

Preface

While on sabbatical leave at Kuopio University, Finland, and being involved with the organization called ISEI (International Society of Environmental Indicators), I reached the conclusion that a concentrated effort articulated in a book on various environmental indicators does not exist on the global bookshelf, and this is the time to put one together!

Following discussions with my ISEI colleague Prof. Em. Osmo Hänninen from Finland, a veteran and highly active member of our organization (ISEI), an outlook list was composed, which was intended to be covered later by various international authors (known as experts in their field). Now, in retrospect, we should say that it was not an easy task, as we had to decide which subjects to cover and which to leave for alternative future opportunities. When the subject list had been consolidated, it was communicated to various international scientists, and, following their approval, the book “assemblage” was on its way. I do recall today that in a phone conversation with Dr. Paul Roos (Editorial Director of Environmental Sciences, Springer Dordrecht), besides expressing his interest, he told me that he thought the proposed project a very ambitious one, basically meaning that our venture would not be an easy task. . . . As scientists, we are never hindered by difficulties, but rather the contrary is true: they make our work more challenging, and therefore, we attacked the task seriously and stubbornly.

Indeed, after more than a year's work, the present book represents the efforts of 80 authors, expressed in 15 subjects and 58 chapters on a large variety of environmental issues, starting from thermodynamics and ending in health issues! The subjects that are covered were selected based on European and US environmental databases, as the important issues that raise critical environmental concerns had been emphasized along the years by these leading entities.

We are happy to bring this compilation to the reader involved in environmental issues, as well as to those who wish to use it as the first textbook on environmental indicators as such. We as well as our academic colleagues always touch upon the indicator issue in our courses, although merely as related to our own specific professional field. The present book is the first effort to present the most

important indicators together and consolidate a unifying line between the various subjects. We hope that this volume achieves this task well and can be used by many thousands of scientists involved in environmental research.

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