Water Resources Management in water stressed environments and Islands: the challenge of Ecoadaptation

International Conference

La Palma,

February 1-4, 2004

We never know the worth of water till the well is dry.

Popular proverb

Water is a driving force for sustainable development and environmental integrity, indispensable for human health and welfare. The empowerment of local authorities and communities in approaching a suitable management of water resources, through the adoption of innovative solutions and strategies, will be one of the great tasks to be undertaken in the years to come.

THE CONFERENCE

The Conference is organised by the La Palma Biosphere Reserve in collaboration with the Aquadapt, Medis and WaterStrategyMan Projects that form the ARID Cluster, and is supported by the European Commission.

Objectives

The conference offers an invaluable opportunity to deal with the new challenges in water management in Southern Europe. The evaluation of new potential management scenarios, the identification of current water management paradigms in representative regions, and the formulation of appropriate strategies for sustainable use of water resources will be the main focal points of the Conference.

The main Conference objective is to open a forum for highlighting key issues common in water stressed areas and particularly in Islands. The hard path approaches and the soft path solutions will be addressed in the context of ecoadaptation. The issues of vulnerability, sustainable development, and the role and importance of coevolution will form the main topics for discussion.

This Conference also aims to share and compare experiences with International Organisations and Programmes working on water issues in arid and semi-arid regions. These objectives are particularly relevant to island governments, reflecting the concept that the currently emerging island paradigms require urgent answers that will be obtained through enhanced co-operation; a common desire, hopefully to be endorsed through a first island declaration on sustainable water management: “Water for the islands, a new commitment for survival”.

PROGRAMME

Monday - February 2nd, 2004

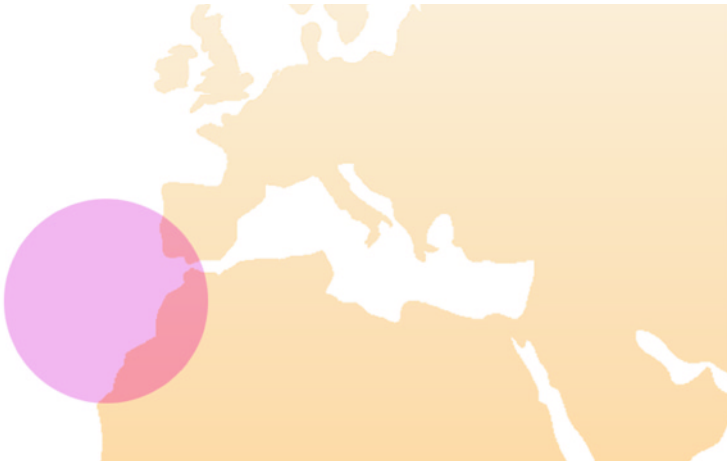
09.30 h. OPENING SESSION
Welcoming addresses
10.00 h. International Organisations presentations
Canary Islands Overview (La Palma)
10.30 h. *Coffee break*
11.00 h. The Arid Cluster
11.30 h. The Aquadapt Project
12.00 h. The Medis Project
12.30 h. The WaterStrategyMan Project
13.00 h. *Lunch break*
14.30 h. Project specific meetings

Tuesday - February 3rd, 2004

09.00 h. Project specific meetings
13.00 h. *Lunch break*
14.30 h. Stakeholder fora
16.00 h. *Coffee break*
16.30 h. Structural instruments for ecoadaptation:
Keynote speech 1
17.00 h. Keynote speech 2
18.00 h. Meeting with the Island Authorities

Wednesday - February 4th, 2004

09.00 h. Project specific meetings
13.00 h. *Lunch break*
14.30 h. Non-structural instruments for ecoadaptation:
Keynote speech 3
15.00 h. Keynote speech 4
15.30 h. Keynote speech 5
16.00 h. *Coffee break*
16.30 h. Closing session



The ARID cluster includes three research projects on integrated and sustainable Water Resources Management:

WSM-WaterStrategyMan (Developing Strategies for Regulating and Managing Water Resources and Demand in Water Deficient Regions) aims to develop an integrated water resources management framework that takes into account economic, technical, social, institutional and environmental implications, to meet both directly and indirectly the EU requirements concerning preservation and enhancement of the quality of the environment, the availability of natural resources, and, sustainable development. Case studies from Southern Europe are employed as paradigms for the development of improved resource demand/management strategies. Emphasis is given on the need for the design of alternative water cost recovery options based on the particular socio-economic and institutional circumstances of each distinct paradigm advanced throughout the study.

MEDIS (Towards Sustainable Water Use on Mediterranean Islands: Addressing Conflicting Demands and Varying Hydrological, Social and Economic Conditions) focuses on the design of an integrated water management tool which will be built on a holistic, interdisciplinary approach, including physical, environmental, socio-economic and legal aspects. Emphasis is placed on the conflicting interests of the various stakeholders and end-users and the search for equitable and sustainable water management in Mediterranean Islands (Corsica, Crete, Cyprus, Mallorca, Sicily).

AQUADAPT (Strategic Tools to Support Adaptive, Integrated Water Resource Management under Changing Utilisation Conditions at Catchment Level: A Coevolutionary Approach) aims to generate knowledge which supports the strategic planning and management of water resources in semi-arid environments at catchment level under changing supply / demand patterns. The intellectual framework which underpins the project reflects recent thinking on the co-evolution of natural resource availability with human societies. Hence, the project explicitly seeks to provide a basis for the integration of water resource planning with structural, social, economic, agricultural and regional development planning.

