

**ICID 22<sup>ND</sup> EUROPEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE  
PAVIA, ITALY 2-6 SEPTEMBER 2007**

**PETER LEE, PRESIDENT ICID, AT THE OPENING  
3 SEPTEMBER 2007**

Prof Ubertini, President ITAL-ICID  
Mr Lassini, Representative of the Lombardia region  
Mr Negri, Representative of the Lombardia Water User Association  
Prof Guizzetti, Vice-President and Pro-rector, University of Pavia  
President Honoraire Prof Bart Schulz  
Vice President Dr Georgi Guluyk  
Vice President and Chair of the European Regional Working Group, Dr Eiko Lubbe  
Vice Presidents Honoraire Dr Ricardo Segura (Spain), Prof Ligitvari (Hungary) and  
Mr Alain Vidal (France)  
Secretary General ICID Mr Gopalakrishnan  
Secretary ICID Dr K N Sharma  
Secretary General ITAL-ICID Mrs Maria Scarascia  
And representatives from Italy, Czech Republic, Croatia, Egypt, France, Lithuania,  
Netherlands, Germany, Hungary, Pakistan, Russia, Spain, Turkey, UK and Ukraine  
Finland, Switzerland, Poland and Romania making 19 countries in all

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you on behalf of ICID, to the 22<sup>nd</sup> European Regional Conference

As a President of ICID from the European region I am very pleased to be welcoming you to a regional conference in my own region. My thanks are extended to the Italian National Committee and the European Regional Working Group of ICID.

This is the third time Italy has hosted a regional conference... starting with the 3<sup>rd</sup> in 1965, and then with the 11<sup>th</sup> in 1977, both in Rome. Only Spain has hosted as many.

Any mention of the ERWG reminds me of the great work of our late-Vice President Wolfram Dirksen, who did so much to invigorate the EWRG and make what is surely the best of our regional working groups. The work of the ERWG is especially important in ICID in that it serves the particular interests of the large number of European member countries, several of which are more concerned with drainage and flood management than with irrigation.

With regard to drainage, it is therefore good to note that this conference will be followed next year by an International Drainage Workshop 6-11 July, to be shared between Finland and Estonia, that is certainly in my diary.

Europe is a region where many issues are not confined to one particular country and these regional gatherings are of special importance. But Europe has always been outward facing, with interests in other parts of the World, and ICID's global objective of "managing water for sustainable agriculture".

I want to make the theme of my address "Europe as a meeting place", and I will explain why.

Irrigation and drainage, or as we tend to say these days "agricultural water management" seems to have two objectives:

- 1) the "productive" objective, epitomized by the commercial farming sector, and
- 2) the "developmental" objective concerned with rural well-being and agriculture's role as one of the principle pathways out of poverty, source of livelihood as much as food.

These two objectives are recognized in ICID's second strap-line "water for food and rural development", and I stress here the "and". The one is not complete without the other. Perhaps instead of "food" we might have said "food, fibre and now, energy", but for the purposes of a simple statement let us take "food" to be a proxy for all outputs from the productive sector.

Of course it is rare to find examples of AWM that do not have, to a degree, both productive and developmental objectives. But there are some systems that are predominantly productive and others that are predominantly developmental.

Systems of both types can exist along side each other in the same country, whether it be thought of as a developing country or developed. Poor farmers are not found exclusively in poor countries, and there may be thriving productive systems in countries that we often think of as poor. All the more reason NOT to muddle the productive and development objectives, and make sure each is given its due attention.

Although the productive and developmental objectives each have their own constituency in ICID, I think that the international meetings have tended to be more orientated to the developmental objective. And therefore, the venue of our meetings tend to be in countries where that objective dominates.

For example, we talk of the need to eradicate hunger and provide food security by increasing the global availability of food by 67% over the next 25-30 years and assume this will come from universal improvements in productivity. Perhaps because the greatest demand for more food is in countries that have a primary need for developmental objectives, we tend to imagine that these developmental objectives can be married with the productive objectives. However, over the period of 25-30 years, which is quite a short period in developmental terms, I do not believe that many systems will be able to develop sufficiently to pass out of the developmental phase so that productive objectives and mechanisms become dominant; for example, with opportunity cost pricing of water and produce.

