

Feedback

Some more fallout from previous issues

ON IRRIGATION EFFICIENCY

First, in continuation of the **Perry- Merrett** debate:

First, matters will clarify a lot faster if you abandon the "e" word (efficiency). Basins are not efficient or inefficient, just under-, fully-, or over-committed. IWMI did something useful in supporting/spreading/reinforcing the various proposals of Jensen, Frederiksen and Keller to stop talking about irrigation efficiency, and focus instead on the physical analysis of water flows and consumption – but then went and invented "basin" efficiency to re-confuse everybody.

So now all the planners and politicians in the areas where water is already over-committed are waiting to get basin efficiencies up from 110% to 140%, and thus solve the water problem. (I can only say that they will not need to install much more drainage to cope with the extra negative water they are planning to use.... maybe they should take the existing drains out to save even more water. But I begin to sound like Alice in Wonderland -- which in this case is appropriate -- and digress.)

Domestic and industrial use is very low consuming -- except garden water and golf courses -- and also in the west at

least, has very high recovery of return flows. So in terms of physical consumption they are very small -- probably 5% or less. But to focus on consumption for these uses is often to miss the point: they DO -- especially industry -- generate a lot of pollution, and their impact on water supplies is probably much greater in terms of water "spoiled" or water required to dilute the effluent than in terms of physical consumption. IWMI did work in Turkey where the downstream part of a basin has plenty of liquid in it -- fine for floating barges, but no useful irrigation water. Your accounting has to do more than look at flows and consumption and return flows to capture the situation.

Agriculture of course consumes a much higher proportion of diversions -- from 30% to 100% depending on technologies. And where you have reuse, for example in Egypt, you can have local "efficiencies" of 40% and a basin "efficiency" of 90% -- again pointing to the importance of abandoning the e word.

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WORLD WATER FORUM

And remembering **Alan Hall's** Gerald Lacey lecture, it predictably stirred up a hornets' nest. **New Delhi** replies....

Dear Sir,

I refer to pages 17-18 of N & V no. 30, on which a report by Peter Johnson titled "2000 Gerald Lacey Memorial Lecture" on The World Water Forum and its implications for ICID is published. The lecture was delivered by Mr. Alan Hall of HR Wallingford, on 16 May 2000. The report contains valuable thoughts about 'irrigation', which are under active consideration of various work bodies of ICID. Unfortunately, the report also includes certain unpleasant remarks about ICID.

By the side of the report, the bulletin has included a box giving Editor's Note to cover gist of response by President Schultz to the report. Besides what is covered by the President, the report indicates wrong and damaging statements about ICID, under the paragraph raising the question of "What is ICID" and the next one relating to suggestions about "reform of ICID". I can't say about the source of the mistakes, which could be either the lecturer or the reporter of the event.

Whatever may be the source, I wish the Editor had verified the correctness of the 'report' or the 'information' in the lecture, from the Central Office of ICID, of which the BNCID happens to be a National Committee, to enable presentation of a balanced picture. I would like to point out the following wrong statements. The BNCID office itself should be having its record of ICID documents including Constitution, which must have been vetted by BNCID along with the Council. Had it been referred, the wrong information could have been

easily spotted. The matter could have been also discussed with the eminent retired and current Office Bearers of ICID from UK who could have corrected the information. I also wish that the Chairman BNCID had discussed the issues with me or with the Secretary General at Cape Town. Had I seen the bulletin beforehand, I would have certainly discussed the matter with him. I know that the speaker is free to have his opinion, but it is better that it is based on facts and such matter is published after due verification by the 'Editorial Team'.

1. The statement that the Central Office is influenced by the Indian Civil Service (ICS) is wrong. It is common knowledge that Indian Civil Service was abolished after India became independent. The present equivalent is Indian Administrative Service (IAS), which has nothing to do with the Central Office of ICID. The suggestion of the speaker to "de-couple" the Central Office from ICS is therefore irrelevant.

2. The report mentions that "traditionally, the Head of Central Water Commission (ICS) fills this post (of Secretary General) after retirement". This statement is again wrong. The Head of the Central Water Commission (CWC) is not a person from the ICS/IAS, but is selected from the Central Water Resources Engineering Service of India. The CWC is an apex water-resources related technical arm of the Government of India. It is responsible for all water resources related planning, policy making and implementation of projects. It is headed by a top level highly experienced technical expert.