The ARID Cluster is supported by the European Commission under the Fifth Framework Programme and contributing to the implementation of the Key Action “Sustainable Management and Quality of Water” within the Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development.

Social Events

January 31st, 2004 - Saturday
Reception of participants.
Afternoon visit to the Historical-Artistic centre of Santa Cruz de La Palma

First Day - February 1st, 2004 - Sunday
Visit to the Biosphere Reserve of La Palma
Visit to the North of the Island, including a visit to Roque de los Muchachos and Astrophysical Observatory, offering amazing views of the Caldera de Taburiente, lunch at the Fayal recreational area and return through Garafía and Los Llanos

Second Day - February 2nd, 2004 - Monday
Welcome Dinner at Hotel Marítimo
(Santa Cruz de La Palma)

Third Day - February 3rd, 2004 - Tuesday
Dinner hosted by the Organisation at the Restaurant La Bodeguita de El Medio
(Santa Cruz de La Palma)

Fourth Day - February 4th, 2004 - Wednesday
Gala Dinner at the certificated Biosphere Hotel Hacienda San Jorge
(Playa de Los Cancajos)

Fifth Day - February 5th, 2004 - Thursday
Visit to the South of the island

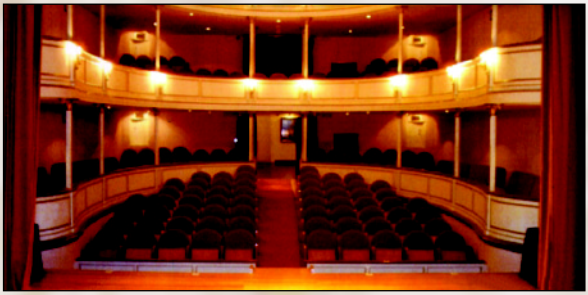
The town of Santa Cruz de La Palma acquired its highest importance at the beginning of XVI century

Casa Salazar - Conference Venue

The Conference working sessions will take place in the Casa Salazar. This building, rebuilt in XVII century, belonged to Ventura Salazar de Frías, Knight of the Calatrava Order, Island Governor. The main façade dates from this time, and it is one of the best examples of the historic architecture of La Palma. The façade of quarry stone contrasts with the inside in tune with the traditional Canary Island architecture patterns, and enriched by the outstanding Mudejar roofs and baroque decoration of the main salon and stairs.

Teatro Chico

The Teatro Chico will host the Conference Opening Session. Established in 1866 by the Terpsícore y Melpómene Society, it is located in the former church of the Nuestra Señora de Los Dolores hospital (XVI century), transformed into theatre in 1840, when this charity institution was transferred to its present location in the former Santa Clara convent. Inside, it is decorated with allegories painted by Ubaldo Bordanova. The hall, supported by elegant forged columns, has wooden, neo-classical style boxes on its sides.



The weather

La Palma enjoys a sunny climate with year-round moderate temperatures. Average sea-level temperatures in Santa Cruz vary from 22ºC in August to 15ºC in January. There is a substantial seasonal variation in rainfall, with almost no rain from June to August, and a peak in November. Temperatures drop substantially with altitude; average temperatures at the observatory (El Roque de los Muchachos) vary from 18ºC in summer to 3ºC in winter.

La Palma, a singular island

The island of La Palma, also known as the “Isla Bonita” (beautiful island) is located in the Nortwestern part of the Canary Island archipelago. It has a total area of 706 km2 and a population of 80,000 inhabitants. The considerable altitudes observed within this small perimeter are noteworthy: at 2,426 m, the Roque de los Muchachos is the highest point of the island and hosts the biggest astrophysical complex in the world. La Palma is of volcanic origin, like all the Canary Islands and the archipelagos of Macaronesia.

From an environmental point of view, it is one of the better-preserved islands within the archipelago. Almost half of its territory is protected, showing spectacular contrasts such as cloud forests, heritage of the Tertiary age, and young burning landscapes of lava.

The first settlers named the island “Benaohare”. It was divided in 12 cantons, or manors, each governed by one lord. The last king to surrender to the Spanish invaders, after the start of the conquest in 1492, was the indomitable Tanausú, who governed the Aceró kingdom (Caldera de Taburiente).

In the XVI century, due to its famous sugar mills, the island enjoyed remarkable prosperity and produced and exported large quantities of Malvasia wine, honey and other products. In the XVIII century the harbour of Santa Cruz was considered the third in importance

of the whole Empire, after Antwerp and Seville. From there, ships sailed towards America, and Santa Cruz hosted at the time the first Court of the Indies. The outstanding labour and formidable effort of the farmers of La Palma succeeded in transforming the sterile lava fields into productive lands, seeking water in the depths of the island and transporting soil from the farthest places.

By reason of all these values, the island of La Palma was declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 2001, a declaration based on the opening of new paths towards sustainable development and the suitable management of natural resources.

Accommodation

Conference participants can reserve accommodation at the Hotel Marítimo, located close to the Conference venue, in Santa Cruz de La Palma. A special daily rate of 41.65 € (+ 5% taxes) for double room - single use with breakfast has been agreed for the Conference participants.

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