

WELCOMING ADDRESS

Authorities, dear Ladies and dear Colleagues,

It's a great pleasure for me to give you hearty welcome together with the Faculty of Engineering of Bari University.

The Institute of Applied Geology and Geotechnics has the honour of being the host of the 8th SWIM which gathers here scholars coming from many countries.

It is not a case that this year Italy and particularly Apulia has been chosen as the seat for the carrying out of such a Meeting. As other countries which hosted the previous editions, Italy too is concerned with the problem of sea-water intrusion, since this factor makes a part of underground water-resources conditional on its being used.

The numerous and qualified participation of Italian experts coming from various regions testifies with I have just said. Let me say that especially in Apulia, a karst region practically lacking in surface water resources, the problem of sea-water intrusion indeed takes on wide proportions: we come across saline contamination when we are finding resources for irrigation purposes or when industries, mostly concentrated along the coast-strip try to increase the poor water supplies by means of underground waters, or when the studies for the correct location of power and also nuclear plants are coped with.

This happens even if Apulia counts on a considerable stored underground water volume estimated in many tens of billions of m³, with a yearly recharge of more than 2 billions m³.

« Puglia sitibonda » (thirsty Apulia), that was the appellation of our region, when the most advanced technology was constituted by a cherry divining-rod; on the contrary Apulia is a « watercasket », but the groundwater circulating in the Apulian subsoil is like a pretty wicked girl, who needs to be treated tenderly.

On the other hand the typical mediterranean mentality of Apulian people, always tending to act in an autonomous way, for operative choices, has greatly contributed to make saline intrusion a real plague, thus preventing huge Apulian zones from taking advantage of the underground water richness.

Many thousands of wells have been drilled, mostly over the last thirty years, in a shameful rush to individualistic water supply; the first visible effect was always encouraging, water come out copiously, and only when water became undrinkable or crops burned, common people accounted for this problem.

Today for the Apulian water-supply, long-term and expensive water works from extra-regional resources are to be resorted to, up till now still insufficient to meet the real needs of the Region.

This is the reason why we consider underground waters as a resource to be delivered, protected and managed accurately.

These brief notes give testimony of the interest that the Institute of Applied Geology and Geotechnics of Bari, the National Council of Research together with the political organisms of the territory which up today have been interested in the study of the problem, place in the works of this Meeting.

Therefore I feel it is only right to thank warmly the colleagues of the Scientific Committee, some of whom in 1968 gave birth to this important kind of periodical international meeting, for approving my proposal to carry out in Apulian Land the 8th Meeting.

Heartfelt thanks to the Boards and Organisms which, by their contribution have made possible the development of this Meeting and particularly I thank the « Regione Puglia » so attentive towards such problems of topical interest for the water resources management planning that the Regione itself is carrying out, the National Council of Research that since a long time has been devoting part of its energies to the studies on the phenomenon and, the Provincial Government of Bari.

Prior to start the works I pass the floor to the Bari University Rector, Mr. Ambrosi and to the President of the Provincial Government, Miss Miccolis, who wish to greet you personally.

I wish you a good time.

VINCENZO COTECCHIA