

**Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the
WORKING GROUP ON ROLE OF IRRIGATION IN POVERTY
ALLEVIATION AND LIVELIHOODS (WG-POVERTY)
17 September 2014, 09.00-10.30 hours [Session 1]
17 September 2014, 11.00-12.30, hours [Session 2]
Gwangju, Republic of Korea**

Strategy Theme: Schemes

Year of Establishment: 2008

Completion of the Mandate: 2014

Mandate: (i) Synthesize specific knowledge and experience from the irrigation sector, to design pro-poor actions in a wider understanding of irrigation along the whole rainfed-irrigated continuum (aka agriculture water management), (ii) Look for technical solutions that work within a clearly defined socio-economic context, so that they can be mobilized in a case specific approach, (iii) Emphasize multiple-use (MUS) of irrigation systems as a specific approach to alleviate poverty in this context, (iv) Increasing opportunities for greater and more open participation by the poor, in the development of systems and in the value chain, (v) Building accountability mechanisms that give longer term support and commitment to poverty alleviation initiatives, (vi) Guidelines supported by case studies on how to enhance the poverty alleviation and livelihood improvement impacts of new and existing projects, and (vii) The effect of urbanization on smallholders in peri-urban areas and drawing population from rural to urban areas.

Members Present: (1) President Hon. Peter Lee, Chairman, 2010 (UK, 2008); (2) Vice President Laurie Tollefson (Canada); (3) Dr. Yohei Sato (Japan); (4) Dr. Enayatollah Farahani (Iran, 2009).

Permanent Observer: Mr. Andre Roux (South Africa).

Observers: (i) Mr. Jiasheng Huang (China); (ii) Mr. Mukhlis Zainol Abidin (Malaysia); (iii) Mr. Muhammad Sani Bala (Nigeria); (iv) Mrs. Robiah Lazim (Malaysia); (v) Ming-Young Jan (Taiwan); (vi) Prof. Udaya Sekhar Nagothu (Norway); (vii) Dr. Chung-Feng Ding (Taiwan); (viii) Mr. Abubakar Sambo Adamu (Nigeria); (ix) Dr. Mochammad Amron (Indonesia); (x) Mr. Mr. Ahmed Aziz (Iraq); (xi) Dr. Hussein El Gammal (Egypt); (xii) Dr. Sylvain Perret (France).

Website: <http://wg-poverty.icidonline.org/>

WG-POVERTY Minutes Item 1: Action taken report by Chair

1. The chairperson President Hon. Peter S Lee opened the meeting by pointing out that the working group had been formed in 2008 and held its first meeting in New Delhi in 2009, with a mandate extended in 2013, to run until 2014. The working group was in its 6th year and has completed its activities.
2. The working group has held a workshop every year; although in 2011 the duration of the workshop was severely truncated by having to share its time slot with the abortive WG-MDGs, and thereafter by clashes in the schedule with other groups. In 2012, the Working Group proposed to wind-up the work of the working group with the production of a position paper, for which the PH Lee had circulated the outline in 2013. He requested inputs to this from the members, which needed to be short in order to fit into the format of a position paper. Case studies to illustrate points in the text would be welcome, but they needed to be in box format.
3. No inputs have been received last year or this, and the case studies heard in the workshop were interesting but they were not in the format in which they be included in the position paper. A lot of work would be needed to draft the text and reduce the case studies to a suitable format for a position paper; moreover it is clear that a lot of other work was going on that would need to be acknowledged in a position paper. The chair was therefore of the view that preparation of a position paper was beyond the capability of the group, and he had instead drafted a Final Report of the working group's activities, which the meeting would review and add to.

WG-POVERTY Minutes Item 2: Membership of the working group

4. Mr. Muhammad Sani Bala, Nigeria voiced concern that his name had been proposed as a new member of the group by the Nigerian National Committee but it was not included in the papers. The chairperson pointed out that as the group was winding up there was no point admitting him as a new member, however, he was welcome to stay and contribute to the meeting.

