



## 4<sup>th</sup> UfM Women's Empowerment Conference reaffirms the key role of women in building inclusive societies and unlocking the potential of the Mediterranean

Conference

11 October 2018

Lisbon, Portugal



The CIHEAM was associated to the UfM Secretariat 4th High-Level Conference on Women's Empowerment entitled, "**Women Build Inclusive Societies in the Mediterranean**" held in Lisbon on 10-11 October.

Organised in partnership with renowned international organisations such as **UN Women, UNIDO, UNDP, the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM (PA-UfM), Science Po Paris, Konrad Adenauer, the Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation and the CIHEAM**, this edition brought together some of the most active voices on gender equality in the region, involving 300 participants from over 30 countries.

The President of Malta, Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, inaugurated the conference, which witnessed the participation of Ministers in charge of gender equality, namely Maria M. Leitão Marques (Portugal), Hala Lattouf (Jordan), Néziha Labidi (Tunisia), as well as the President of the Egyptian National Council of Women, Maya Morsi and the Secretary-General of the European External Action Service, Helga Schmid.

The participants discussed the role of men, the private sector and the media to shift stereotypes and social barriers. They explored ways to combat gender-based violence, **means to empower women in rural and agricultural areas**, the role of women in science, technology and innovation, and measures to invest in reproductive health.

### "Women are key partners to overcome Mediterranean rural issues"

In his concluding remarks, M. Placido Plaza, SG AI of the CIHEAM, recalled the CIHEAM's commitment to a major mission: finding sustainable solutions to the challenges faced by Mediterranean rural territories. These include climate change, food and nutritional insecurity, natural resource management in a context of scarcity, degradation of terrestrial, aquatic and forest ecosystems. The CIHEAM is also striving to overcome the challenge of unequal development of territories and communities in the Mediterranean region. These inequalities feed rural exodus and lead to the waste of precious human resources in a region that needs them.

For each of these challenges, Placido Plaza explained that "rural women are key partners and that we need to invest in enhancing their role." He recalled that in 2016, the CIHEAM adopted a new Strategic Plan (CAPMED)



that enables to focus the action of the Organisation on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This Plan highlights the importance of the place women in a transversal way.



### The CIHEAM's contribution to women empowerment

#### 1) Capacity building and the scientific fields

Above all, the CIHEAM addresses this issue of gender through “capacity building”. In its Institutes, female students are mentored throughout their Masters and PhD courses. Women are encouraged to invest themselves in research and the scientific fields. With the UfM, the CIHEAM had a scholarship programme dedicated to this objective. Today, the issue of gender is integrated in our events such as meetings of Mediterranean young researchers and doctoral students. Example of the MEDFORUM. A future goal of the CIHEAM would be to mobilize its ALUMNI network to support projects for rural women.

#### 2) Value chain approach

The strengthening of rural women must also be accomplished through the value chain approach. “From Field to Plate”, rural women play a fundamental role and the CIHEAM can support them from upstream to downstream by integrating environmental issues and innovations with high social added value.

#### 3) Regional dialogue

The issue of strengthening and empowering rural women is a growing priority for the CIHEAM. As an IO bringing together countries of both Mediterranean Shores, through its political dialogue activities, the CIHEAM will promote this strategic theme among Member Countries and partners because it is at the heart of common interests. As such, exchanges of experience, good practices and data must be reinforced.

#### 4) Institutional synergies

Lastly, the CIHEAM is at the disposal of partners wishing to develop joint projects. We strongly believe in the importance of synergies and complementarities in the fields we cover and even more so in strengthening the role of women as this requires a multidimensional approach and the strong participation of stakeholders.

CIHEAM-UfM Workshop “Empowering women in rural and agricultural areas”



Moderated by Ms Wafa Dikah Hamze, Former Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, advocate for women’s rights and gender equality, Agriculture and rural development specialist and CIHEAM Board member and with the participation of Ms Blanca Moreno-Dodson, Managing Director, World Bank/Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) the workshop brought together panellists from the CIHEAM (Ms Patrizia Pugliese), UNIDO (Ms Monica Carco), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Development Centre (Ms. Alejandra Maria Meneses) and from the civil society and NGO’s (Ms Rima Tarabay, Founder of Ecotown & vice president Bahr Loubnan, Liban. Ms Sarah Toumi, Founder, Acacias for All., Ms Belouahri Houria, in charge of El Ghaith project).

The workshop invited the panellists and the participants to exchange, present their experiences and to provide recommendations for the conference. The discussions took place around three major questions:

- How to overcome barriers to harness the full potential of women in rural and agricultural areas?
- What are the key lessons from policies, programs or initiatives to better integrate the gender dimension into agriculture and rural development?
- How can the 2030 Agenda be used to advance women empowerment agenda in rural and agricultural areas?

Rural women play a key role in the development of rural and agricultural areas. They account for 43% of the world's agricultural workforce, a percentage that reaches 70% in some countries. Women are responsible for the majority of agricultural work, controlling most of the non-monetary economy (subsistence agriculture, childcare and child education, household responsibilities, water and energy supply). They are major contributors to food and nutritional security, to generating income and to improving the livelihoods and general welfare of households, particularly those with low incomes. Rural women are increasingly leading their own businesses, although their entrepreneurial potential remains largely unknown and underutilized. In terms of their role in the management of natural resources and their responsibilities in the provision of energy in their homes, they are leading actors in the fight against climate change.

