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## Preface

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**Biographical notes:** Walter Leal Filho (BSc, PhD, DSc, DL) heads the Research and Transfer Centre “Applications of Life Sciences” at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, in Hamburg, Germany. He specialises on environmental management and on questions related to climate change and the implementation of the principles of corporate social responsibility.

George Sorial is a Professor and Interim Department Head at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Cincinnati. He has over 90 publications in peer reviewed journals. He has 25 years of experience in bench scale and pilot scale research. His research interests include: air biofiltration, electrochemical processes for destruction of organic contaminants, activated carbon adsorption, modelling of adsorption systems (equilibrium and dynamics), remediation of contaminated soils, modelling of mercury speciation and chemical interactions in sediments and aquatic systems, development of analytical methods for analysis, and development of protocols for US EPA in effectiveness of surfactants on oil spills. He is also an Associate Editor of *ASCE Journal of Environmental Engineering*.

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The International Conference on Environmental Science and Technology is an annual conference meeting of engineering and science professionals from academia, government and industry from around the globe. The fourth conference was held in Houston, Texas on July 28–31, 2008. The objective of the International Conference on Environmental Science and Technology is to provide a major interdisciplinary forum for presenting new approaches from relevant areas of environmental science and engineering, to foster integration of the latest developments in scientific research into engineering applications, and to facilitate technology transfer from well-tested ideas into practical products, waste management, remedial processes, and ecosystem restoration. Environmental humanity and sociality such as environmental ethics, environmental law, environmental economy

and environmental management were also included in the scope of the conference. Researchers, engineers, site managers, regulatory agents, decision-making officials, consultants, and vendors benefited from the opportunity to exchange information on recent research trends, to examine ongoing research programs, and to investigate world-wide public and regulatory acceptance of environmental protection and remediation technologies. Environmental disturbance and pollution are complex problems worldwide. The current development of modern science and technology combined with management on social and economic activities are contributing more and more to solution of the problems. Although considerable environmental protection work has been and is presently being conducted, a multidisciplinary platform for environmental scientists, engineers, management professionals and governmental officials to discuss the latest developments in environmental research and applications is very helpful for protecting our global village. During the Fourth International conference presentations from the following countries were presented: Americas: Brazil, Mexico, Canada, USA; Europe: France, Spain, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Italy, Russia, Switzerland; Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Cameroon, Zambia, Botswana, South Africa; Asia: China, Taiwan, Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Japan, Korea, Israel, Turkey, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. We also had attendees from Australia and New Zealand.

The conference started by four plenary presentations given by well known professors in selected areas of research and then parallel sessions were conducted to accommodate the various accepted papers. Technical presentations on a broad range of environmental topics: i.e., surface water quality, drinking water, wastewater treatment, soil remediation, air quality, water resources, recycling, restoration of ecosystems, bio-accumulation, microbial degradation, modelling, metals, global topics, remote sensing, analytical techniques, education and sustainable development were presented by scientists and engineers from around the world. The conference was chaired by Dr. George A. Sorial (University of Cincinnati). Recent developments in research, engineering practice, and regulations were exchanged through oral and poster presentations. Conference attendees had a unique opportunity to communicate with world-class scientists about research ideas, to exchange environmental management experience with international peers, to seek project partners, to discuss possible collaboration with other delegates, and to build solid long-term partnership relations with worldwide professionals face to face. A total of 400 abstracts were received and reviewed and 110 papers were accepted for oral presentation and 35 papers were accepted for poster presentation at the conference. This special issue of the journal contains eight selected papers from the following areas: energy assessment; ecosystem assessment; environmental quality, planning, and assessment; and sustainability.