

Professional scientific sessions for art, architecture and urban planning Thursday evenings

Held in: Conference hall of Herampey Consulting Engineers

Date: 07.02.2019

Title: Cultural Landscape and sustainability in development.

Speakers and panel members: Mr. H. Laqaei and Mrs. A. Malek Marzban.

The first speaker was MR. H. Laqaei who presented a brief history of sustainability, saying that the word was used in a book, predicting the disintegration of the world in the 21st century, adding that there were still chances to change the trend, through the improvement of economic and ecologic conditions. In 1972 the conference on environment, organized by the UN was concluded by the declaration of Stockholm, affirming the complexity and serious social and environmental crisis that human society was facing, giving new hopes to reverse the worrying message that the nature was giving to us. In 1978 the book entitled “Our common future “, contented the essences of sustainability’s meaning.

The concept that in 1991 was adopted by the UN for sustainability, is the introduction of a policy that through its realization, the positive manners of natural resources use will be predictable and continuous for the coming years.

The five principles of sustainability are economic, social, environmental knowledge, local development sustainability through the cultural continuity.

The realization of UN guidelines, contain the concepts and parameters of sustainable development, through different factors and tools, paying attention to the environment and arguments related to the sustainability. One of these aspects is the field of ecotourism related to the rural development that aims to improve the quality of life and social wellness of rural communities. In this context the main goals are to create conditions for an economic dynamicity, assuring the participation of the people and the constant presence of tourists, environmental protection, identification of spaces and their dynamicity, finding financial resources, for acts of protection and local participation.

Mr. Laqaei explained that for ecotourism and sustainability actions short, mid and long term goals of must be defined (cultural, economic, political, structural and social). The goals are the sustainability, exclusion of office ordered programs, financial guarantees, the definition of the projects and parameters, the definition and evaluation of executive actions. The four principal questions that must be posed are why cultural, economic and social projects based on the environmental evaluation and identification of the future possibilities and potentials have not been formulized. Despite the approval of various programs why they have not been adopted and realized. At the end of each project why scientific and practical analysis have not been realized. And the last question is why despite the stress on the sustainable development importance, it hasn’t been introduced in the national strategic plans of sustainable development priorities?

The speakers defined also the key problems that must be faced in this context. Why the destruction of the earth, where does come from this mentality, which are the difference between the sustainable development and the demolition of the earth, the increase of population and demand and the necessity of programming, the exploitation of the environment and its capacities, evaluation of development consequences and the reduction of exploitation negative aspects, sustainable exploitation of resources, programming, edition of regulations, development management and supervision of the activities.

Continuing his speech Mr. Laqaei talked about the problems that currently create problems for Iran. Some of them are the danger of floods in many parts of the country, increase of deforestation, increase of forestall resources exploitation, increase of exploitation of ranges, official and non official increase of construction in various areas, ignoring the problems and consequences that they may cause to the environment. Other aspects of problems mentioned by Mr. Laqaei were local problems that than assume a global aspect, they can have long or short term aspect, be more or less complicated. These different aspects dictate the necessity to consider and comprehend the programs in a larger national and international sphere, in order to insure their successful realization. Talking about case studies, he mentioned shiraz, the revitalization of fishing areas and the local economy, the Laft geo-park, the Sorkeh Hesar park in Teheran etc.

After presenting case studies and general approaches, Mr. Laqaei spoke the attempts to introduce and localize the trends and experiences that are occurring in other countries that have achieved successful results, especially the case of Italian universities. He explained how the group that he has created (ETED OR IITED), has organized visits and bilateral workshop for professors and university students interested on the matter, during the last eight years, but he considered the results that they have achieved not enough for such problems, that are global and need a particular approach. To show the importance of their activity, Mr. Laqaei explained how such cooperation with the Italian counterpart has insured the registration of the city of Yazd by UNESCO as a world heritage. In his opinion in Iran there are other cities like Isfahan that have this capability to be registered in the world heritage list not through different monuments, but entirely as a city.

Concluding his speech Mr. Laqaei talked about the lack of edited and long term programs in Iran regarding the matter. In his opinion another point that the researchers must work on is the collection of information, in order to have the possibility to design a road map for the organization of studies and activities.

