



73RD INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING



24th ICID INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS 73rd IEC MEETING

3RD OCT - 10TH OCT 2022
ADELAIDE | SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Theme: Innovation and research in agriculture water management to achieve sustainable development goals



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CURSE OR BLESSING! ARE SMALLHOLDER IRRIGATION SCHEMES DOOMED TO SUCCEED?

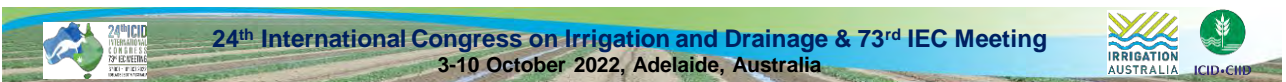
Eng. Bezzel Chitsungo

(Director - Department of Irrigation; Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, and Rural Development) &
(Chairperson - ZwCID)

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON “INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT IN THE FUTURE”

06 October 2022: 11:15-13:00 and 14:00 to 15:45 Hours

Adelaide, Australia



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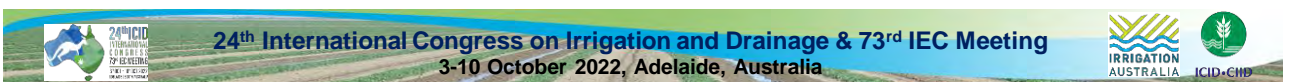
BACKGROUND

- ❑ Despite evidence of several shortcomings, governments and donors have maintained a renewed interest in smallholder irrigation development.
- ❑ The Zimbabwean government has in recent years consistently allocated at least 30% of its annual agricultural budget to irrigation development.
- ❑ Donors and multilateral institutions, on the other hand, have poured millions, if not billions, of dollars into various program interventions over the years.



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- ❑ The World Bank estimated in 2008 that 85% of the people in SSA lived in rural areas and depended primarily on rain-fed agricultural production with generally low yield levels for their livelihoods.
- ❑ Governments are seized with the need to ensure food self sufficiency in the now, and are bracing themselves for the future demands in light of the anticipated increase in population and the impacts of climate change.



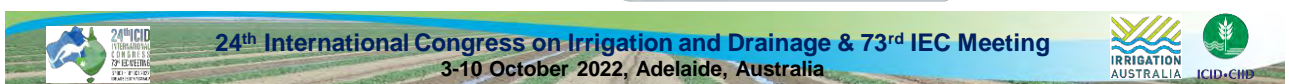
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- ❑ In 2020, the Government of Zimbabwe launched its National Development Strategy 1 which has given prominence to irrigation development as a key accelerator to enhanced food production, and has set ambitious target of increasing area under irrigation from the current 185 000ha to 350 000ha by 2025.
- ❑ Such a national policy target is however not backed by a robust sector policy blueprint, which in my view is critical in shapping the institutions, financing and implementation of complementary programmes



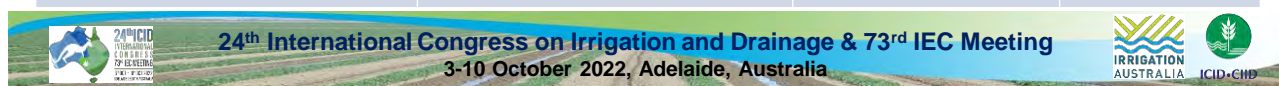
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- ❑ irrigation is a critical input in developing countries for poverty alleviation, economic growth, food security, and environmental protection.
- ❑ there is some confusion over who manages irrigation infrastructure.
- ❑ Farmers, smallholder farmers especially have found themselves at the centre of chaos triggered by continuous interventions by governments and donor agencies who are always assisting with funds for rehabilitation and revitalization of irrigation schemes through various programming



