



FAO-CIHEAM new partnership focuses on food security, nutrition, and resilience

Presse Release

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The International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) today signed a new strategic partnership aimed at strengthening the livelihoods of rural communities in the Mediterranean region.

The two organizations will work together to advance solutions on issues in the region related to food and nutrition security, rural development and improved management of scarce water resources for agriculture. This will primarily be done at regional and global policy and in advocacy fora.

FAO and CIHEAM will also support policies and programmes to empower small-scale farmers and fisher folk to improve their incomes and employment opportunities, and to build their resilience to human-induced and natural shocks.

Another area of joint work will be generating and sharing well-adapted and useful knowledge targeted to the needs of small-scale farmers and fisher folk, through joint research, publications and documenting best practices.

"Today countries in the Mediterranean region are facing urgent and complex difficulties linked to agriculture, food and rural development," FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva said.

By strengthening their cooperation, he added, FAO and CIHEAM will be in a better position to raise awareness on issue related to food security and rural development.

“One important area of our collaboration is certainly the enhancement of water productivity for irrigated agriculture,” Graziano da Silva said.

For his part, CIHEAM Secretary General Cosimo Lacirignola stressed how the partnership “highlights complementarities between the two organizations; reinforces programs based on knowledge sharing and that invest in human resources.”

Lacirignola noted the need to bring more visibility to existing innovative solutions and best practices contributing to rural development in the Mediterranean region which is “full of potential”. He said that CIHEAM’s main objectives are providing concrete solutions, sharing experiences, investing in youth training and promoting useful knowledge to develop the region.



Roma, 23 October 2015, Signing of MoU

M. José Graziano da Silva, FAO Director-General and Dr Cosimo Lacirignola, Secretary General, CIHEAM

Today’s agreement builds on more than 35 years of collaboration between FAO and CIHEAM and reaffirms the organizations’ shared goals to enhance food security, nutrition and sustainable agricultural development in the Mediterranean region. The region faces numerous challenges including the need to cope with the impacts of climate-change. However, it also possesses considerable advantages, such as a relatively high proportion of young people in its population and a tradition of healthy eating habits and sustainable agricultural practices (e.g the Mediterranean Diet and family farming).

Website of the FAO www.fao.org

Website of CIHEAM www.ciheam.org



CIHEAM

International Centre for Advanced
Mediterranean Agronomic Studies

CIHEAM-FAO
MoU signing Ceremony

Roma, October 23, 2015

Speech of the CIHEAM Secretary General
Mr Cosimo Lacirignola

***Dear Director General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

On behalf of the whole CIHEAM Team, I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to you and to your colleagues for your warm welcome today at the FAO headquarters and for the strategic partnership we are about to renew.

FAO and CIHEAM have worked together since 1977. We have signed several agreements and we have developed many joint activities related to food production and quality, water and land management, forestry, fisheries or animal health. More recently, we have jointly implemented research and projects in the field of sustainable agriculture and food, especially concerning organic production and Mediterranean Diet model.

But this renewed partnership signed today aims to prepare a better future for food and nutrition security in the Mediterranean Region, meaning a greater inclusive development in this region. Indeed, the challenges of employment, youth and geographical cohesion, linked to agricultural and rural development, remain critical.

As you know, CIHEAM promotes multilateral cooperation in the Mediterranean, aiming to respond to the needs of our 13 Member countries. CIHEAM pursues this cooperation mission through complementary higher education, specialised training, networked applied research, development and technical assistance, scientific diplomacy and policy dialogue.

We are convinced that our mission will be stronger and more efficient by enhancing the cooperation with FAO. All our Member countries

remember very well your attendance, Mr the Director General, celebrated in February 2014 to the 10th CIHEAM ministerial meeting in Algiers. On that occasion, the 13 Ministers of agriculture called for a "better strategic agenda of actions" between FAO, CIHEAM and the European Union.

Given the huge challenges the Mediterranean region is facing, there is no doubt that greater synergies between the Organisations working for Mediterranean development must be explored as a priority. The emphasis should be on agriculture because it is a wonderful reservoir of solutions. While its purpose in providing food is inescapable, agriculture is also a provider of jobs and stability. For this reason, public policies should implement innovative and inclusive approaches designed to further involve vulnerable groups, especially the rural population, in the governance and the decision making process.

Therefore, CIHEAM aims to define and to develop in joint cooperation with FAO a Master plan for a sustainable agriculture, rural development and food nutrition system in the Mediterranean. Water scarcity, small-scale farmers and fisheries, resilient production, climate change adaptations but also food losses and waste should be the main challenges targeted through this Master Plan in which the support of other regional and international organizations will be welcome. But we cannot forget the issues of youth employment in agriculture, the plant protection in the region or the need to improve the agricultural markets information if we want to improve the food and rural situation in the Mediterranean Region. That is why the links between AMIS and MED-Amin are so important.

In order to improve food security for people in the region, better managing of natural resources, reducing agricultural loss and adapting knowledge to primary needs are strategic levers for pragmatic actions. Thus, knowledge should be promoted and experiences and ideas should

be increasingly shared. The circular economy of knowledge is incredibly powerful. Innovation is not only the creation of “unprecedented actions”, but above all, it is the power of federating energies and intelligence put at the service of common goals.

This is why CIHEAM is currently working with FAO to jointly conduct a cross-cutting analysis of this triple dimension of the waste. This work will be the key issue of the 2016 edition of the *Mediterra* Regional Report and we hope that the next editions, in the future, will be also jointly prepared and edited.

We are also convinced that we must work together with all multilateral cooperation actors wishing to commit to a Post-2015 Development Global Agenda which implementation lays largely on agriculture and food.

But let me conclude by saying that the Post-2015 Agenda, at the heart of CIHEAM's Activities, also needs to be implemented and adapted at regional and local levels. In this sense, already existing innovative solutions and best practices from the Mediterranean countries can be promoted and disseminated around the World for a better sharing of knowledge and know-how.

This “Mediterraneization” of the Global Agenda would also be useful to give a more positive image of this strategic area of the planet. In this perspective, the Partnership with FAO is not only welcome but especially crucial. We have complementarities in terms of activities, synergies in terms of targeted challenges and also joint responsibilities to contribute to a better future and to a zero hunger generation.

Thank you very much