WG-POVERTY Minutes Item 3: Workshop on Poverty Alleviation Interventions

5. A further case study had been received, and this was presented as an additional item. Mr Mukhlis Zainol Abidin, Malaysia gave a presentation on the Muda Irrigation Project, which had been greatly intensified since the 1960s to contribute nearly 40% of the nation's staple food supply and alleviate poverty in a region once poor area by enabling double cropping of paddy and improving the income of farmers. Mr Bala, Nigeria (Secretary General of Nigerian National Committee) indicated that the World Bank has been supporting a project in Nigeria which he believes could be appropriate to this WG. The project is called "Transforming irrigation management in Nigeria (TRIMiNG) Project". The chairperson indicated that information on this project could be useful. Mr Bala will forward the information to Ms Gabriel, who will forward to the chairperson. The chairperson said that it sounded like the agri-business element of the project and might be the most relevant here.

WG-POVERTY Minutes Item 4: Final Report of the Working Group on the Role of irrigation in poverty alleviation and enhancing livelihoods

6. The chairperson presented the draft Final Report and asked for comment and suggestions.

7. The chairperson had contacted some of the more active members of the Working Group before the meeting and Professor Linden Vincent had sent comments on the Appendix (i.e. the outline of the Position Paper). In this, she said priority lay with:

- (a) Opportunities for the poor through
 - (i) Broadening access to resources
 - Pro-poor design
 - (ii) Improving resilience
 - Working with ecosystems
 - Designing for sustainability
 - (iii) Increasing livelihoods through participation
 - Farmer operations
- (b) Continuing challenges
 - (i) Unsympathetic design and operation
- (c) Pro-poor interventions
 - (i) Bottom-up design and management

8. However, since the Group had neither the time nor resources to work on even these items, the chairperson proposed that instead, the Group focus on the Final Report and identifying actions that could be taken forward in support of ICID's design of Topic 2.1 Water for Food at WWF7 (April 2015), where ICID will lead a session on Modernization of Irrigation Schemes. There might be an opportunity here for ICID to advocate pro-poor interventions as a part of the modernization process, he suggested.

9. The chairperson asked the members, if they had projects that might be implemented during the 3 year period following WWF7 to illustrate such interventions.

10. In South Africa, it was pointed out, the small holder farming is a low source of income (about 4%) in the rural areas. Rainfed farming is more important than irrigation farming. The Government's focus is, however, on smallholder farming. Projects being undertaken cover inclusion of women in farming, improving farmers' participation in the food value chain and agribusiness. Currently irrigation is being debated in South Africa where the National Development Plan emphasizes an increase of irrigated area, however the country does not have enough water and on the other hand, the current allocation of water for smallholder irrigation is not being used to full potential. We need to look at access to land and water, knowledge and skills to use the water and finally the management of irrigation schemes. Dr Backeberg requested that rainfed agriculture should also be brought back into the picture. One should be looking it as a continuum (irrigation and rain-fed).

11. In Malaysia, in the next 3 years, the focus will be on the development of irrigation infrastructure. While in Iran, many irrigation projects are being modernized, and a key issue was operation and maintenance. Farmers also need to be taught the value of water and by doing so an increase agriculture production, thus addressing poverty alleviation. Dr Farhani promised to provide the chairperson with the information. In Japan, the focus is on labour saving as they are losing labour from the agriculture sector.

12. Sylvain Perret – Year of Family Farming. One needs to look at the dynamics surrounding family farming and integrate these aspects into modernization and not just focus on engineering aspects of modernization as was done in the past. The circumstances of the poor are changing; more are connected to markets (i.e. not just subsistence) and more diverse (e.g. in livestock or part-time employment in the towns). This has an impact on agriculture, for example, where some are leaving for other jobs, transplanting of rice is no longer done due to lack of labour. One needs to look at adaptive modernization. It is a very complicated subject, and this supported the view that it could not be properly addressed in a Position Paper without a lot more work, which the Group was not able to provide.

13. Several speakers cautioned against the introduction of too sophisticated irrigation technologies as labour and skills were critical constraints.

14. VP Tollefson asked how the report will be completed. Will documents be attached? The chairperson said he had placed the report and the documents into the ICID Dropbox and he would work on them there. Several members have access to this box and could provide their suggestions.

WG-POVERTY Minutes Item 5: Any other business

15. The Working Group closed its activities leaving the chairperson and secretary to complete the Final Report and other documentation.