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Funding Partners	Programme Code	Period	Funding Envelope
International Fund for Agricultural Development(IFAD) in partnership with Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and GOZ	Smallholder Irrigation Support Programme (SISP)	1999 - 2003	USD19.3 million
European Union (EU)	Smallholder Irrigation Development Support Programme (SMIDSP)	2008 - 2012	Euro 6 Million
EU through the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United nations(FAO)	Smallholder Irrigation Programme (SIP)	2014 - 2019	Euro 6 Million
Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC)			USD6.6 Million
International Fund for Agricultural Development(IFAD) in partnership with GOZ	Smallholder Irrigation Revitalization Programme	2016 - 2023	USD52 Million



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- ❑ A closer look at these programmes suggests that there is evidence of duplication of efforts and resources confirming the notion that the sector is trapped in a vicious cycle of build, neglect rehabilitate, neglect, rehabilitate.
- ❑ Smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe are bedeviled with a cocktail of challenges.
- ❑ the land reform created situations where farmers were put together on lands sharing the same irrigation infrastructure; no one owns the infrastructure, and no one feels like investing resources into maintaining it.
- ❑ As a result, the land under irrigation in Zimbabwe has generally not been sustainably improved.



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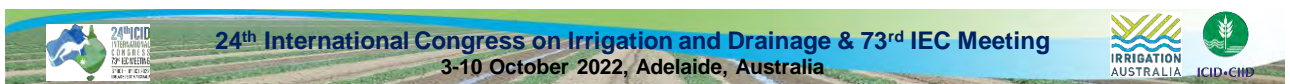
Other challenges

- ❑ Unsustainable plot sizes
- ❑ Unclear definition and duplication of roles by governments departments and agencies.
- ❑ inefficient, unreliable, and inequitable water service; chronic underinvestment in maintenance; rapid deterioration of infrastructure; and reduction in service areas with adverse impacts on cropping intensities and productivity' appear to be generic in most developing countries (Philippines- Araral study)



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- ❑ Land reform?
- ❑ land management transfer was done hurriedly, not in a structured way; government institutions continued to act as if they were managing the schemes, providing subsidies to farmers especially for the production of wheat and maize.
- ❑ farmers were not free to adapt their production to market demand, and had little incentive to maintain the schemes as a result production figures inevitably went down as much infrastructure dilapidated..
- ❑ informal institutions such as the village chiefs still play a key political role that falls outside the control and authority of central government.



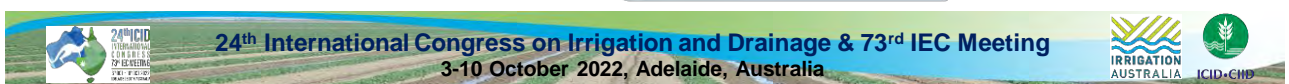
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- ❑ what determines the success or failure of an irrigation projects is the quality of management, instead of the size of the irrigation scheme and who owns it and controls the system
- ❑ institutional weaknesses and performance inefficiencies of public irrigation agencies have led to high costs of development and operation of irrigation schemes
- ❑ the causes include everything from government policy (for example, inadequate institutions) to environmental problems (for example, high salinity and waterlogging levels) to social issues (such as farmers' lack of agronomic and irrigation knowledge) to financial challenges (farmers being unable to support the scheme, access to finance.



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- ❑ paradigm shift in irrigation management, from an inefficient subsistence system to a market-oriented production system
- ❑ Literature on smallholder irrigation in Zimbabwe gives conflicting conclusions on the viability and sustainability of smallholder schemes
- ❑ World Bank (2008) observed that “There are hardly any cases of successful and sustainable farmer-managed smallholder irrigation schemes despite efforts by Governments, NGOs and private organizations”
- ❑ literature review indicates varying and sometimes contradicting views on the economic viability and socio-economic impact of smallholder irrigation development



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Conclusion

- ❑ This has given the impression that the smallholder irrigation sector is siphoning funds from central governments and donor agencies.
- ❑ because smallholder irrigation schemes are contributing to food security and rural economies, they remain of paramount importance in addressing issues of food and nutrition security, poverty alleviation and employment creation.
- ❑ irrigation schemes present themselves as a great and ideal platform for political expediency, hence the politicians will never, for a moment argue against financial support to this constituency.
- ❑ One would be justified to conclude that Smallholder Irrigation Schemes are doomed to succeed



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Thank you



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