

Proposal for Creation of an “International Qanat Club” as a Side Event

For over 2 millenniums, Qanats have turned deserts into blooming orchards and have made it possible for people to settle in some of the world's most inhospitable environments;

Adoption of tube and deep wells and the use of electric & diesel pumps are causing deterioration of Qanats. Moreover, migration from Qanat villages, loss of labor, and breakdown of the social structure that supports Qanat water management, in addition, to climate change are contributing to rapid demise of Qanats in many parts of the world.

There are numerous traditional methods for construction and maintenance of Qanats in different parts of the world which some are still practical. Researches are being carried out to identify new technical methods to enhance these traditional systems. Recently, international organizations such as UNU, UNCCD, UNESCO, EC (European Commission) have paid increased attention to rehabilitation and sustainable development of the traditional Qanat systems.

Many scientists have made enormous contributions to study and further advancement of Qanat systems around the globe. To appreciate these noble efforts and to also disseminate the knowledge to other countries, ICQHS will be officially launching the “International Qanat Club” who will serve long-term partners as trainers and advisors to the Centre. Through their technical contributions, the experts will be identified and notified in advance by ICQHS. This club can pool the knowledge and experience of many scholars from different parts of the world concerning Qanat system, on the other hand the club serves to network all the entities which are involved in Qanat somehow including green NGOs, academic centers, research organizations, etc. Also, the members can be posted of the events taking place about Qanat, and can share their information coming from their research projects through the Qanat Club.

Call for Papers

Policy and decision makers, administrative and technical staff, practitioners, consultants, researchers and educators, either at international, national and local levels involved in water and traditional water-related issues wishing to make a presentation during the Conference are invited to submit extended abstracts.

Consistent with the title of the conference, the subject should be addressed to one of the themes and topics of the conference. The extended abstracts should be presented in English and not exceed one and a half A4 pages. The International Scientific Committee will select from the extended abstracts the authors who will be requested to prepare their full papers. The participants are kindly requested to submit their extended abstracts to <http://tkwrm.icqhs.org/>.

Important Dates

Extended Abstract Submission	30 July 2011
Notification of Abstract Acceptance	30 September 2011
Full Paper Submission	30 October 2011

Registration

The full registration fee is **500 USD** that covers conference registration, accommodation in Yazd, one day field visit to few Qanats of Yazd, conference publications, meals, and refreshments. There are limited fellowships for waiver of registration fee and coverage of international travel expenses for young participants and experts coming from low income countries.

Contact Us

International Center on Qanats and
Historic Hydraulic Structures (ICQHS)
UNESCO Category II Center

P.O. Box 89165 – 1553, Daneshjoo Blvd., Yazd, Iran

Tel: (+98) 351 825 05 53
(+98) 351 825 83 93
Fax: (+98) 351 824 16 90
E-mail: tkwrm@icqhs.org



TKWRM 2012;

International Conference on

Traditional Knowledge for Water Resources Management

21-23 February 2012
Yazd, IRAN

Lessons Learnt from Sustainability,
Adaptation to Emerging Changes,
and Socio-Cultural Compatibility



▲ Construction of A Diversion Dam on “Zarineh-Rud” River, Using Chaff as the Main Material;
A Symbol of Creativity, Endeavor, and Team Work.
North-Western of Iran, June 1965

<http://tkwrm.icqhs.org/>

Background and Rationale

Global changes such as population growth, climate variability, expanding urbanization, and often pollution, are occurring in a pace and scale never experienced before. The impacts are also far to predict and hard to cope with. Amongst all impacts, food security and equitable access to fresh water resources are major challenges in which it is estimated that, within 25 years, two thirds of the world's inhabitants will live in countries with serious water problems.

Inventive approaches and innovative technologies have to be developed to call for every possible water resource. However credibility, sustainability, cost-effectiveness and success of these approaches / technologies could be only judged by future generations. This is while learning from past experiences will minimize the risk of failure of such innovations.

