

ITALIAN MANIFESTO FOR TERRACED LANDSCAPES



6th - 15th OCTOBER 2016
ITALY





**TERRACED
LANDSCAPES
CHOOSING
THE FUTURE**

International Terraced Landscapes Alliance
3rd World Meeting on Terraced Landscapes
Italy, October 2016

Manifesto

Choosing the Future for Terraced Landscapes

We, 250 people from over 20 countries, meeting in Padua in the final session of the 3rd World Meeting on Terraced Landscapes, express warm thanks to our Italian hosts for the stimulating experience made up by inspirational lectures, peer-to-peer knowledge and vision exchanges occurred during the plenary sessions held in Venice and Padua and in the field visits in Costiera triestina, Topolò-Dordolla, Canale di Brenta, Valpolicella-Valdobbiadene, Trentino, Ossola Valley, Canavese-Aosta Valley, Chiavari-Lavagna-Vernazza, Ischia-Costiera amalfitana, Pantelleria.

We have focused our attention on the remarkable history and regional variety of terraces around the world, with a particular focus on those in Italy; and have reflected with high concern and high hope upon the future of terraced landscapes. Looking across the broad European heritage of terraced landscapes, we believe that the present time – after decades of abandonment and degradation processes – should be the nadir of a great U-shaped curve in the state of that heritage.

We commit ourselves to start the upward trend of revival in the use and sustained management of terrace systems. This bold commitment is justified in our view by a series of current impulses: these include the rising demand for fresh, locally produced food of known provenance and good quality, with lower food-miles and less artificial inputs; the support to small and family farms, and enabling a new generation of young farmers to gain access to the land and a dignified life in mountain areas. These factors provide the crucial starting-point for a new valuation of the great inherited stock of terraced landscapes. They are a key part of the social and cultural richness of the world, created by the skill and the hard labour of past generations, capable of being used for decades and centuries ahead. They reflect a way of life which in many regions is still continuing. But in other regions terraces have been abandoned, because of the hard work involved and outmigration.

We believe that the challenge, in such regions, is to find new ways of life and viable activities which will make good use of this inherited resource. The solutions can be based upon, and justified by, the long-term public benefits that terraced slopes can yield: the prevention of soil erosion, the mitigation of the effects of climate change, the control of flooding and management of water systems; the protection and enrichment of

agrobiodiversity and ecosystems; the diversification of rural economies by adding value to different food, seeds and crops; the willingness to choose them as a viable option for people's life; the educational value of heritage and cultural landscapes, and of the human and natural stories which they embody; the beauty and appeal of these landscapes for leisure and tourism. This rich range of benefits or 'public goods' justifies a new governance and the injection of communal resources – at local, regional, national, continental or global scale – into the maintenance, and where necessary the redemption, of terraced lands.

We note with high interest the approach to analysis and appreciation of landscapes embodied in the European Landscape Convention, principles we can apply elsewhere in the world. By adopting the Convention, many European governments have committed themselves to identify, evaluate and prepare objectives with full public consultation related to all the landscapes in their territory; and to secure protection and management of all landscapes and promote redemptive action where that is needed. It points to the need for research and policy-making to draw on a wide range of disciplines and knowledge systems. Mapping researches by Universities and regional governments is laying the groundwork for such actions.

We recognize the central role of old and new forms of sustainable agriculture and craftsmanship (farmers, dry-stone walls artisans, hobby and part-time farmers, cooperatives and associations) in the maintenance of terraces. The adaptive knowledges of these stakeholders, whose forebears and predecessors created the terraces by deep understanding of nature and skilful use of available materials, should be fully recognized in debates and decision-making about the future of terraced lands.

We welcome the increasing interest in revival of abandoned terraced system. In a growing number of places, communities, local authorities and farmers are leading this revival. It is refreshing to see the commitment among young people in farming the land, and call for action by local authorities and civil society to support them in these ambitions through vocational education, on-the-job training, financial support for newcomers and other techniques. The viability of farms in terraced areas can be greatly enhanced by the strengthening of new economies, by adding value to local food products and the introduction of more circular systems in local economies. At the same time, new relations between rural areas with terraced landscapes and cities for cooperation and mutual benefits are needed. The quality of heritage, environment and food production can also offer a unique experience to visitors and bring complementary income to rural economies.

We call upon international organizations, governments, local authorities, inhabitants, landowners, commercial interests, rural and urban communities, peasants, artisans and other 'hands-on' producers, educators, researchers and all relevant stakeholders to commit themselves to the protection and long-term maintenance of terraces. They should incorporate respect for terraced landscapes in all policies and programs, notably those supporting agriculture, rural development and quality of life, environmental protection, water and river catchment management, spatial and territorial planning and regional development.

We entrust the International Terraced Landscapes Alliance to take the lead in promoting multinational exchanges of ideas and experiences and to assist the strengthening of initiatives and networks in this field.

Padua, 15th October 2016