

BALI DECLARATION

At the end of the 10th Afro-Asian Regional Conference and IEC, a statement known as "Bali Declaration" was issued which appealed all African and Asian countries to take pro-active steps to ensure sustainable water and land development. Following is the text of the Bali Declaration:

"Since the mid-eighties global food production is declining at about one percent per year. This decline is mostly taking place in the developing and some of the developed countries of Asia and Africa. The changing economic conditions in these countries bring with it changes in land use and tenure. Annually more fertile agriculture land is lost to more lucrative industrial and urban development, while less fertile lands, and highlands and forests are brought under agricultural use. The gap in income between urban/industrial and agricultural/rural occupation is steadily increasing. This is inevitably creating greater gaps between the two sectors and makes farming no longer a desired occupation. In addition, the low level of education of farmers hinders their capability to adapt. The net result is a gradual reduction in the level of food production and lower food security.

Meanwhile the demographic conditions show a rapidly increasing population in Asia and Africa. Increase of food production and agricultural base incomes, as well as the eradication of food insecurity are intricately linked with sustainable and productive use of water and land resources. The largest contributor to food production is irrigated agriculture for which fresh water is the single most important factor. Yet all indicators point to the critical condition of global fresh water in the coming 21st century. The increasing scarcity and declining quality of fresh water is cause for serious concern.

A more integrated and multipurpose approach for land and water development and management is required which will also enhance water saving measures. Reuse of agricultural drainage and unconventional poor quality water can be used in water shortage areas. In the introduction and application of technology, priority should be given to appropriate technology, taking into consideration financial feasibility and social acceptability. It may also be noted that for better and efficient use of resources, a shift of paradigm in water and land resources development is required from government oriented decision making process and activities to a more user-based system. The empowerment of water user organizations and their participation in the planning and management aspects of water and land resources development is essential for putting in place an effective management system that will ensure performance.

Since the irrigation sector is the largest user of water, it is necessary to optimize water use and promote conservation, and improve irrigation efficiencies. Such optimization however requires modern and viable management operation systems for planning, water distribution, operation and maintenance including engineering, agronomic, social, economic and financial aspects. Their adoption can be a substantial step forward in raising productivity and water use efficiency. Socio-economic development and environmental conservation are also closely linked. The green economics is based on the concept of internalized environmental cost in setting the prices.

It is agreed that community and public at large have an important role to play in the water and land resources development and management. It is now particularly recognized that women have a strategic role to play in water management and conservation. Enhancing participation of the stakeholder is essential for sustainable development of land and water resources. There is a need to enhance the role of the economically empowered Water Users' organizations with particular attention to small-scale economic enterprises and gender equity issues. In the light of this Management transfer of irrigation schemes, the empowerment of community organization and enhancing of women participation are a prerequisite for sustained development and management of land and water resources.

The Afro-Asian Conference held in Bali from 20th-22nd July 1998 urges that ICID strives towards the fulfillment of the above mentioned objectives and hereby appeals to all governments of the Asian and African nations to take pro-active steps to ensure sustainable water and land development. Such affirmative action would enable the region to enter the new millennium with added assurance of food security and enhanced prospects of poverty alleviation."