



10TH MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE OF CIHEAM'S MEMBER COUNTRIES

Algiers – 6 February 2014

FINAL DECLARATION

At the invitation of H.E. Abdelwahab NOURI, the Algerian Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, the ministers of agriculture of the 13 member states of the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), or their representatives, met in Algiers on 6th February 2014.

Ministers and Heads of Delegation,

HAVING REGARD TO

- The Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Agriculture, held in Venice on 27th November 2003, in the course of which the 37 countries present emphasised that “*the increased importance the Community attached to the need for sustainable rural development, the preservation of agriculture in deprived and mountain areas, and the multifunctional nature of agriculture, required that adequate consideration to be given to these points in dealings between the European Community and its Mediterranean Partners*”;
- The recommendations of the 8th meeting of the 13 Ministers of Agriculture of the CIHEAM member countries, which was held in Istanbul on 8th March 2010 and addressed “*the impact of climate change on food safety and security in the Mediterranean Region*”;
- The recommendations of the 9th meeting of the ministers of agriculture of the 13 CIHEAM member countries, which took place in Malta on 27th September 2012 and addressed “*Food security and the volatility of food prices in the Mediterranean countries*”.
- The Final Declaration of the 1st Ministerial Conference of the 5+5 Dialogue on Agriculture and Food Safety, which was held in Algiers on 27th November 2013.

BEARING IN MIND

- That the right to food is enshrined in article 25 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that voluntary guidelines designed to promote the steady realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security were adopted by the 187 member countries of the FAO General Council on 23rd November 2004;
- The Declaration by the World Summit on Food Security, held from 16th to 18th November 2008 at the FAO, and in particular the commitment by heads of state and government to reverse the fall in national and international funding for agriculture in the developing countries. Promote new investment with a view to increasing sustainable agricultural production, combining their efforts and expertise to give effective form to the Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, and take all necessary measures – at regional and other levels – to improve food security;

- That corresponding measures to improve food security and Aid the fight against agricultural price volatility had been considered in international forums, notably the FAO, the G8 (July 2009 Summit in L’Aquila) and the G20 (November 2011 Summit in Cannes);
- The United Nations Conference on sustainable development, known as the “Rio+20” (Rio de Janeiro summit of June 2012), the last two FAO conferences on food security (38th session of the FAO Conference in June 2013 and ministerial Meeting on food prices on 7th October 2013) and the meetings of the World Food Security Committee following its reform in 2009, all of which addressed this subject;

KNOWING THAT:

- The progress made over the past few years in fostering agricultural food and rural development in the Mediterranean Region through the adoption of national policies implemented by governments and by establishing of cooperative arrangements by international organisations;

AWARE

- That food security depends on many interrelated factors, whether agricultural, environmental, demographic, social, territorial, economic or political, and that a holistic approach is therefore called for in dealing with this matter, which has a decisive effect on development, stability and peace in the region;
- That food security in all its aspects must be one of the essential pillars of regional cooperation in the Mediterranean Region, illustrating the extent to which countries in the basin are interdependent;
- Of the interest of strengthening Mediterranean cooperation through the exchange of experience on agricultural and food policies, designed to ensure a better management of food products markets;
- Of the complexity of establishing a better food security in the Mediterranean in a context of numerous constraints (scarcity of water and soils, rising demography and urbanisation, climate change, environmental threats, etc.) and serious challenges (improvement in production in terms of quantity and quality, more inclusive social and territorial development, employment in rural areas, development of infrastructure and logistics, establishment of health-nutritive programmes, etc.);
- That the quest for improved food security in the Mediterranean called for multilateral solidarities and a cross-cutting intersectional approach, which involved the implementation of strategies tailored to local situations, and the development of innovative funding measures, which might be applied on time and meet specifically identified needs;

- That agriculture, food and rural development were matters of strategic importance to the stability of the CIHEAM countries and the daily well-fare of their populations and that all forms of agriculture clearly had a crucial contribution to make – as did the fisheries, aquaculture, and forestry sectors – if the challenge of world food security was to be met;
- That the original configuration of CIHEAM provided an appropriate forum in which to identify mutual interests in the fields of rural and agricultural development, food security and sustainable management of natural resources, as well as sustainability of food systems at a time of political, social, economic, and environmental transition in the Mediterranean Region;

