

**Welcome greetings from the Head of Italian Civil Protection Department
Franco Gabrielli**

Good morning to all,

while extending my warmest welcome to all the Workshop participants, I wish above all to thank all those who have promoted by offering their valuable contribution and making possible the realization of this event, particularly the speakers that have joined us here today from all over the world, agreeing to introduce and discuss topics and important experiences pertaining to the field of volcanic risk.

I would like, of course, to express my gratitude particularly to the VUELCO Project, that has been implemented in the Framework of the Seventh Program promoted by the European Commission of which this Department is the only non strictly scientific partner but rather a technical-operational institution. Thank you also for allowing us to select not only strictly scientific topics but also and above all those technical-operational topics so closely linked to civil protection activities that render the input provided by such qualified experts almost superfluous.

Evidently this dialogue between the world of science and the world of those who study and analyze these phenomena and the world of technical experts, i.e. of the civil protection operators is a sort of "*unicum*"; an event that has no precedent although it is obvious that science has over time been compelled to confront the decision makers, today in fact we are asking science to confront that intermediate sector that exists between science and the decision makers, that is the operators of civil protection. Clearly our country stands at a vantage point in this sense since the history of the national service of civil protection has been operating this exchange for more than twenty years now, as its founding principle; it is not by chance that an operational structure of the National Service and above all its 1992 legislator understood the importance of availing itself of a privileged stakeholder that is the Commissione Grandi Rischi - This is one of the reasons I am particularly happy today to welcome here the Commission's President Prof. Maiani and Vice President Prof. Scarascia Mugnozza as they are fundamental partners, team mates in the comprehension of phenomena that science can help us better understand but above all they represent the invaluable asset through which who ever operates in civil protection can obtain the answers needed to allow for an ever more effective and efficient response to disasters. I also of

course want to thank the colleagues from INGV, the National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology not only for the contribution given in planning this event, but also for their extra effort in making sure this event would take place back-to-back with another important occurrence planned in a joint initiative with the United States Geological Service, thus enabling a wider participation of experts coming from every part of the globe. Experts that are already quite numerous and qualified at this forum. We can count the impressive participation of 100 experts coming from 14 different nations, who represent 10% of the global total of volcanoes who are very experienced and highly qualified.

On this occasion the experts will have a chance to discuss with each other and with us topics that are so dear to us. Topics that obviously regard the management of the un-rest phases of volcanic activity by sharing and comparing experiences introduced by experts who have managed crises in densely populated areas. This is also an opportunity for us to face very important and current issues such as the management of two particularly significant volcanic areas in our country, that is the Vesuvian and Campi Flegrei areas as well as another topic that has become ever more relevant and crucial which is risk communication. In other words it is important to understand scientific phenomena and to translate scientific knowledge into the field of civil protection planning, but it is also very important, if not decisive and a top priority that the hazards caused by volcanic activity on a territory are made accessible in terms of communication to our end users, that is to the citizens living in the areas at volcanic risk. Therefore in this sense as you and we will be dealing specifically with issues related to volcanic areas which I mentioned before in the Campania region, we will pay special attention to your experiences and suggestions. These experiences and suggestions that from now on I can assure you will be translated into action with regard to activities that will be undertaken by the Department of Civil Protection in the framework of the National Service of Civil Protection.

The workshop is in fact structured in three sessions, each session will deal with a specific topic including a few power point presentations by Italian and international experts, and much space will be given to discussion and exchange sessions with the assembly. Three case studies will also be discussed, two from Japan and one from the Philippines, related to crises that have taken place in the premises of explosive volcanoes in densely populated areas. Finally, there will also be the opportunity to introduce our national civil protection system, its areas of intervention, our

operational rooms and ties with the international community in the framework of emergency management beginning from the European Union Mechanism of which we are an integral part.

As I renew my welcome to you and thank you once again for being here and for offering your precious contribution I wish you a profitable work session!