

## Commemorating the Centenary of the Strait of Messina Earthquake at the Italian Academy

Marina Melchionda (November 19, 2008)



*Sempre lungo le banchine del porto piene di rovine e di macerie, alcuni soldati hanno appena appoggiato il corpo di una vittima, in attesa del trasferimento su una delle navi di soccorso.*

On 11/20, "One Hundred Years After the Strait of Messina Earthquake: Emergency Management from Solidarity to Efficiency"

The Italian Academy at Columbia University will host the symposium "One Hundred Years After the Strait of Messina Earthquake: Emergency Management from Solidarity to Efficiency - the Response of Public Institutions to the Strategic Challenge of Emergency Management" on November 20th. The event, starting at 8:45 am, is organized by the Italian Consulate General in New York in collaboration with the Italian Cultural Institute, the Italian Academy, the Regional Council of the Region of Calabria, the Region of Sicily, the City of Messina and the Regional Delegation of ANFE (Associazione Nazionale Famiglie Emigranti/ National Association of Migrating Families).



The seminary is part of the series “Colloqui Newyorkesi di Cultura Scientifica Italiana Linx XXI” and has a double aim: first, to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the earthquake of the Strait of Messina, when the US government showed great solidarity towards the victims by sending naval units in rescue mission; second, to offer an updated portrait of Italy.

The program is divided into three scientific sessions, respectively dedicated to the management of general emergencies, sanitary emergencies and preservation of the cultural heritage pieces that the catastrophe damaged.

The leitmotif of the event will be the excellence reached by our country in every aspect of emergency management. Professor Marcello Saija will offer an historical overview of the 1908 earthquake before the beginning of the sessions. At the end of the seminary, the jazz pianist from Messina Daniela Schachter will perform in a concert organized in collaboration with Kairos Italy Theater.

The Italian Academy will also host a part of the exhibition *Terremoto dello Stretto di Messina*, set up by the US Navy in Grand Central Station in occasion of the celebrations for Columbus Day 2008.

During the event Richard Greco, a former Undersecretary of the US Navy, will receive a decoration from the Italian government.

The Ambassador of Italy in Washington, Giovanni Castellaneta, the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations Amb. Giulio Terzi di Sant’Agata, Hon. Antonio Martino, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defense, and the Ambassador Francesco Paolo Fulci, former Representative of Italy to the United Nations, both coming from Messina, are among those participating to the conference.

They will be joined by Mr. Guido Bertolaso, Undersecretary of the Presidency of the Council of Ministries and Head of the Department of Civil Protection, Mrs. Catherine Bragg, Assistant Secretary - General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator of the UN, Mrs. Caterina Bon Valsassina, Director of the Superior Institute for the Conservation and Restoration at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, professors Roger Yurt (Presbyterian Hospital at Weill Cornell, New York), Eric Legome (St. Vincent Catholic Medical Hospital, New York) and Andy Jagoda (Mount Sinai Medical Center, New York).

Besides them - together with Agostino Miozzo, Head of the International Relations sector of the Italian Department of Civil Protection - some representatives of FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) will intervene on the theme of sanitary emergencies.

Calendar follows:

8:45: REGISTRATION AND COFFEE

9:15: OPENING REMARKS

Mrs. Barbara Faedda, PHD Director a.i. of Italian Academy at Columbia University  
Min. Plen. Francesco Maria Talo’, Consul General of Italy in New York  
H.E. Amb. Giovanni Castellaneta, Ambassador of Italy to the USA

Greetings of Sicilian and Calabrese Authorities and honors to the US Navy

9:45: OPENING SESSION: THE STRAIT OF MESSINA EARTHQUAKE AND THE AMERICAN SOLIDARITY

- Messina 1908-New York 2008: Friendship between peoples and cooperation between Governments

Hon. Antonio Martino, Foreign Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defense

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H.E. Amb. Francesco Paolo Fulci, Former Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations

- One hundred years after the Messina Earthquake: Reconstruction and Emigration

Prof. Marcello Saija, University of Messina

10:45 DISASTER REDUCTION, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE TO NATURAL HAZARDS;  
WHICH ROLE FOR THE INSTITUTIONS?

Moderator: H.E. Amb. Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata  
Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations

- The Italian Civil Protection and the "real-time" risk management scenario: the emergency intervention and the evolution of new organizational model

Hon. Guido Bertolaso, M.D.  
Secretary of State and Chief of the Civil Protection

- Natural emergency and sustainable development: the role of the United Nations in the management of natural hazards

Ms. Catherine Bragg, PhD  
Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator of the United Nations

- How America copes with natural disasters: presentation of a successful story in the management of natural disaster emergency

Mr. Andrew Slaten  
Director of the Office of International Affairs at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (F.E.M.A.) of the US Department of Homeland Security

Discussion

LUNCH BUFFET

2 pm: SECOND SESSION: CITIZENS, GOVERNMENTS AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS FACING HEALTH EMERGENCY

Moderator: Andy Jagoda, M.D.  
Professor and Vice Chair of Emergency Medicine Mount Sinai School of Medicine, Medical Director of the Emergency Department, Mount Sinai Medical Center of New York

- The response of Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Hospital and New York Presbyterian Hospital at Weill Cornell to the 9/11 emergency



Roger Yurt, M.D.

Johnson and Johnson Professor of Surgery and Chief of the Burn Center at New York Presbyterian Hospital at Weill Cornell

Eric Legome, M.D.

Professor and Chairman of Emergency Medicine for Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Hospital of New York

- Humanitarian Response and public Assistance in managing international Health Emergency. "Distress call" and prompt intervention. Lessons from the past and challenges for the future

Agostino Miozzo, M.D.

Chief of the International Affairs Department of the Italian Civil Protection

- The psychology of the disaster: psychological damage affecting victims and rescuers in case of disaster

Silvana Riggio, M.D.

Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology at Mount Sinai's School of Medicine - New York  
Director of the Consultation Liaison Service in the Department of Psychiatry at James J. Peter's VA Medical Center - New York

Discussion

3:45 pm: THIRD SESSION: NATURAL CATASTROPHES, DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND ARTISTIC HERITAGE

Moderator: Min. Plen. Francesco M. Talò  
Consul General of Italy in New York

- The Assisi earthquake: from the emergency management to the successful restoration

Caterina Bon Valsassina - Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities - Director of the "Istituto Superiore per la Conservazione e il Restauro"

- 1966 Flood of Florence: catastrophe and restoration

Oriana Sartiani

Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities - Opificio delle Pietre Dure e Laboratori di Restauro di Firenze

- Venice, artistic heritage at stake

Prof. Randolph H. Guthrie  
Chairman of "Save Venice" USA

Discussion



5.15 pm: COFFEE BREAK

5.30 pm: Hon. Richard Greco Jr., Former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, is awarded with an Italian decoration

5.45 pm: Piano jazz concert by Daniela Schachter and Kairos Italy Theater

**Location:**

Italian Academy at Columbia University  
1161 Amsterdam Avenue (at 116th Street), New York, NY, 10027

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