Mr. Laqaei concluded his speech stressing on the importance of technological achievements' introduction and the necessity to involve popular participation, in order to be able to ensure the maximum results and efficiency.

The second speaker was Mrs. A. Malek Marzban. She began her speech that the term "cultural landscape" has been used since a century ago. During the last two decades the World Heritage Center and the WHC have assumed the responsibility for the identification and protection of cultural landscapes. What we need to understand the content of this term that has different dimensions and

comprehend various fields, is knowledge and information. The first attempt to treat this argument occurred in 1920. In the past the cultural landscape corresponded to the human life manner and is part of it. The transformations that machine based behaviors and the uncontrolled formation of urban conglomerates, caused many changes in the way of life and because of these changes, consciously or unconsciously many cultural landscapes have been destroyed. In order to find a way to stop the trend of demolition, it's necessary to make a clear definition of cultural landscape, needed also in the process of development and because the sustainable development has different meanings and dimensions, the relationship between the cultural landscape and sustainable development can be studied in the same context. The cultural landscape prepares the ground to reinforce the heritage of a country, for example the direct link between cultural landscape with sustainable tourism and reinforcement of economic and social aspects in a society is undeniable. Mrs. Malek Marzban added that the need of identity in all human societies is common. The need for landscape and the way to find identity in landscape and place is a common necessity too.

Talking about the experiences and results achieved by various researchers in the '90-s of last century, Mrs. Malek Marzban mentioned David Jacque, Richard Englehart, Otto Slotter, Frantz Bauz and others. What is common in all these researchers is the sense of belonging and the relationship with the environment.

Describing different definitions of landscape she explained that landscapes are classified as natural, cultural and historical. The first is that man had no intervention in its creation, the second is the transformation of natural landscape by human intervention and the historical landscape is the one that comprehend an outstanding monument or trace of human civilization or society. The historical landscape is a place where through human use it has experiences change, having its precise form, where a historical fact has occurred. Even though a historical landscape is also a cultural landscape but not always a cultural landscape is a historical one.

Regarding the cultural landscape, she explained that it's a combination of natural and manmade works, like parks, rest areas and cemeteries, the second group are sites that during the time have experience completion and transformation and third group are landscapes that comprehend cultural, religious and natural aspects.

What is important for cultural landscapes to be registered in UNESCO world heritage list, are their requisites. The candidate for registration must reflect human creativity, development in architecture and urban planning, historical and memorial arts, urban design, based on cultural and civilization traditions, buildings, collective works, human traditional living spaces, use of land, traditions that reflect the life, ideas, believes, natural phenomenon, natural beauties, historical events etc.

The natural landscape is not limited to memorials, archeological sites and objects, but is comprehend also traditions and way of life as heritage, like oral ceremonies, visual arts, social activities, natural sciences etc. She repeated that the cultural landscape, as we see is the reflection of a coexistence between history and nature, expressed in activities that today we call them Landscape Urbanism.

Mrs. Malek Marzban presented the list of monuments that have been registered in UNESCO world heritage that included more than twenty monuments.

Some of the monuments that are registered in the UNESCO world heritage list, have been presented by Mrs. Malek Marzban, like Shahr-e Babak (registered in 2015 as the 19th Iranian monument). She presents new where the city was located, how the people lived in the village and which were the architectural-historical characteristics of the buildings, the language they used to communicate, how they defended themselves in the past. She talked also about historical information regarding the area.

The next monument (the fifth that in 2004 was registered in UNESCO list) was the fortress of Bam. The monument was almost completely destroyed during the earthquake occurred in 2004. Historical records show that the fortress was founded between 4-6th B.C.

Another interesting natural-manmade structure is the subterranean channels called “qanat” that still are used in Iran to transfer water from a point to another, where there is the necessity. Bam and its qanats is the first cultural landscape to be registered in the UNESCO list.

The following cultural landscapes that were presented, are the spring of Ali (cheshme Ali) and the village of Varkaneh and the archeological-historical are of Shar-e Ray.

At the end of the presentations the speakers answered to the questions of the participants to the session.