



International Workshop on Water Saving Irrigation and Food Security

July 11-14, 2011 Beijing, China

Summary

The International Workshop organized jointly by the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID) and Chinese National Committee with the support of the Ministry of Water Resources, China, was held in Beijing in July 2011. The Workshop is a maiden effort following the engagement under ICID's renewed efforts to invigorate the IPTRID, a global programme on Irrigation and Drainage Technology and Research, in tune with the IEC decisions of ICID. In Yogyakarta, CNCID and ICID signed a Memorandum of Understanding to the effect and undertook to organize a workshop on Water Savings in 2011 to begin with.

The Conference placed high emphasis on the issues related water savings in irrigation and was attended by experts gathered from 12 countries covering over 60% of total world irrigated area namely, China, Australia, Canada, Iran, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, South Africa and Uzbekistan. The workshop attracted an overwhelming participation of nearly 100 professionals from China and abroad.

The Conference highlights include the inaugural with an exposure of the 'Irrigation Development and Management' in China with the opening address of Vice minister, Ministry of Water Resources, China Mr. Jiaoyong followed by a country presentation. In his opening remarks ICID President Madramootoo urged on the need for Global Food Security and the importance for water savings in agriculture which shall drive the future technology and research in the sphere.

ICID's significant contribution to the global water savings efforts through an initiative of giving recognition to best innovations and practices through "WatSave" awards came out effectively through ICID Secretary General's presentation. Besides ICID contributions to World water Fora in successive meetings and bringing focus on 'Water for Food' to ensure MDG achievements, besides the planned roles for the upcoming WWF 6 conference in Marseille in March 2012 were highlighted. Setting targets and actions to achieve food security has factored the need for 'water savings in agriculture' and shall make suitable recommendations.

Several "country presentations" by lead professional and scholars in ICID fraternity resulted in a wide coverage of case studies and actions at National level. These covered 20 presentations touching upon scenarios in Australia, Canada, China, India, Iran, Nepal, Malaysia, Niger, Pakistan, South Africa and Uzbekistan which covered the entire scenario of the Central Asian Region.

The main topics covered included irrigation management, irrigation technology, water productivity improvement at different scales, and irrigation technology for small holders, environmental aspects of water saving irrigation, rainwater harvesting, a summary update on irrigation research publications bringing out the dynamics of the sectoral Research and Development correlating them to Chinese R&D.

In a nutshell, the Conference brought out the following:

- Importance for water savings with the ever growing stress on land and water for food security.
- The need for national level actions to address issues connected with food security.
- The multipronged approach of several countries in approaching the issue adopting hard and soft options in the irrigation and Drainage sector to enhance water and land productivity.
- The opportunities to address the problems with a variety of solution options like adaptable mechanized irrigation system and developing 'pro-poor' cost effective portable irrigation systems that can fit in small holder situations seen widely in Asia
- The wide ranging practices in addressing cost recovery for irrigation measures
- The need for revamping existing large scale irrigation scale systems in vogue using new technology tools (RAP and Masscote, Benchmarking)
- The strength in technology tools and the need to bridge in the gap between farmers' uptake
- For a wider success, there is a need for bridging the gap between the technology 'haves' and 'have-nots'.
- ICID member countries could gain by the new IPTRID process by twinning interests and hence,
- An institutional mechanism to share the available technology and knowledge base among countries and regions across the world is highly desirable under the circumstances.

The participants of the workshop were privileged to participate in an impressive launching ceremony of an International Centre for Training and Research in Irrigation and Drainage in Beijing in the hands of ICID President Chandra Madramootoo, thanks to the great support of the Government of China in the Ministry of Water Resources.

Acknowledgement

It is my privileged pleasure to specially thank, on behalf of ICID fraternity, His Excellency Hon'ble Minister for Water Resources, China, Dr. Chen Li, for his strong everlasting commitment in supporting the ICID and growing interest in promoting ICID mission across the globe.

Our sincere thanks are also due to Vice Minister HE Jio Yong, PH Aly Shady, Prof. Wang Aiguo, Chairman CNCID, Prof. Jia Jinsheng, President ICOLD and all the office bearers gathered here during this occasion, VPH Cai Lingen, VPH Karim Shiati, VPH Gao Zhanyi besides VP Vlotman, and VP Bajaj. Thanks are also due to all the presenters for their interesting inputs.

We appreciate and thank VPH Gao Zhanyi and his team for their untiring efforts in organizing the entire event, so admirably.