Water harvesting as well as management techniques probably date back to the history of civilizations arising in different parts of the world. Many civilizations rose alongside great rivers whereas a number dispersed by fade of water resources. In between are those who learned to operate limited water resources in a sustainable manner; causing, at times, political empowerment with neighbors. If studied and properly disseminated, there is a wealth of traditional knowledge in management of water resources that can lessen common errors in policy, technical and managerial practices while enlightening valuable hints to those in seek of new approaches.

In 2005 and upon decision of UNESCO member states, the International Centre on Qanats and Historic Hydraulic Structures (ICQHS) was established under the auspices of UNESCO in the ancient city of Yazd, Iran, home to many historic hydraulic systems including Qanats. ICQHS has the mission to fully understand the technical as well as social aspects of traditional water management techniques and to also promote capacity-building in these fields.

ICQHS is determined to serve as a hub for scientists, experts, academicians and decision-makers involved in traditional water management to bring their knowledge and experience together by making available its resources and technical capacity.

To this end, this conference is another important step initiated by ICQHS to collect and document traditional knowledge available on water resources management from around the globe while providing a forum for presenting new views on the topic. Alongside the event, the eminent "**International Qanat Club**" will be launched using the opportunity of having senior experts in Qanats sciences. Those scientists honored to join the Qanats Club will be given a certificate and formally become a member of the Club by certificates endorsed by UNESCO and ICQHS. The members of the club will be long-term partners of ICQHS to further pursue its mandate in advancing the knowledge of Qanats and capacity-building for the Qanats know-how.

Objectives

Bringing together leading water management experts and archeologists, scientists and engineers, policymakers, climate change experts and economists, and executives of water services of local and regional authorities to:

- (1) Present their findings and lessons learnt from sustainability, adaptation to climate variability and community participation of traditional water management techniques, and discuss how to incorporate such technologies into short-term decision-making and long-term water management and policy-making;
- (2) Exchange ideas and experiences on how learning from traditional knowledge could be systematically incorporated as an integrated element of water related decision-making process and different actors could be identified and involved in the process with emphasis on involvement of and capacity building for the civil society;
- (3) Identify research areas for incorporating modern advancements with traditional knowledge to address evolving global needs and establish links to further pursue these areas;
- (4) Establish a permanent secretary at ICQHS to network among scientists contributing to understanding of traditional techniques in water resources management and to host the "International Qanats Club"

- (5) Produce a policy proposal and an action plan for a concrete and practical follow-up to the proposed conference recommendations and, also, to contribute to the Seventh Phase of UNESCO's IHP-VII, 2008-2013.
- (6) Discuss the possible ways to enhance public awareness about water scarcity and the environmental-social backlash of overexploitation of groundwater resources.

Themes

THEME I: Sustainability of Traditional Water Management systems and coping with emerging challenges, i.e. changing climate, food security:

- A) Indicators for sustainability of historic hydraulic systems
- B) Water balance at the basin level
- C) Coping with issues emerged at the time and responding to challenges (case studies from history)
- D) Traditional agreements for managing trans-boundary large rivers and aquifer systems
- E) Indigenous methods for forecasting and monitoring; with focus on drought and flood management scenarios

THEME II: Traditional practices in community participation and level of decision-making in water resources management:

- A) Managerial mechanisms and community participation in management and O&M of historic hydraulic systems
- B) Financing and pricing systems in traditional methods for water production, supply, and O&M and success stories from traditional water markets
- C) Lessons learnt from traditional ways of identifying water dependencies, applying water measurement techniques and meeting water demands equitably
- D) Role of women in traditional water production, distribution, use and management
- E) Traditional water division systems and its role in economic, political and social structures

THEME III: The Role of Culture in Water Resources Management:

- A) Water ethics in water management systems
- B) Role of religion in water resources management
- C) Attitude of Islam toward equity in water distribution