



Water scarcity in the Mediterranean

A multi-stakeholder high-level workshop to discuss challenges and opportunities

Press Release

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With the collaboration of the UNFAO and the CIHEAM, ACEA, Italy's National Water, Energy and Environmental Services multi-utility, organized the workshop "Water scarcity in the Mediterranean region: challenges and opportunities". This meeting intended to bring together actors from the public and private sectors, civil society and academics that have a strong interest in improving the performance of irrigation systems, in order to discuss issues and solutions regarding water scarcity in the Mediterranean region. The Vice-Presidents of the CIHEAM, Mr Gianni Bonini and Mr Mohammed Sadiki and the Director of the CIHEAM Institute of Bari, Maurizio Raeli, participated to this strategic workshop in line with the CIHEAM objectives to [promote stronger partnerships and cooperation with a diversity of actors](#) for Sustainable Development.

Water scarcity is a global major constraint aggravated by the combined effects of irregular rainfall, the increasing needs of the countries to meet the demographic pressure and of the economic sectors (agriculture, industry, drinking water, tourism, etc.) and by the impact of climate change. With a water use rate of 69%, the agricultural sector is by far the most water consuming and the most affected by climate change.

For the Mediterranean, climatic constraints, particularly water scarcity have always been structural characteristics. Societies have developed ingenious agricultural production systems adapted to local specificities. However, today, this resilience is being challenged. Concerning countries whose water availability per year and per inhabitant is less than 1700 m³, water insecurity is already affecting 10 Mediterranean States (Libya, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Malta, Palestine, Syria). Nearly 180 million people are describes as "water poor" in the region ([Mediterra 2016](#)).

Due to rising population, gaps between per capita water resources and problems to access water are expected to increase . These quantitative and physical limits are coupled with signs of water quality degradation of. As a result, food security will become increasingly dependent on the efficiency of water resources management and the optimisation of irrigation systems.



In view of the current situation, all stakeholders including governments, public and private actors and civil society need to take strategic and coordinated action in order to improve agricultural water efficiency and productivity to better ensure food security in the Mediterranean region.

Generating and sharing well-adapted and useful knowledge targeted to the needs, through joint research-actions, publications and documenting best practices contributes to address the challenges of water scarcity. In this context, Mohamed Sadiki, Vice-President of the CIHEAM and Delegate of Morocco presented the case of Morocco to illustrate the significant progresses that have been accomplished in terms of techniques and practices for saving irrigation water, its collection and its mobilisation notably thanks to the agricultural development strategy implemented since 2008, called the 'Green Morocco Plan'.

This kind of meetings are important to explore the challenges of managing irrigation in countries with limited water resources, to identify the opportunity of introducing advanced methods from other countries and assess the role that farming businesses and socially aware consumers can play.

Watch the interview of the Vice-President of the CIHEAM Gianni Bonini on this [high-level workshop](#)

Presentation of the Vice-President of the CIHEAM, Pr. Mohammed Sadiki, [Water Scarcity, the case of Morocco](#)

More about the CIHEAM www.ciheam.org

CIHEAM

Created in 1962, the CIHEAM is a Mediterranean organisation that works for improving sustainable agriculture and fisheries, for ensuring food and nutrition security and for developing rural and coastal territories. The organization gathers 13 Member States from both shores of the Mediterranean (Albania, Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey) and works with several international and regional institutions. CIHEAM's actions rely on a bottom-up collaboration and are problem-solving oriented, connected to the peculiar needs of the countries. With our Member States, public and private partners and academics the CIHEAM strive to meet the 4 following challenges:



Struggling against "triple waste" (Knowledge-Natural Resources-Food)



Boosting Sustainable Agriculture and Food



Investing in new generations and fragile territories



Preventing risks and managing tensions