EMPHASISING

- That the year 2014 was the International Year of Family Farming, intended to highlight the potential contribution of these farmers might make to food security, and also the year in which the joint FAO-WHO International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) was due to be held;
- That year 2015 would be marked by important international events: those associated with the 20th anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration, which brought about the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in November 1995, the scorecards for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the definition of the post-2015 global development agenda with its update of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD); the Milan Universal Exposition on the theme “*Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life*”, to be held from May to October 2015; the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Changes (UNFCCC); and the 11th Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, due to be held in Paris in December 2015 (COP21);

HAVING TAKEN NOTE

- Of the numerous publications issued by CIHEAM in recent years on the topic of food security in the Mediterranean, including particularly the different editions of the regional report *Mediterra*;
- Of the conclusions of the international seminar on rural development in the Mediterranean, organised by CIHEAM in collaboration with the Algerian authorities in Algiers on 4th and 5th February 2014. These discussions had underlined that rehabilitation of the rural territories was a matter of urgency, since they had the potential to offer growth and improved quality of life. They had also highlighted the need to move towards a new rural development model, which would require participative, inclusive public policies designed to achieve sustainable development and strengthen player networks, thereby enabling players to share experiences and good practice.

- Of the priority areas for region-wide cooperation addressed in this seminar, with ministers being called upon to maintain particular support, both at national and at regional level, for the ENPARD initiative launched in 2012 by the European Union as part of its neighbourhood policy;

CONVINCED

- That the worrying increase in the number of people exposed to the risk of food security in the region called for bold remedies;
- That the development of a performing agriculture both economically and ecologically, is a way for the future of the region.
- That CIHEAM must continue to play an important role in meeting the common challenges faced by regional countries;

The Ministers and Heads of Delegation:

- Have focussed their discussion on the subject of “*Sustainable food security in the Mediterranean: situation and outlook*”;
- Have sent recommendations to the national Mediterranean authorities (i), the International Organisations active in the Mediterranean zone (ii) and CIHEAM (iii).

REQUEST

(i) *To the Mediterranean Countries*

- 1) To progress at national level on the issue of food security in the Mediterranean and encourage further regional agricultural cooperation, particularly through CIHEAM, aiming at making such cooperation effective and permanent, and placing it at the centre of diplomatic relations between Mediterranean countries;
- 2) Implement national and regional policies for agricultural, agrifood and rural development, taking into consideration the protection animal and plant genetic diversity, with ecologically and socially responsible strategies, to reinforce the production, productivity, quality, and food security, for citizens and support agricultural producers, insuring products following and using industrial methods and valuing certain products particularly, protein rich cultures and cereals, by industry throughout organized activities , improving conditions and means of transportation, storage and processing of agricultural and agrifood products by involving agriculture as an integrated part of a dynamic territorial economy;

- 3) Bring about a shift towards a sustainable rural development to promote agro-ecological approaches focussing on employment, socially and territorially inclusive growth, sustainable use of natural resources, improved governance, the establishment of networks and clusters, and the production and sharing of knowledge, mobilising such agents of change as local players (particularly those from the private sector), together with women and young people in inclusive, equitable and participative initiatives.

And so doing:

- Improve access to satisfying food, in terms of quantity and quality, especially for vulnerable populations;
- Support family agriculture – particularly on the southern coast of the Mediterranean – since it makes an important contribution to the food security of rural households, concur to the sustainable development of natural resources and promotes human development, particularly in the case of women and young people;
- Promote new investment, as well as public/private and national/foreign partnerships, with a view to increasing agricultural and agrifood output but sustainable methods; reduce food waste and the non-food use of agricultural crops; and establish risk management tools to protect the incomes of farmers and stock breeders;
- Take into account policies on forest preservation and development, animal and plant health, and fisheries and aquaculture when considering food security, without overlooking problems relating to infrastructure, logistics and the cold chain;
- Encourage the development of products presenting quality signs as *terroir* products, organic products together with systems of protection designed to preserve wealth-creating activities or to produce added value in rural areas;
- Encourage coordination of regional policies that will strengthen the role of the coastal communities involved in small-scale fishing and call for a regional programme to develop sustainable small-scale fishing;
- Promote – alongside regional strategies – a territorial approach to food security, given the interest of making such strategies operational and adapting them to local realities;
- To engage themselves in the ENPARD initiative, launched in 2012 by the EU as part of its neighbourhood policy, and support its implementation at bilateral and regional levels;
- Promoting harmonisation, cooperation, information sharing and experience exchange, support regional agreements with a view to establishing phytotechnical and phytosanitary standards for plant reproduction stock that are suited to conditions of each country, and

