

Distinguished President of METU  
Distinguished Coordinator of the Engineering Research Group at TUBITAK  
Distinguished Assistant General Secretary Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality  
Colleagues  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

This workshop with the theme “Advances in Earthquake Engineering for Urban Risk Reduction” marks the last formal activity related with NATO Project SfP977231 entitled Seismic Assessment and Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings.

This project was a joint activity of 4 participating countries. These are namely Turkey, Greece, Macedonia and USA. Five institutions, namely

- METU
- University of Patras
- Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and
- The University of St. Cyril and Methodius
- University of Texas at Austin

have contributed to the success of this project.

Four project co-directors out of five are present here today. Apart from myself the names of these co-directors are as follows:

- Prof. Michael N. Fardis
- Prof. James Jirsa
- Prof. Kyriazis Pitilakis

I would like to thank each of them individually for their support and cooperation.

May I also extend my sincere thanks to those of you who have contributed to the success of this workshop technically. Your efforts in preparing the manuscripts as well as your willingness to participate in this important event are greatly appreciated.

I wish you all a very fruitful workshop and a pleasant stay in this beautiful and historical city of Istanbul where not only souls but also continents meet.