

## Editorial

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The notorious Mayan prophecy failed to materialize, and the world did not come to an end on December 21<sup>st</sup> 2012. This does not mean that it is safe from the risks caused by the degradation that has been mounting over the last years. Just as severe environmental problems emerge and affect life on the Planet Earth, a great variety of initiatives and tools have come to be part of our everyday life. New developments bring together politicians, diplomats and civil society, seeking – frequently without positive results - means to neutralize complex and threatening processes, such as human induced climatic change.

In this context, the COP-18 meeting, in Doha (Qatar), held in December 2012, approved a regrettably weak document that does not even propose a concrete financial base. The second phase of the Kyoto Protocol was saved, but little was achieved in terms of a more decisive action concerning climate change. The nations that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change were defeated in Doha.

In the negotiations about the Doha agreement, which must be closed in 2015 in order to be launched in 2020, the US and Europe managed to eliminate from the text the reference to an important point agreed upon in the Rio + 20 meeting. The Rio summit reaffirmed the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. This means that all nations must contribute to solutions of the problems related to climate change, but in ways related to their capabilities. The US and Europe understood that the principle may reproduce the Kyoto model and tried to avoid this.

Therefore, the current picture shows that rules and principles are presented with a certain degree of visibility, but we can see also that their translation into widely discussed agreements does not keep pace with the severity of the problems to be addressed.

As the world lives on and its problems linger on, ***Sustainability in Debate – SeD*** continues its efforts to become a forum – among many others – in which these problems can be discussed.

This issue, our sixth, besides presenting a renewed visual project, is centered upon a dossier about a topic of growing importance – the relation between tourism and

sustainability. It is a paradox of modern societies that tourism is growing so swiftly and that it has serious consequences for the natural environment. The more intense the visitation of places of interest – a reflection of expanded well-being, of improved opportunities for leisure, and of the democratization of opportunities – the greater the risk to the integrity and the sustainability of these places. This happens both with areas endowed with unique natural beauties and features and with monuments, buildings and museums built by different human societies.

We have invited two specialists on the topic as editors of this dossier – Arminda Eugenia Marques Campos and Maurício César Delamaro, both from the Department of Production, School of Engineering, of the Guaratinguetá (state of São Paulo) campus of the Universidade Estadual Paulista - UNESP. Some of the articles were selected among those presented to a relevant panel in the VI National Meeting of ANPPAS (Brazil's National Association of Graduate Programs in Environment and Society), in October 2012, in the city of Belém, state of Pará, Brazil. Others were submitted directly to **SeD**. All articles have gone through a peer-review process.

The focus of the dossier – which has an international bias – is the relation between tourism, local development and sustainability. The texts show that it is possible to combine tourism with sustainability, despite several risks that must be addressed in each case.

This number of **SeD** launches a new section, called **Gallery**, with a content associated to that of the dossier. This section, conceived as a permanent part of the journal, seeks to join the interdisciplinary theme of sustainability with socioenvironmental photography, drawings and scientific illustrations. This first appearance of the section provides beautiful photographic images of several Brazilian locations in which ecotourism has become a significant activity – Chapada dos Veadeiros (state of Goiás), Pantanal Mato-Grossense (states of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul), and Vale do Ribeira (state of São Paulo). Paula Simas de Andrade is the author of both photos and texts.

An opinion piece, co-written by Maureen Flores and José A. Puppim de Oliveira, is another complement to our dossier. It deals with the prospects of sustainable tourism, particularly in Rio de Janeiro, seat of the recent Rio + 20 summit (2012), the FIFA soccer World Cup (2014), and the 2016 Olympic Games.

**SeD** 6 contains three more scientific articles and an essay. The first article, by Guilherme Coelho Britto, Osvaldo Ryohei Kato and José Antonio Herrera, deals with payments for environmental services linked to family farming in the Amazonian state of Pará. The second, by Antônio Sergio da Silva, José Gilberto de Souza e Antônio Cezar Leal, proposes and applies a system of indicators to measure environmental quality and the quality of urban life in the city of Formosa, state of Goiás. The third article, written by Juliette Lainé, uses discourses and images to analyze landscapes and their representations by the inhabitants of riverside communities in Lake Janauáca, in the state of Amazonas, Brazil. The essay, written



by Valdir Lamim-Guedes, uses an environmental justice approach to reflect about the disproportional imposition of environmental risks on Black populations in Brazil.

Two texts showcasing research results also appear in this number. Eduardo Moraes Arraut, Paulo Nobre, Carlos A. Nobre and Fabiano M. Scarpa author the first one. The text summarizes the structure and the program of a climate change research network - “Rede Clima” -, involving a large number of institutions and universities in Brazil. This text seeks to inform the international scientific community about the state of the art on climate change research in Brazil. The second text is written by Donald Sawyer. He reports on the results of community-based projects focused on common property resources in Brazil. These results stem from the GEF-funded program “PPP-ECOS”, which supported dozens of grassroots productive activities in the Cerrado the Brazilian Cerrado biome, dealing with water, biodiversity and carbon and with the well being of local populations.

In the Interview Section, Professor Oran R. Young, a leading authority on global environmental governance research, makes some pithy observations about key concepts of governance. After having published more than 20 books and devoted 40 years of his life to the study of governance issues, Young admits that there is still no general theory about environmental governance. In his opinion, the challenges of the Anthropocene will require substantial changes in the existing world order that recognize the non-linear and often abrupt changes of our era. It will also require governance systems that are effective and resilient.

Five book reviews close this number of *SeD*.

Two notes on the livelihood of *SeD* seem proper here. First, over the last few months there has been a very positive development - a remarkable increase in the number of article submissions. We believe that this expresses a growing acknowledgment of the relevance of our mission. Of course, the continuity of *SeD* depends on the trust that it manages to generate among researchers. We will continue to work to maintain and expand this trust.

Secondly – and this is not a new development -, we must insist that our “internal” sustainability has relied from the start on the efforts of a small but talented and dedicated staff of volunteers – postdoctoral fellows, doctoral and master’s students, library staff members and so on. The team gets the job done in the many activities inherent to the production of a scientific journal – receiving and acknowledging submissions, contacting reviewers, relaying evaluations and decisions to authors, identifying and securing copies of reviewable books. They also contact potential interviewees copy-edit texts and maintain our journal’s site.

We have been lucky to have such a large, diligent and capable cadre of reviewers. They have invariably accepted our invitations to evaluate submitted manuscripts and their good evaluations have helped us in our editorial decisions.

We extend these acknowledgments to the members of our Editorial Board, whose



willingness to support **SeD** is just one dimension of their participation in so many other dimensions of the interdisciplinary and the international debate about sustainability.

After three years of existence, we reached our sixth issue. We have strived to maintain our commitment with the quality and thoroughness inherent to high level scientific publications – blind peer review, attention to timely publication, visual quality, full accessibility, and prompt editorial decisions.

**SeD 7** will include a dossier about the topic of “Payments for Environmental Services”. It will deal with the relevance of those services that are rendered “silently” by natural processes, and without which humanity would find itself susceptible to all kinds of difficulties not only for its sustainability, but also for its mere survival.

We wish a good reading and a great 2013 to all.

