

PREFACE

Our consumerist attitude towards natural resources has adversely affected the carrying capacity of our planet, as the global ecological deficit has increased without regeneration. The situation in the Mediterranean Region is no different. Ecosystems there have reached a stage where biological diversity is greatly threatened.

Reclamation of damaged ecosystems needs a thorough understanding of the ecological functions that control them. Although restoration and reclamation efforts are underway, the process of acquiring knowledge and learning is slow. Learning the dynamics of a habitat, the plasticity of individuals in an ecosystem, and the microclimatic features are all integral to any restoration programme. In addition, stresses induced due to global climate change must be taken into consideration while planning restoration so that resulting restoration projects are resilient and self sustaining.

This book, *Environment and Ecology in the Mediterranean Region*, is a result of papers presented at the International Conference on the Mediterranean region held in Edremit, Turkey from 5-7 May 2011. 160 participants from 25 countries attended and presented 170 papers, of which 35 are selected for this publication. Chapters include aspects of environmental ecology, drought, changes in land use/fragmentation, tourism, sea level rise, environmental transformation, climate change, rural development and agriculture, water use, urban ecology, and forest resources/fires. Although much remains to be done, we fervently hope that this book will upgrade the importance of awareness among the public for protecting this fragile environment.

—The Editors