

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

04 September 2019, 14:00-16:00 hours
Bali, Indonesia

Presented by the Interim Chairman

Background

1. The International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID) was established in 1950 and has currently a network of more than 74-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; organize 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, Educator 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.

7. Given above, a Preparatory Meeting for establishing American Regional Working Group (AMRWG) was held on 15 August 2018 at Saskatoon, Canada. A Summary of the proceedings of the meeting is available at **Annex**. 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 Third Irrigation Forum (WIF3) and 70th International Executive Council (IEC) meetings has been scheduled to be held from 1-7 September 2019 at Bali, Indonesia.

8. During the Saskatoon (2018) meeting, the possible barriers for South American countries to join ICID were discussed. PH Peter S. Lee (UK) presented the direct membership option for South American countries to join ICID. Dr. Warren Helgason (CANCID) was elected as Interim Chair of the WG to lead the promotional activities of the group and provide a report during the 70th IEC meetings in September 2019 at Bali, Indonesia.

9. In order to strengthen the membership in the Americas, ICID Central Office requested Dr. Brian T. Wahlin (USA) of Vice-President, ICID (*In-Charge of Americas*) to take up matter with Associate Members and New countries in the assigned region to foster and encourage greater country participation in ICID activities. While a number of member countries in Americas are gradually decreasing due to one reason or other, it is extremely important to reactivate the countries who have become 'Associate Members' (*Inactive National Committees*) and bring them into ICID as well as liaising with new countries for becoming ICID members. Vice President Dr. Brian T. Wahlin (USA) and Interim Chair of the RWG may present the current status of the membership of the RWG and explore ways to reinvigorate the membership of Latin countries.



NOTES FOR CHAIRPERSON:

1. Draft minutes of this meeting to be submitted to ICID Secretariat at Bali (Indonesia) after the meeting.
2. Chair to participate and present his report to PCSO meeting on 5 September 2019.

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

15 August 2018, 09:00-10:30 hours (Session-I)
15 August 2018, 11:00-12:30 hours (Session-II)
Saskatoon, Canada

SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING

1. The Working Group had informal discussion on possible barriers for South American countries to join ICID. Observers Ir. Pilar Gil (Chile) suggested that informal networks of professionals who are interested in irrigation and drainage could be used as a 'grassroots' approach to building interest and potential membership in ICID.
2. PH Peter S. Lee (UK) advised on direct membership options. WG members were encouraged to explore existing contacts / networks with South American countries as a mechanism to develop interest in ICID. WG discussed the possibility of asking a VP to write introduction letters and send to WG member contacts, and provide ICID promotional material to be presented at the conferences / meetings.
3. WG appointed Dr. Warren Helgason (CANCID) as Interim Chair for this WG to lead the promotional activities during 2018-19 and provide a report during Bali meetings in September 2019.

Observations

(i) Feedback from 'Special Session of Latin Americas' held on 14 August 2018 at Saskatoon, Canada

4. It was noted that the Special Session of Latin Americas could not be held due to lack of attendance during the event.

(ii) Regional Membership of ICID

5. PH Peter S. Lee, Chair of TT-RO apprised the members and provided updates on direct member options for individuals and associations in South American countries as an option to develop ICID interest / capacity where national committees do not exist.



