

UNFAO Director-General hails partnership with the CIHEAM

PRESS RELEASE

Bari, Italy, Friday 23 June 2017



The FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva visited the CIHEAM's Institute of Bari (Italy) at the invitation of the Secretary General, Cosimo Lacirignola. The Director General observed the complementarity of the CIHEAM's activities in the fields of research, education and cooperation. He also took the opportunity to meet the staff and to attend the Master Diploma Award Ceremony



Graziano Da Silva and Cosimo Lacirignola both stressed the need for the transformation of agriculture and food systems in order to face the impacts of climate change and to ensure that the world's natural resources are safeguarded.

"Today it is fundamental not only to increase production, but to do it in a way that does not damage the environment," said the UNFAO Director-General. "The future of agriculture is not input-intensive but knowledge-intensive."

"Territorial inequalities, poverty and unemployment in rural areas lead to social crises in the Mediterranean region. Our students and more generally the Mediterranean youth can contribute to the improvement of living conditions in rural areas and turn problems in opportunities " added Cosimo Lacirignola.



During his speech, at the award ceremony for students at the CIHEAM's institute in Bari, the FAO Director-General noted that "scientific research and innovation are essential elements for sustainable development".

He also stressed how at global level, it is crucial to implement sustainable agriculture and food systems that offer nutritious and accessible food while at the same time contribute to building climate-change resilience.

"This can be done by supporting small holders and family farmers, reducing the use of pesticides and chemicals, increasing crop diversification, and improving land conservation practices, just to name a few aspects," he added.



Cosimo Lacirignola recalled that since 1962, approximately 40,000 persons have studied in the CIHEAM's Institutes. "Mostly coming from the Mediterranean, these people have lived together, ate together, exchanged and studied together in a context of openness to the differences, dialogue and mutual respect. When you come to the CIHEAM, you become a member of a Mediterranean Family."

He invited the CIHEAM community and its strong partners to join efforts to mobilise intelligence, forces and energies at work to offer the best to the youth and to give the Mediterranean the place it deserves.

CIHEAM and FAO – a long-standing partnership

Noting that the collaboration between CIHEAM and FAO dates back to 1977, the Director-General highlighted some of the areas of joint work related to overcoming the enormous challenge of food security and sustainability faced by Near Eastern and North Africa Mediterranean countries.

This includes joint efforts in the fields of organic farming, water scarcity, plant diseases, plant genetic resources, animal production and health in dry areas, fisheries and aquaculture, and forestry.

In March, the FAO and the CIHEAM co-organised a high-level technical event on the management of the Red Palm Weevil – a destructive pest first detected in South Asia that has since spread to attack more than 40 palm species worldwide. The Mediterranean countries are the most at risk.



The FAO and the CIHEAM have also worked together on the Blue Hope Initiative, aimed at strengthening livelihoods in coastal communities in the Mediterranean particularly affected by migrant flows.

Read more about some UNFAO and CIHEAM projects

- [Xylella Fastidiosa](#)
- [Red Palm Weevil](#)
- [Blue Hope initiative](#)
- [Zero Waste in the Mediterranean](#)
- [Distress Migration](#)
- [South-South Cooperation](#)

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About the CIHEAM and the CAPMED 2025

Founded in 1962, the CIHEAM is a Mediterranean intergovernmental organisation devoted to sustainable agriculture and fisheries, food and nutrition security and rural and coastal development. The CIHEAM Action Plan for the Mediterranean (CAPMED2025) is based on four main development goals (i) Protect the planet through combating triple waste (food, natural resources, knowledge) (ii) Food security and nutrition through boosting sustainable agriculture (iii) Inclusive development through investing in new generations and fragile territories (iv) Crises and resilience through preventing risk and managing tensions.

For more details on the [CAPMED2025](#)

CIHEAM-Bari Institute website : www.iamb.ciheam.org

CIHEAM-Chania Institute website: www.iamc.ciheam.org

CIHEAM-Montpellier Institute website: www.iamm.ciheam.org

CIHEAM-Zaragoza Institute website: www.iamz.ciheam.org

For more details on the 11th CIHEAM Ministerial Conference in Tirana in 2016

www.ministerial2016.ciheam.org