversity regions, Africa provides excellent opportunities for environmental research, earth and space observations, as well as socio-economic aspects of sustainability sciences. This Conference provided linkages to explore and make use of these opportunities.

The Conference attracted researchers and professionals involved in ecosystems

and environmental problems, as well as policy makers, social and political scientists, and experts in a wide variety of topics. Their interaction was essential to initiate trans-disciplinary discussions with a view of formulating solutions than can benefit society as a whole.

The papers presented at this meeting were grouped in a series of sections, ie Development Studies, Environmental Issues, Changing Climates, Trans-border Strategies, Air Quality, Energy and Aquifer Studies. A special session was organized by Dr Nebo Jovanovic to present South Africa's Water Issues.

The Editors of the book are grateful to all contributors for the quality of their papers as well as to the members of the International Scientific Committee and other colleagues who helped to review the papers.

The Editors

The Cape, South Africa

December 2009

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