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PREFACE

This book contains most of the edited contributions presented at the 5th International Conference on Sustainable Development and Planning, held at the Wessex Institute of Technology campus in the New Forest, UK. The meeting built upon a series started in 2003 in Skiathos, Greece and evolved into another three conferences in Bologna (2005), the Algarve (2007) and Cyprus (2009).

The adopted model of 20th century economic development based on increased urbanization, deforestation, predominance of private car against public transport, unplanned tourism and industrial development, uneven consumption of water and goods between different regions, led to a dramatic environmental and ecological degradation of the planet. A major impact of human intervention is climate change which is not just of scientific interest but it is a reality felt every day by every citizen in every country of the world. We are living in an era of global warming and the symptoms are visible, affecting all human activities.

In this context there is an urgent need for the necessary adjustments for survival in this transition period until a new ecological balance is established, much different from the previous one, which will not only affect the biosphere but also the whole socioeconomic structure. Policies for natural resources, agricultural production, environmental protection, urban development and management of natural and cultural heritage must reconsider their priorities in this new context taking into account scientific progress and technological advances. Consequently, spatial planning – as a catalyst for the integration of all sectoral policies – is the prerequisite for the sustainable development at any geographical level: local, regional, national, global.

There is a need to change the existing models of consumption and production as well as those of geographical mobility towards a new direction where the Eco-nomy and the Eco-logy will stop to be in parallel courses but will combine and act together since their ultimate goal remains the same: the achievement of sustainable and livable environments.

The conference brought together scientist and other stakeholders from all over the world to discuss the latest advances in this field.

The editors are grateful to all the authors for their excellent papers and especially to the members of the International Scientific Advisory Committee, and other colleagues, who have helped to review the papers, thereby ensuring the quality of this volume.

The Editors,
New Forest, 2011

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