3. As reported, there is no laid down ICID "tradition" that a retired Head of the CWC is drafted to fill the post of Secretary General. For this purpose, I invite your attention to ICID Constitution and Bylaws. A vacancy in the position of

the Secretary General is internationally advertised, applicants shortlisted, and an international team nominated by the President interviews and selects the best available candidate. The IEC vets the appointment of such a candidate. The recruitment procedure for the Secretary General, has thus an international base.

4. It is said that ICID is considered to have a heavy bureaucracy that tends to restrict debate and progress. In ICID, there are more than 25 work bodies democratically operated by elected representatives of National Committees. I am sure that New and Views know this. Is this what is considered as bureaucracy? OR does the report refer to

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

*And meanwhile, another debate has been raging by email, concerning the Young Professionals Forum. **Ragab Ragab** started it all....*

On my visit to the Capetown Congress I was disappointed to find such low attendance at the Young Professionals Forum. I think this was due to the exorbitant costs of attendance. If we are to attract young people onto the international scene we have to reduce fees for workshops and conferences.

*To which several people including **Adrian Laycock, Felicity Chancellor, Peter Borrows and Jim Perry**, said ...*

I agree with Ragab.

*Or words to that effect. But a more studied response came from **Peter Lee***

Most people in ICID would agree we need to find ways to encourage more young professionals to participate in ICID. That is the point of the YPF.

The financial problem has been debated every year since 1998 (if not before). After all the solution is that those who think strongly enough about this should come up with the money.

I cannot remember whether we charged YPs at the Oxford IEC meeting (perhaps someone can remember) but if we did we can hardly complain that others do the same.

In any case, ICID international meetings generally make losses for the organisers and after the losses we made at Oxford we have to sympathise with the reluctance to make reductions for "young professionals" (who may not be that young). However, the French have done this for Montpellier (YPs will attend for free?) and so have the Koreans (as Ragab recognises). So rather than moan about it let us recognise what HAS been done.

Moreover, let's recognise also what has been raised again and again, and that is attendance fees are only part of the problem. The bigger problem is the cost of fares and accommodation. The organisers usually try to arrange low-cost accommodation, but the solution is sponsorship. Any offers?

*And young-at-heart **Brian Flynn** reminds us that...*

The fact that over half our membership is older than myself gives me cause for concern.

*Now it's back to **Ragab Ragab**...*

Central Office work? In fact there is another opinion that in spite of too much debate, these work-bodies produce lot of work. Maybe the author has a minority opinion. I wish the opinion was supported by facts and figures, which N & V could have verified and then published.

I suggest that the Editorial Team may please in future be careful about verification of the matter published.

K.N. Sharma
Executive Secretary, ICID, Delhi

I do agree on all your comments but would like to comment on Peter Lee's note. The high registration fees are to blame for the losses made by some Host countries (they are very few). If the registration fee is low with marginal profit more participants will attend and the marginal profit will be more substantial. Nowadays Host countries adopt a new fashion by giving the whole business to a private Agency who, instead of getting us cheap accommodation, get us to pay more than what you would pay if you book as individual (e.g Cape Town). Why do we have the most expensive meetings in the world, are we feeding participants Caviar and driving them in Rolls Royces? Before we look for sponsorship we have to address these points. There are a lot of Organizations around the world that do have meetings at US\$150-200 cost, and some do it free !

*And when the question was put to ICID central Office, **S.P. Goyal** , Deputy Secretary, gave a telling response:-*

In view of the newly emerging issues in irrigation, drainage and environment, it was felt necessary to associate younger generation with the activities of ICID by providing a separate forum for their contribution to the fields of irrigation and drainage. In 1993, the Council approved the establishment of a Young Professionals Forum with a view to attract the young talents to the Commission. The question of the establishment of National Section of these forum and the manner in which the young professionals in the country are involved in the fold of the National Committees were left to the National Committees to decide. But, it was decided that the National Committees would establish a Young Professionals Forum so that such a forum could help develop the future leaders of irrigation and drainage in different countries and at the international level and ensure continuity and sustainability of ICID as a pro-active organisation.

The first meeting of the ICID Young Professionals Forum was held in Rome in September 1995 and was attended by young professionals from Bulgaria, Egypt, Iran, Korea, Malaysia, Slovenia and representatives of National Committees of Algeria, Canada, Hungary, Poland and USA. In their presentation the representatives of Young Professionals Forum highlighted the progress made by their National Committees on establishing Young Professionals Forum.

