

From the Mediterranean to Australia, on to Guatemala, the sea is a thermometer of the evolving environmental crisis

"Temperature, a profound increase"

Today is the last session, with the presentation of Greenaccord's appeal to Copenhagen

Viterbo, 29th November 2009 – The last day in Viterbo of the Seventh International Media Forum On The Protection of Nature, organized by Greenaccord, opened with a presentation on the impact of climate change in the Mediterranean basin. **Maurizio Sciortino**, a researcher for ENEA and a member of the National committee for the fight against desertification, showed one of the hot spots more sensitive to the consequences of global warming. From the salinization of the water to the doubling of the annual nights with temperatures over degrees Celsius (before twenty, now forty), to the loss of biodiversity, to the rising of sea levels. Effects that happen to both rich and poor countries indiscriminately. "Populations living in river deltas are the most exposed – said Sciortino – like those on the Nile Delta, which has 38 million people. Six million would be swept away by an increase of just one meter of water, which would also reduce by ten percent Egypt's arable land."

In the morning space was given to the climate witnesses, with testimonials from every latitude: from Australia **Tony Fontes** brought his scuba-diving experience, where he is daily in front of a coral reef that loses its color with progressive bleaching. "It's a tangible sign – says Fontes – of the reaction of the coral to stresses, above all the rise in water temperature. Where the effects of global warming are more severe a greater bleaching has been found; with just a half-degree increase there is a 90% energy reduction for the coral, which are too weak to capture food, and then the consequent risk of disease. We have to do something quickly – concluded the Australian – or our oceans won't have borders any more."

David Tobar Franco, from Guatemala, has seen his region afflicted by less frequent rain, and rain that is, when it comes, more intense and destructive in the last few years. "Before it rained six months a year, now our luxuriant vegetation is just a memory. And if on the land our crops are threatened every year by unexpected drops in temperature, it's not much better for the fishermen. There are fewer fish, and many fishermen get into trouble because to survive they're forced to go beyond territorial waters. The longest river, 500 kilometers long, hasn't been navigable since 2003. My people's poverty doesn't allow for an education so that they can conceive of the damage. Given that potable water is harder and harder to come by, it's lucky that NGOs are helping us. The situation is dramatic."

Marush Narankhuu, 68 years old, from Mongolia, is worried about the survival of her fourteen children. "I remember, when I was a girl, nearby Lake Khar Us: it was beautiful. There was a lot of water and everything was green and we lived well, with beautiful seasons. In the last five years the situation has changed: the lake has evaporated, there's no grass any more, no fish, animal-raising has been cut in half, and many people have moved away. In 2002 there were 600 head of cattle, now there are 250, and many of these die in the mud that is all that's left of the lake. The situation of my community is already at the very lowest level of survival, but I don't want to go away. This is my home."

Today will see the end of the Forum organized by Greenaccord with the testimonials of journalists from the Greenaccord network who bring to their various countries the mission (at times difficult) to inform and make people aware of environmental topics. At the end, the president of the scientific committee of Greenaccord, Andrea Masullo, will present the official appeal for Copenhagen, signed by the journalists and presenters in Viterbo, which will be delivered to Brussels to the president of the International Panel on Climate Change, **Rajendra Pachauri**.