

# Vice President of the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID)

## Dr Gerhard R Backeberg

Dr Gerhard Backeberg is currently Director for Water Utilisation in Agriculture at the Water Research Commission, Pretoria, where he has been involved in research leadership and project management on a range of issues regarding agricultural water management since 1995. The strategic focus is on improving knowledge of the biological, technical and economic processes for efficient water use and food production; improving knowledge for effective management of water by people in the food value chain; improving knowledge of natural processes and people-induced impacts of water resource use. His career started in 1977 with the Department of Agriculture where his research and advisory work focused on planning of irrigation farming, feasibility studies of irrigation schemes and analysis of irrigation policy. He has been involved in irrigation research, advice and project management since 1981.

Over this period he has authored/co-authored more than 30 papers and articles published in proceedings and journals; contributed chapters to more than 20 reports and books; and made more than 40 presentations at conferences, symposiums and workshops both nationally and internationally. He received the Agrekon/SJJ de Swardt Prize as co-author for best article published in 2004 and the ICID Best Paper award in 2007, for his article published in *Irrigation and Drainage*, Vol. 55 No. 1 (February 2006).



Dr Gerhard Backeberg (on the right) together with Dr Nico Benadé, winner of the 2006 WatSave Innovative Water Management Award.

Dr Backeberg obtained his M.Sc. (Agric) with distinction (1984) and his PhD (1994) at the University of Pretoria, with specialization in Agricultural Economics. He was awarded the S2A3 Bronze Medal for research excellence by the South African Association for Advancement of Science in 1985; the FR Tomlinson Medal of Honour by the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa in 2004; and the SABI Silver Medal for his contribution to irrigation research in South Africa in 2007. He is currently a member of the Advisory Board of the International Centre for Water Economics and Governance in Africa (IWEGA) which is based in Maputo, Mozambique; is Chairman of the Task Force on Financing Water for Agriculture of the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID); was Chairman of the South African National Committee on Irrigation

and Drainage (SANCID) from 2003 to 2008; President of the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa from 1995 to 1997; and Chairman of the Liaison Committee of Professional Societies Concerned with Agriculture from 1987 to 1990.

The contributions as a member of **SANCID** involved the following: **1.** Represented the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa (AEASA) since establishment of SANCID in 1992/1993; **2.** Served as Treasurer of SANCID 1995-2000; **3.** Served as Vice-Chairman from 2000-2003; and **4.** Served as Chairman from 2003-2008: In this period Dr Backeberg took the lead to activate membership through first, national involvement in annual meetings of SANCID, the biennial SANCID Symposium (held since 2004) and the annual SANCID Lecture; as well as international involvement in ICID Working Groups, ICID Conferences and Congresses; and publications in the ICID Journal; **5.** Served as member of the Organising Committee of the 1991 Irrigation Symposium, Durban; the 2000 Micro Irrigation Conference, Cape Town; and the 2007 2<sup>nd</sup> African Regional Conference, Johannesburg; and gave the opening address during the SANCID Symposiums held in 2004 and 2006 as well as presentations during the SANCID Symposiums held in 2008 and 2010.

Dr Backeberg has participated in **ICID** activities since the 1999 Congress held in Spain. Thereafter he was elected as **1.** Vice-Chairman of the Working Group on Irrigated Agriculture under Drought and Water Scarcity (WG:IADWS), with contributions to activities of the WG as representative of South Africa (2002-2007); **2.** Represented South Africa on the International Executive Council (IEC) of ICID (2003-2008); **3.** Elected as Chairman of the Task Force on Financing Water for Agriculture (TF:FIN), with organisation of

International Workshops in New Delhi and Yogyakarta and presentation of papers as representative of South Africa (2009 to date); **4.** Presented papers during the IPTRID Workshop held in Wallingford in 2000; presented papers during the Working Group Workshops held in Tehran in 2003, Montpellier in 2003 and Beijing in 2005; presented papers as lead or co-author during the 21<sup>st</sup> European Regional Conference held in Germany, 2005; 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Asian Regional Conferences held in Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi and Yogyakarta in respectively 2006, 2009 and 2010; 4<sup>th</sup> USCID International Conference held in Sacramento, California in 2007; gave the closing remarks during the 2<sup>nd</sup> African Regional Conference held in Johannesburg in 2007; was the co-author of papers in proceedings of ICID Congresses held in Canada, 2002; Pakistan, 2008; and Tehran, 2011; **5.** Nominated two candidates from South Africa and winners of WatSave Innovative Technology Award in 2003; WatSave Innovative Water Management Award in 2006; and was recipient of ICID Best Paper Award in 2007.

With this active involvement as a member of SANCID in the activities of ICID, and if elected, Dr Backeberg is committed to continue to serve ICID in the capacity as Vice President. In particular it will be important to mobilise inactive member countries in Africa, with facilitation by both SARIA and ARID, as well as representatives of eastern and northern Africa.

