



Newsletter 15

The Dams Newsletter
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Dams are a question of heart - better dams for a better world

Anton Schleiss, ICOLD President

Looking at the financial markets and the recent revelations regarding offshore companies one can have the impression that the world economy is mostly controlled by financial speculations. Nevertheless, one should not forget that the soundness of the world economy strongly depends on investments and above all on the creation and maintenance of infrastructures. Among those, the hydraulic schemes or water infrastructures are decisive for any development. During several thousand years mankind has continuously developed techniques to use water and at the same time to protect itself from water. History shows that the economic prosperity of a society and its cultural wealth has always been closely related to the level of the development of the hydraulic schemes including hydropower and dams. In view of climate change, dams and reservoirs still and have to play an even more important role as mitigation and adaptation infrastructures in order to satisfy the vital needs in water, renewable energy and food in the different continents worldwide.

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As I underlined during my inaugural speech as newly elected president ICOLD at the closing ceremony of the 25th ICOLD Congress in Stavanger in Norway, dams are a question of heart because: **H** stands for health. Dams ensure water and which is the basis for health. **E** stands for energy, which is required for developing the welfare of any society. **A** stands for available and affordable. **R** stands for renewable. **T** stands for trans-boundary and transportation. Dams are trans-boundary infrastructures that satisfy the needs of large communities and societies. The ICOLD family is proud to contribute to a sustainable future for our young generation by fulfilling its mission. ICOLD leads the profession in setting standards and guidelines to ensure that dams are built and operated safely, efficiently, economically, and are environmentally sustainable and socially equitable. ICOLD is assisting nations to meet the challenges of the 21st century in the development and management of the world's water and hydropower resources. Water infrastructures are still urgently needed and they are and will be of fundamental importance in this century since they can really satisfy the human vital needs of water-energy-food. For gaining wide acceptance and obtaining a win-win situation between all stakeholders such large water infrastructures projects have to be designed as multi-purpose projects by multidisciplinary teams with a complex system approach. This needs excellence in engineering sciences and management. It is a privilege for me to serve as president ICOLD since, through the excellent work of his technical committees, ICOLD is contributing to the worldwide vision "better dams for a better world".

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