

## PRESENTATION

*With this edition, updated and augmented, of the Sicilian Annual Statistical Yearbook, I have the honour of offering the general public an important tool for discovering Sicily and the complex economic and social phenomena that occur there. It is not merely a question of formal accomplishment – the acquisition of knowledge is development. The importance of the information society is well-known in defining the new standards of civil progress as is the role it plays in everyday competition between the various national and regional systems in the global market. However, the information must be opportunely processed and selected, it must reflect real phenomena and lend itself to continual verification in order to establish its reliability; essentially it must be assisted by statistical functions that, in the public sector and respecting constitutional principles, are inspired by criteria of impartiality, accessibility and democratic control.*

*In conformity with these rules, the Regional Statistical Service, in operation at the Department for the Budget and Finance, in the year 2002, started to put together a general statistical compendium regarding Sicily. The present volume, the fifth annual yearbook, has been overhauled with regard to its structure and its sequence of illustrated topics and for the first time contains a section devoted to a comparison between the Regions and countries lying in the Mediterranean area. This new look is not the result of chance but an effort on the part of the statistics office to adhere more and more to a shifting reality, and in this light it constitutes a fine example of synergy and co-operation between public bodies, since it is the fruit of work carried out together by the Sicilian ISTAT Office and our own Service, in virtue of a special agreement signed this very year.*

*Such contributions do not remain isolated or unutilised in the sense that for an administration that is improving there corresponds a reactive society. Sicily has demonstrated, as these*

*pages also show, that it knows how to renew itself and to face up to the challenges offered by the new millennium with confidence. The commitment of its autonomous institutions and its Regional government is geared towards not disappointing it.*

*Palermo, December 2006*

**Councillor for the Budget and  
Finance of  
Regione Siciliana  
The Honourable Guido Lo  
Porto**

*As well as continuing the policy of the Sicilian Regional Budget and Finance Department (General Accounts) of constantly reaching outwards, the present edition of the Regional Statistical Yearbook has the innovative feature of being the first Regional volume of statistical information to have been written in collaboration with another office of SISTAN. The Statistical Services have worked effectively in the preparation of this work, in collaboration with the Sicilian Regional office of ISTAT; the work was initiated several years ago, but it was only in 2006 that the official stamp of approval was given for a long-term accord signed by myself and, on behalf of ISTAT, Giuseppe Quirino.*

*The Department is obviously committed to proceeding along the chosen path, whilst studying new forms of collaboration and possibly extending its accords to other departments of the Region or public administration. Sound statistical information as a basis for a sounder knowledge of the local reality leads to ever more transparent, effective and efficient public decision-making processes. This is the motivating factor driving us onward, along with mounting evidence of requests from all quarters for easier access to an understanding of the complex local Regional situation.*

*Palermo, December 2006*

***Accountant General for the Region  
Vincenzo Emanuele***