encourage harmonisation and cooperation in different areas, such as health and phytosanitary quality standards, labelling, certification, prevention and control of diseases and pests affecting animals and plants (before and after harvest) and control of contaminants (mycotoxines) in food products, while seeking to coordinate responses at regional level, based upon the concrete regional approaches as the ones developed in the REMESA Framework (Mediterranean Animal Health Network) .

- Sharing national concerns, information and national experience in the field of food security, so that concrete lasting regional projects might be steadily drawn up, and to that end rely on Mediterranean cooperation and research networks to prepare joint initiatives and share knowledge at regional level. Such exercise might involve projects on sustainable development in the rural environment, sustainable food systems, development and promotion of quality products or the Mediterranean diet, coordination of agricultural research into, for example, water-stress- and salinity-resistant plant species, water-resources management, and the development of plant and animal genetic resources, and agrifood and biotechnology sectors (gene banks, etc.);
- Supporting CIHEAM's MOAN network (Mediterranean Organic Agriculture Network), a platform for the promotion of Mediterranean agrifood quality and a forum where leading officials from the ministries of agriculture and institutions of the countries in the region can exchange ideas, knowledge and good practice in the field of quality products (particularly organic agriculture and *terroir* products);
- To encourage the development of the initiative entitled "Mediterranean Agricultural Markets Information Network (MED-AMIN)", launched in January 2014 to promote cooperation and share experiences among the national information systems of the agricultural markets, following the request made by the ministers of the CIHEAM member states at their meeting in Malta in September 2012. This new network coordinated by the CIHEAM will work closely with the AMIS Secretariat, FAO and the specialized services of the European Commission. It will be mainly dedicated to cereal products (wheat, corn, barley, and rice) that are strategic for food security in the Mediterranean countries;
- Support the "Feeding Knowledge" initiative, a pivotal element in the legacy of Expo Milano 2015, which encourages, among other things, the sharing of knowledge about food security, access to the gene banks of the northern Mediterranean countries for the purpose of reviving natural areas in countries on the southern shore, and the dissemination of innovative sustainable technologies and practices, taking into account local needs and offering effective responses derived from local and international research. The innovative technological platform of this initiative, maintained by an international expert's network, will form the basis of a centre of shared expertise on food security and will reinforce focal points already active in ministries of the Mediterranean and Balkan countries.

(ii) as regards the international and regional organisations

- 1) That the different international institutions in charge of Mediterranean cooperation or food security collaborate with CIHEAM to create synergies between education and research programmes, development projects and sustainable natural-resource-management projects. They also request common research projects, and technology transfer should be put up. These programmes might pool the human and financial resources mobilised, encourage regional dialogue and maintain the resolve to face up to food stress;
- 2) That European Union confirms its commitment to Mediterranean agriculture, food and rural territories by continuing to support research and cooperation work intended to meet the challenges referred to above. To this end it should use such instruments as the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and the ENPARD initiative, which provides for specific partnerships in agriculture and rural development within the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument and should make a long-term strategic contribution in these areas for countries in the Mediterranean neighbourhood;
- 3) That European Union could attach particular importance to stable and sustainable cooperation in the region through joint common planning. In this connection the use of the instrument provided for by article 185 of the EU Charter on stable Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on research and innovation might also take account of the way problems in the agricultural and agrifood sectors impact upon the sustainable development of the region;
- 4) That European Union could reinforce CIHEAM's mission in the Mediterranean, notably by making use of the delegated cooperation instruments designed for international organisations;
- 5) That European Union and international institutions support the implementation of the recommendations put forward by the international seminar on rural development in the Mediterranean, the conclusions of which are annexed to this declaration;
- 6) That European Union, FAO and CIHEAM examine the idea of defining a common strategic cooperation agenda designed to support agricultural, food and sustainable rural development in the Mediterranean.