### Download the presentations

[CIHEAM](#)

[OECD Development Center](#)

[ECOTOWNS Lebannon](#)

[EL GAITH Association](#)

### WIKIGENDER Discussion organized by the OECD Development Center, the UfM and the CIHEAM



**About Wikigender**  
As a global online collaborative platform, Wikigender lets policymakers and experts from both developed and developing countries to share knowledge and find solutions to advance gender equality. Wikigender focuses on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular on SDG 5.

[www.wikigender.org](http://www.wikigender.org)

**Strengthening the role of women in rural and agricultural areas in the Mediterranean region: transforming challenges into opportunities**  
Synthesis of the Wikigender online discussion

**About the online discussion**

In the context of growing recognition of rural women's role to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Wikigender, the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) organised an online discussion on the topic: "Strengthening the role of women in rural and agricultural areas in the Mediterranean region: obstacles and opportunities" from 17 to 21 September 2018.

**Key outcomes**

The Wikigender online discussion stressed four main challenges to rural women's empowerment:

- ◆ Legal restrictions on rural women's access to land ownership, as well as weak legal provisions and women's lack of legal literacy;
- ◆ Lack of educational and training opportunities;
- ◆ Persistent customary laws and discriminatory practices denying women's legal rights to land assets;
- ◆ Burden of unpaid care and domestic work that restrict rural women's empowerment opportunities.

Over 50 insightful and expert comments were posted which identified:

- ◆ The challenges facing rural women;
- ◆ Policy recommendations towards achieving the SDGs; and
- ◆ Examples of good practices to unlock rural women's empowerment.

**Context**

Leveraging rural women's potential will boost rural and agricultural development. Marginalising the role of women in rural development and agricultural strategies has created gender-blind policies and programmes. Rural women's needs have not been addressed, holding back rural women's contribution to inclusive growth and sustainable development. This is costly for the national economy; if women would have the same access to productive resources as men, farm yields could increase by 20-30% (FAO, 2011).

**Mediterranean women already play a key role in rural and agricultural development:**

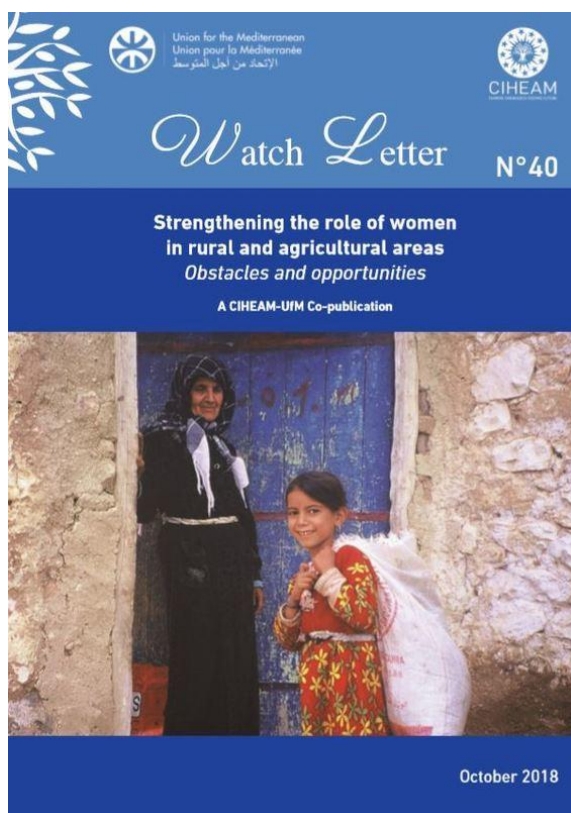
- ◆ Women are responsible for the majority of agricultural work, controlling most of the non-monetary

Online Discussion: EN: [1011/2018/0408](#) FR: [1011/2018/0408](#)



Main findings of the Wikigender online discussion [“strengthening the role of women in rural and agricultural areas in the Mediterranean region”](#): [transforming challenges into opportunities](#)” held on 17 September to 21 September 2018 organized by the OECD Development Center in partnership with CIHEAM and the UfM.

### CIHEAM Watch Letter n°40



Furthermore, the joint publication of the CIHEAM-UfM [‘Strengthening the Role of Women in Rural and Agricultural Areas – Obstacles and Opportunities’](#) was presented during the conference which focuses on women in rural areas, who, unless empowered to become more resilient, will continue to bear the brunt of climate change and inequalities that hinder our collective prosperity and development.

More information on the [Fourth UfM Women Empowerment Conference](#)

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# CIHEAM

International Centre for Advanced  
Mediterranean Agronomic Studies

## CIHEAM

Established in 1962, the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) is a Mediterranean intergovernmental organisation composed of 13 Member States (Albania, Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey). As a key player in multilateral cooperation in the fields of agriculture, food, fisheries and rural territories, its missions revolve around four main objectives:



Protection of the planet by combating waste in all its forms including waste of knowledge and know-how;



Food and nutrition security by boosting sustainable agriculture and food;



Inclusive development by investing in new generations and fragile territories;



Prevention of crises and resilience of territories.

The CIHEAM Action Plan for the Mediterranean 2025 (**CAPMED 2025**) that falls within the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development of the United Nations is based on these four lines. The CIHEAM carries out its missions through the tools of specialised training, network research, cooperation, technical assistance but also political dialogue and partnerships.

[www.ciheam.org](http://www.ciheam.org)