

**PREPARATORY MEETING FOR ESTABLISHING
AMERICAN REGIONAL WORKING GROUP (AMRWG)**

11 October 2017, 09.00-10.30 hours (Session-I)
11 October 2017, 11.00-12.30 hours (Session-II)
Mexico City, Mexico

Presented by the Chairman

Background Note

1. The International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID) was established in 1950 and has currently a network of more than 70 member countries around the world. Different geographical regions of the world have different characteristics defining their ecology and populations. The member countries of ICID have been categorized in four regions, namely, Asia, Africa, America and Europe. Accordingly, in order to promote linkages and networking among the countries, four different working groups have been established, namely, American, Asian, African and European Regional Working Groups.

2. In order to achieve the larger goal of Food Security in the Latin American countries (South and Central Americas), ICID's 49th meeting of International Executive Council (IEC) approved the establishment of a Latin American Regional Working Group (LARWG) in 1999 at Bali, Indonesia with seven countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guyana, Honduras and Mexico) as its members. There is vast scope of water resources development and its management in Americas as irrigated area in the region is only 46 million hectare which is about only 16% of the total arable area of the region.

3. The LARWG was mandated to assist in the development of broad-based ICID National Committees in Latin American countries; obtain and disseminate information on irrigation and drainage in these countries; organise national and international discussions on relevant scientific and technical issues; and work as a catalyst for promoting better contact with the ICID and other relevant international organizations. The most important task of the LARWG was to identify organizations that could contribute to the development of irrigation and drainage in the region.

4. The 4th Inter-Regional Conference on "Environment-Water: Competitive Use and Conservation Strategies for Water and Natural Resources" was organized during 27-30 August 2001 at Brazil by the LARWG to focus on environmental issues of the region. Dr. Chandra Madramootoo (Canada) shared several articles from Latin American countries, which were published as country papers in the ICID Strategy document at the 2nd World Water Forum held at The Hague (2000). They were also included in CD-ROM brought out by ICID as a part of Golden Jubilee Year celebrations (1999-2000). In 2000, Dr. Beltran (FAO) distributed copies of FAO Water Report 20 titled 'Irrigation in Latin American and the Caribbean in Figures'. The Brazilian National Committee of ICID (ABID) also brought out a new issue of its Journal (ITEM) with a special article on 'Irrigation of Coffee' in 2000. Later, in 2002, Chair Dr. Ricardo L. Brito (Brazil) contributed a paper on Brazil in the Special Event for the "Vision on Water for Food and Rural Development" held during the 18th ICID Congress (2002) at Montreal, Canada.

5. The Group was re-established / renamed as American Regional Working Group (AMRWG) in 2003 to attract a wider participation from ICID National Committees in North, Central and South Americas with eight countries (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Chile, Guyana, Mexico and USA) as its members. In order to encourage the Latin American countries, ITAL-ICID had organized one-day Seminar with the theme "Water for Food, Water and Health" on 25 February 2010 at National Research Council, Italy under the leadership of VPH Lucio Ubertini (Italy). The seminar provided good opportunity for Latin American Countries and their representatives to share information on their activities and explore further avenues for cooperation with each other. The main objectives of the workshop were to share the links between water and food, water and agriculture, water and development among the Latin American countries. The representatives of Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela participated in the workshop.

6. Keeping in view the mandate of AMRWG, the group focused on (1) the broad-basing of the ICID National Committee in Latin American countries; (2) to organise national and international discussions on relevant scientific and technical issues, and (3) to act as a catalyst for promoting better contact with other relevant international organizations in the region. Later during Adelaide (2012) meetings, Mr. Maurice Roos (USA) and Mr. Machel Mierzwa from USA and Dr. Clarke Ballard (Australia) discussed ways to enthuse the countries in Americas to get involve in the activities of the Commission. With this objective in mind, VPH Laurie C. Tollefson (Canada), who

was Vice-President In-charge of Americas 2012 communicated with several South American countries for reinvigorating the AMRWG. Failing all the efforts, the AMRWG was closed in 2012.

Way Forward

7. Given that many National Committees (NCs) from Americas have become inactive in ICID, it is worth exploring the opportunity to re-activate the NCs in the region and re-establish the American Regional Working Group especially when the 23rd International Congress on Irrigation and Drainage and 68th International Executive Council (IEC) meetings scheduled to be held from 8-14 October 2017 at Mexico City, Mexico and later in the next year, 69th International Executive Council Meeting and International Conference is scheduled to be organized from 12-17 August 2018 at Saskatoon, Canada.

8. It is therefore proposed to come together on 11 October 2017 during the 23rd ICID Congress at Mexico City, Mexico and discuss strategies to revive the American Regional Working Group and bring in more countries from South America to ICID for mutually sharing the benefits of ICID's global network. Members/attendees may deliberate and evolve a action plan for at least three years with a mandate and an agenda specially when the next ICID meetings will be held in Canada in 2018.

Issues for discussions

Members / attendees may deliberate on issues such as:

1. Are there institutions / network like Southern African Regional Irrigation Association (SARIA) in Africa, to promote agriculture water management in South/Central America?
2. Do the South / Central American countries gain by joining ICID?
3. How can linkages between irrigation institutions in South/Central America be revised so that they can work together with the rest of the ICID network?
4. How can appropriate technologies in irrigation and drainage be shared among South American countries?
5. Is language a problem for interlinkages with ICID? If so, how can the language barriers be overcome?



NOTES FOR CHAIRPERSON:

1. Draft minutes of this meeting to be submitted to ICID Secretariat at Mexico City (Mexico) after the meeting.
2. Chair to participate and present his report to PCSO meeting on 12 October 2017.