(iii) To the CIHEAM

- 1) Continuing its work in higher education, research and cooperation by developing activities to promote food security at all levels (local, national and regional) with the involvement of all actors concerned (international organisations, governments, regional authorities and local players);
- 2) Consolidating the gains made during the fifty years of its existence by adapting to the new regional situation and cultivating its Mediterranean-wide commitment to share knowledge about food security and rural development with tomorrow's leaders;

- 3) Pursuing to offer higher education courses on rural and agricultural development, introduce ways of combating food waste and losses, the non-food use of agricultural crops; manage biotechnologies, particularly by identifying each country's national animal and plant genetic heritage, and apply them in the development of rural areas; implement sustainable food systems designed to protect soil fertility and maintain potential water resources and genetic resources in the form of plants, animals and ecosystems by increasing their resistance to climate change; ensure that populations are fed; organise agricultural and agrifood sectors while endeavouring to offer innovative educational paths and educational mobility, thereby helping to build capacity to manage rural areas; and implement adequate policies for the protection and the conservation of agricultural soils, notably regarding the negative effects of the urbanisation process.
- 4) Improving the Euro-Mediterranean policy dialogue and Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on agriculture, food, rural development, fisheries and aquaculture through the establishment of *ad hoc* forums with a view to maintaining a better, a better and more stable cooperation and developing a common approach to revitalising marginal, rural areas in the Mediterranean. Special importance should be attached to the following challenges: bringing about true innovation; and increasing the capacity for sustainable production in terms of quality and quantity by promoting agro-ecological approaches;
- 5) Ensuring greater coherence and operational linkage between cooperation projects and research and innovation in the context of such projects as ENPARD, MEDSPRING and ERANETMED;
- 6) Promoting the implementation of the initiative "Mediterranean Agricultural Markets Information Network (MED-AMIN)", launched in January 2014 to meet the CIHEAM member countries' expectations of establishing an area of dialogue, exchange, and technical cooperation around the monitoring of agricultural cereal markets and the methodology of statistical systems for these commodities;
- 7) Setting up a regional *ad hoc* committee (comprising high-ranking ministerial officials) in order to enhance the policy dialogue and the support for the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation strategy;
- 8) Helping countries to set up national observatories or improve them if they already exist and inaugurate national research centres charged with monitoring markets and food security; the observatories and national research centres will support the regional committee, acting as a think tank and putting forward invaluable proposals;
- 9) Strengthening instruments and networks that are in a position to promote and encourage the mobility of researchers and experts, foster innovation and the pooling of information on good practice between rural players, including young farmers, in order to promote the role of women and young people in agriculture, encourage initiatives to counter food waste, establish concrete measures for diversifying income and improve management of natural resources (water, land, forests, etc.) while taking account of the effects of climate change.

CONCLUSIONS

- At the end of their work, the ministers and heads of delegation recognised that questions relating to food security warranted constant vigilance and required coordinated responses in terms of agricultural, agrifood and rural development policies, which the multilateral Euro-Mediterranean framework should facilitate.
- The ministers and heads of delegation acknowledged the efforts made by CIHEAM in these areas over the past few years, when many Mediterranean countries had experienced different crises. They express their willingness to strengthen its capacity and sustainably support its action.
- Ministers and heads of delegation agreed to bring these recommendations to the attention of their countries' ministers of foreign affairs so that they might be taken into account in the international negotiations and policy initiatives they were involved in.
- They commended H.E. Abdelwahab NOURI, the Algerian Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, and all his collaborators for the effort that had gone into making this meeting a success.

They thanked CIHEAM for its contribution to the success of the meeting and expressed their commitment to this organisation, which devoted all of its day-to-day activity to building up genuine Mediterranean solidarity.