

Viterbo, 25-29 November 2009
Seventh International Media Forum On The Protection of Nature

Zamagni, “A global organization for the environment is needed now”

This morning ‘History’s lessons’ by Brian Fagan, the Mediterranean situation, and the glaciers in the Antarctic

Viterbo, 26 November 2009 – “We need to give up things now and worry about leaving resources for future generations.” The words of Stefano Zamagni, a professor of Political Economics at the University of Bologna, heated up the crowd at the Greenaccord Forum in Viterbo. “Up until now we have faced the problem by using efficiency, that is by using a utilitarianistic philosophy that hasn’t functioned perfectly. Today we need to find a balance between efficiency and generational equity. Ours is an elective-competitive democracy, whose horizons don’t go beyond the end of the current legislature.

This is precisely why we need to committ ourselves to changing and bettering this model of democracy, perhaps with new formulas involving popular representation, for example “deliberative forums,” above all for environmental questions that need long-term policies. We need – added Zamagni – a cultural revolution which introduces a new concept of liberty, understood as integrated and responsible human development. The Indian economist Amartya Kumar Sen, a Nobel prize winner for economics in 1998, for example, shows in a recent essay how the ‘human development approach’ that she proposed in the Nineties is able to make new connections in the relationship between development and the protection of the environment.

Her positions have found a notable place in the Caritas in Veritate of Pope Benedict XVI: authentically human development cannot take place in contrast to the laws of nature. Individual countries – added Zamagni – and the current market cannot by themselves implement sustainable development, and therefore it is necessary to create international environmental organizations with sanction power, as the WTO exists for commerce. This new global organization for the environment would try, on one hand, to render more compatible the rules of free trade and the proposals for environmental protection, and on the other would try to enforce them on the parties, governments, international agencies and other organizations. An agency, then, with strong powers, that would intervene as an extra party in all situations to prevent harm and coordinate environmental defense.”

This morning the session goes ahead with the much-awaited presentation of Brian Fagan, professor of anthropology at the Univesity of California at Santa Barbara. Fagan will propose a look at the effects of climate chance on historic events. Presentations will follow from Antonio Navarra, director of the Euro-Mediterranean Center for Climate Change, and from Joellen Russell, professor of geology at the University of Arizona, who will talk about the melting of the glaciers in Antarctica.

Press releases, abstracts, photos, presentations, and videos are available at www.greencanal.eu