

THE HAGUE ICID DECLARATION

World population is expected to exceed six billion by the end of the century with 90 per cent living in developing countries. Based on current trends, population growth may exceed increases in food production.

During the past four decades, irrigation and drainage have contributed significantly to the increase in food production. Today, a meagre one-sixth of cropped lands that is irrigated produces one-third of the world's harvest of food crops. Drainage has enhanced the productivity of another tenth of cropped lands. These contributions are not without costs. Irrigated agriculture consumes 70 to 80 per cent of the fresh water used in developing countries. Drainage of agricultural lands impacts downstream water quality. The performance of many irrigation schemes is below their potential levels. Globally, about two-fifths (100 million hectares) of irrigated lands are at risk from waterlogging or salinization, or are already affected. Future growth in irrigated agriculture will be limited by the scarcity of water and land, by increasing competition for water, by the degradation of the environment, by the rising cost of development, by the deterioration of existing systems, and, finally, by the inadequacies of management.

Fresh water is a finite and vulnerable resource having an economic value with social, economic and environmental implications. The Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro, June 1992) set formidable challenges for the development of water resources and agricultural production. AGENDA 21 of the Earth Summit sets the targets for increasing sustainable crop production at 3 to 4 % per annum including the increase in productivity of existing irrigation schemes. These targets will ensure that future degradation of land and water resources is avoided or even reversed.

The International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID) has a half century of experience in the promotion and transfer of water management technology and in the handling of related issues. Building on its past experience, accomplishments, and the comprehensive water management framework, about 750 participants from 65 countries, meeting in The Hague from the 6th to the 11th of September, 1993, at the 15th ICID Congress, addressed the theme of "Water Management in the Next Century".

Actions resulting from these discussions are :

1. ICID will promote new programs for water savings in agriculture to enable the release of water for other emerging high priority uses.
2. ICID will encourage irrigation and drainage agencies to optimize the use of resources and adopt holistic and multi-disciplinary approaches to the planning of irrigation and drainage systems which, in large measure, are the keys to attaining sustainable schemes.
3. ICID will promote programs to enhance the productivity of water at both the farm and system levels, and to ensure equity in the distribution of irrigation water, the sustainability of development and the protection of the environment.
4. ICID will launch public awareness and participation programs in association with other agencies on the annual World Water Day, 22nd of March, as established by the United Nations.
5. Irrigation and drainage agencies will be encouraged to increase participation of farmer organizations in the operation, maintenance and management of irrigation and drainage systems.
6. ICID will promote international cooperation in the management of international river basins.
7. ICID will promote special programs in irrigation, drainage, and water management in Africa and other water-stressed areas.
8. ICID will develop area-oriented plans for the management of droughts and floods.

9. ICID and its national committees will broaden their memberships and develop young professionals from whom future leaders will emerge.
10. Programs will be undertaken to exchange appropriate technology among national committees, planners, designers and managers of irrigation systems.

ICID's Action Plan will have **APPROPRIATE WATER MANAGEMENT** as its central theme. It will be implemented in close cooperation with other international agencies. National Committees will develop their own action agendas in support of this central theme, focusing on water saving and improving the performance of irrigation and drainage schemes, while, at the same time, ensuring increases in food production. This sets ICID on a new challenging path for water management in the 21st century.