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Sommario/riassunto	We are witnessing an ever-increasing level and intensity of disasters from Ecuador to Ethiopia and beyond, devastating millions of ordinary lives and causing long-term misery for vulnerable populations. Bringing together 26 case studies from six continents, this volume provides a unique resource that discusses, in considerable depth, the multifaceted matrix of natural and human-made disasters. It examines their bearing on the loss of human and productive capital; the conduct of national policies and the setting of national development priorities; and on the nature of international aid and bilateral assistance strategies and programs of donor countries. In order to ensure the efficacy and appropriateness of their support for disaster survivors, international agencies, humanitarian and disaster relief organizations, scholars, non-governmental organizations, and members of the global emergency management community need to have insight into best practices and lessons learned from various disasters across national and cultural boundaries. The evidence obtained from the numerous

case studies in this volume serves to build a worldwide community that is better informed about the cultural and traditional contexts of such disasters and better enabled to prepare for, respond to, and finally rebuild sustainable communities after disasters in different environments. The main themes of the case studies include: * the need for community planning and emergency management to unite in order to achieve the mutual aim of creating a sustainable disaster-resilient community, coupled with the necessity to enact and implement appropriate laws, policies, and development regulations for disaster risk reduction; * the need to develop a clear set of urban planning and urban design principles for improving the built environment's capacities for disaster risk management through the integration of disaster risk reduction education into the curricula of colleges and universities; * the need to engage the whole community to build inclusive governance structures as prerequisites for addressing climate change vulnerability and fostering resilience and sustainability. Furthermore, the case studies explore the need to link the existence and value of scientific knowledge accumulated in various countries with decision-making in disaster risk management; and the relevance and transferability from one cultural context to another of the lessons learned in building institutional frameworks for whole community partnerships.