The second meeting of the YPF was held in Cairo in September 1996. The 'Gulhati Memorial International Award' and the 'Hassan Ismail Memorial International Award' were presented to young professionals for the first time during the Cairo Congress.

The third meeting was held at Oxford in September 1997 and the fourth meeting in Bali in July 1998. The fifth meeting was

held in Granada in September 1999. The 'Gulhati Memorial International Award' and the 'Hassan Ismail Memorial International Award' were presented to young professionals during the Granada Congress.

The 6th meeting of the ICID Young Professionals Forum was recently held in Cape Town, South Africa on 22 October 2000 and the Dr. Hassan Ismail Memorial International Award was presented to a young professional from Ethiopia.

As you are aware, a draft directory of young professionals was published in 1998 and circulated among all the National Committees of ICID so that those National Committees who were not appearing in the Directory could draw inspiration and furnish the data pertaining to their Young Irrigation Professionals in the next YPF Directory. The Group at its meeting in Bali, recommended that the second edition of YPF Directory would be published in 2000 based on revisions from each National Committee. At the Granada meeting of the Working Group on YPF, it was reported that the Eleven countries had issued the directory. Since a new directory has been planned to be published by early 2001 as decided at the Cape Town meeting of WG-YPF, your National Committee is requested to send the list of your Young Professionals to the Central Office for inclusion in the new YPF Directory, preferably by end of December 2000. The Chairman of the Working Group of ICID has already drawn up a format as follows:

1. Name, 2. Sex, 3. Place and Date of Birth, 4. Office Phone, Fax and E-mail. 5. Home Address and Phone Number, 6. Educational Background, 7. Professional Activities.

I shall be grateful if your National Committee may kindly send the information pertaining to the members of YPFs of your National Committee in the above format to the Central Office preferably before 31 January 2001 so that the same could be included in the YPF Directory.

*To which **Ragab Ragab** points out ...*

I did ask the officials of the ICID more than once to reduce the subscription fees to encourage Young Scientists to attend the annual meetings. On contrary, there is a competition between the host countries to make the fees more unaffordable to the Seniors let alone the young generation. I used the poor attendance in Capetown as a case where the young could not afford to present their work in a Workshop organised by my Work Group because simply they were asked to pay 650US\$. I did warn the Korean National Committee not to make the same mistake and they agreed to reduce workshop fees to 450US\$ for workshops which is still high enough to put off any young scientist. I did suggest fees 150-200US\$ for Workshops and received no response whatsoever. In summary, there is no point in pretending that we are after the young generation while we make it almost impossible for them to attend and present their Work.

*But then **Jitin Davda** hit the nail on the head....*

Agreed, the purpose of the forum is to attract young talents to the Commission and develop them as future leaders.

The reality is more prosaic. For younger professionals to get to these workshops/fora, they have to get passed the regular ICID meetings first. If at these meetings, members are content only to chat amongst themselves and the people they've worked with down the years, then we will continue to see fleeting younger faces who never become members.

ICID can provide a continuum of knowledge as well as opportunities to contribute fresh ideas. The greater the age range at all meetings, the better. New and emerging issues are equally relevant for all. The 'future leaders of irrigation and drainage' will emerge, regardless of whether they could get to a jamboree in Cape Town. But they may not be members of ICID.

*And a parting shot from **Jim Perry***

This is all interesting stuff and needs to be discussed, but are emails the best way. How about a discussion group facility on our web site with access restricted to members ?

*(This being a reference to the fact that this entire debate so far has been conducted via email between members of the British National Committee and New Delhi.) So over to you **Melvyn**, our website supremo....*

*But before we drop the subject, let's hear the Editor's opinion. At risk of excommunication, **Adrian Laycock** says....*

We do not need to polarise our profession into young/old, male/female, engineer/ non-engineer, experienced/ inexperienced, or any other perceived classification. It's true that the young can learn from the old, - notably how to avoid repeating their mistakes. It is however even more true that the old can learn from the young, - in attuning to the way of the modern world and its attitudes to things not made from concrete, in bringing fresh ideas, lateral thinking, new computerised techniques, for example. And as any old professional can testify, a young professional will soon grow into an old one. Why hive off the contributions of half our colleagues into some spurious pigeonhole that merely conveys to them the message, "Thanks for your contribution. We don't take it seriously because you're too young. But when you grow up you can be an old pro like us, and we might listen to you then".

Kill the YPF!