More likely there will many systems that will remain predominantly developmental, which modest increases in productivity, whilst the big demand for more food will be met by other systems that have predominantly productive objectives. These productive systems may coexist alongside developmental systems, but more likely they will be in different countries or regions, linked to the demand by trade, which is where European businesses and their policies become important.

I think it is a mistake for us to assume that developmental systems will become radically more efficient, especially where these systems are primarily to serve the poor, who may be new to farm management and irrigation, and with very limited ability to invest.

These are things to which ICID should be giving a lots of attention, and is relevant to see that the thematic framework for the next World Water Forum to be held in Istanbul in March 2009 recognises “water and food for ending poverty and hunger” and “multiple uses of water, eg water supply and irrigation” in the topics under the theme “advancing human development and the MDGs”. This is the developmental objective with which ICID feels quite comfortable.

But we must not forget the productive objective, and the second green revolution that is needed to increase global food production by 67%. This is a different objective, and the thematic structure of the World Water Forum recognises this in the topic “ensuring adequate water resources and storage infrastructure to meet agricultural, energy and urban needs” that comes under separate theme of “managing and protecting water resources and supply systems to meet human and environmental needs”.

There are echoes here between this theme, and the theme of this conference “water resources management and irrigation and drainage systems development in the European environment”. This reinforces the view that ICID has much to learn from this conference and Europe, in general that is relevant to the productive objective. Europe may play its part in the next green revolution in ways that go beyond the contribution of its own productive sector.

Europe is above all a great meeting place, and if ICID is going to contribute to the productive objective as well as the developmental one, it is going to have to look beyond the World of donor-driven institutions and connect with commercial farmers, agri-business, technology suppliers and the big food and energy companies, many of which have European headquarters or strong links to Europe.

The Stockholm Water Week this year was sponsored by Nestle, and European businesses were strongly represented in exploring new ways to link investors and businesses to the water sector. Even more significantly, European food companies Groupe Danone, Nestlé and Unilever have launched the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI), a partnership to actively develop and promote sustainable agriculture. This reflects ICID’s own objective “managing water for sustainable agriculture”.

Of course it has been often suggested that ICID should be developing links with the businesses behind this initiative, and others like them, but I have to ask the question if ICID has enough to offer, given that our international meetings are usually held far

from Europe and with venues coming up in Lahore, Abuja and Jogjakarta, can expect to involve such firms. No, if we are to make proper connection with this new initiative we have to be prepared to go to them, and here, Europe is the meeting place.

I am pleased that this conference has already provided the venue for an interim meeting of ICID's European Regional Working Group, and we were able to discuss how ICID might connect better with others similarly interested in managing water for sustainable agriculture, particularly Europe-based organisations mostly orientated towards the productive objective and its implications. Examples include global food companies and investment fund managers; also energy companies diversifying into bio-fuels, and especially companies like Shell investing in cellulosic ethanol; also water technology companies with international interests: and also other NGOs and civil society organisations like the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, World Wildlife Fund and The Nature Conservancy.

These organisations are very interested in ICID and its objectives, and impressed that we have such an impressive meeting programme (with meetings in all our regions, Asia, Europe, Americas and Africa) and roots in the developing world, but it is in the European context that such organisations are most likely to meet us.

In thanking the Italian National Committee and sponsors and supporters of this regional meeting in the beautiful and historic city of Pavia in the midst of the agricultural region of Lombardy, I would like to call this the Pavia initiative.

The initiative is to call on the ICID National Committees in Europe, through the good offices of the European Regional Working Group, to help ICID as a whole to connect with other organisations interested in managing water for sustainable agriculture, using Europe as a meeting place bearing in mind that the run-up to the next World Water Forum provides a good opportunity to do this, but it will not end there. Such connections will I believe, help ICID and the participating National Committees in the long term.

So I commend to you, the Pavia Initiative!

Thank you.