

Preface

Sustainable development has been a key issue in developed countries since 1970. It can be considered as an integration of three factors: environmental, economic and socio-political. Technological advances and new strategies implemented in many industrial activities have been successful in dealing with some major issues, leading to the so called *steady state economy*.

Sustainable development is also a major issue for developing countries, but its implementation is not always compatible with their goals of growth and better living standards. There has been in the last two decades an increasing demand for high quality water mainly because the intensive exploitation of aquifers, primarily in arid zones.

The NATO-Advanced Training Course “*Economic sustainability and environmental protection in Mediterranean Countries through clean manufacturing methods*” was intended to address sustainable strategies and the search of alternative sources and water treatment methods. The course was planned to be held in Sfax (Tunisia), but because of the political events it was postponed and held in Huelva (Spain) on October 3–7, 2012. A selection of presentations is included in this volume.

Membrane treatment of effluents received special attention as a technology to alleviate water shortage, by promoting recycling. Integrated or hybrid systems combining physico-chemical pretreatments followed by membrane treatment are very promising technologies in many arid areas of the world.

The course and this monograph would not have been possible without the generous participation of the speakers and participants interest through stimulating discussions. We acknowledge and thank all of them.

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