



## DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE VALUE CHAINS IN MOROCCO

*A Forum organised by the CIHEAM, EBRD, FAO and the Moroccan Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests*

Press Release

Meknes, Morocco, 20 April 2017



*Agriculture contributes significantly to Morocco's economy and employs 40 percent of the country's workforce. But the sector continues to face major challenges and important steps need to be taken to make it more sustainable. Working with the private sector to pave the way is key. With this in mind, the [International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies \(CIHEAM\)](#), the [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development \(EBRD\)](#) and the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(FAO\)](#) organized a forum on sustainable value chains on 20 April 2017, in partnership with the [Moroccan Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests](#). The forum gathered participants from all segments of the value chain – agribusinesses, producers' associations, financial institutions – to examine opportunities for improving the economic, social and environmental sustainability of Morocco's agrifood sector.*

Held in Meknes, the forum capitalized on the ever-increasing audience of the [Salon International de l'Agriculture au Maroc](#) of which the 12th edition is held under the theme "agribusiness and sustainable value chains". The exhibition has now become one of the largest international fairs in Africa and in the world, bringing together more than 1,220 companies and attracting over one million visitors.

The forum also built on the achievements of the government's "Green Morocco Plan" (PMV) and the role that Moroccan producers, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), large agribusiness companies and policy-makers play in making the sector more dynamic and sustainable.

In his opening speech on behalf of the Minister, **Mohamed Sadiki, General Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests**, said: "Interaction with the private sector has been the backbone of the PMV since its inception. Aggregation, which is one of the foundations of the Plan, is an innovative



model for organizing farmers around private actors or professional organizations with a strong managerial capacity. It is a win-win partnership between the productive upstream and the commercial and industrial downstream, which helps overcome land fragmentation and enables farmers to access modern production techniques, finance and markets.”

### **Agribusiness leading the way**

Private sector companies in Morocco have already started taking concrete steps towards more inclusive and environmentally friendly business models. For example, Lesieur Cristal, a leading vegetable oil company, invested in two biomass boilers to produce steam from olive waste and managed to reduce its fuel consumption by up to 40 percent.

Another example is Frulact, a major international player in fruit preparations for the food industry and present in Morocco for 10 years. It has created significant value in the Larache region by sustainably sourcing strawberries from local farmers and processing them locally into high value-added fruit preparations for yoghurt and other dairy products for the domestic and export markets.

In Casablanca, Maghreb Industries, a leading Moroccan confectionery producer, provides a good example of concrete actions in the use of renewable energies: the company built a modern, energy-efficient facility that is powered by a 1.4 megawatt rooftop solar plant, one of the first of its size in Morocco. These are just some of the many examples that can be replicated in the country.

### **Working together along the value chain**

The event also focused on interprofessional organizations and how they can support a more inclusive and efficient agriculture sector by fostering a common vision among value chain players and working to improve essential services.

“The promotion of public-private dialogue and cooperation between value chain players is essential for a stronger and more productive agriculture sector in Morocco. In this context, inter-professional organizations play an essential role by promoting a unified vision of the sector’s development. They can combine the efforts of all operators in key areas such as research, extension and technology transfer, interact with public authorities on sectoral policies and offer shared services to their members,” said **Michael George Hage, FAO representative in Morocco.**

Among the many interprofessional and professional organizations supported by FAO in



Morocco, Interprolive, an interprofessional organization involving all of Morocco's major private sector players for table olives and olive oil – from production to marketing – is already moving quickly to promote and defend the interests of the olive sector in Morocco. Among other initiatives, the organization has launched an advertising campaign to encourage consumers to buy olive oil in bottles rather than in bulk, and has started a series of technical trainings to help members improve productivity in olive production.

"First we have focused on organizing ourselves better and ensuring good representation of the players all along the value chain. With the signature of a 'Contrat programme' with the government we have been able to start providing services to our members, such as technical assistance and communication strategies to increase consumer awareness. We have also been collaborating with FAO and the EBRD on olive oil quality systems and productivity along the supply chain," said **Rachid Benali, President of Interprolive**.

### **Disseminating climate knowledge**

Climate change is affecting Morocco's agriculture, with lower-than-average rainfall and increasing drought and groundwater depletion. Adapting Morocco's agriculture to climate change while also enhancing the sector's ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions was debated at length during the COP22 global climate talks in Morocco in November 2016.

**Cosimo Lacirignola, Secretary General of the CIHEAM**, said: "For Morocco's agriculture to overcome the challenges that climate change brings about, fostering the uptake of innovative and socially inclusive technologies and practices is essential. It is also important to draw on the ancestral know-hows of the "Mediterranean diet" which provides local sustainable jobs. It is vital to reach out to players at all levels of the value chain, through research, extension, education and cooperation, and trigger transformational change in terms of climate adaptation and mitigation. These actions are at the heart of CIHEAM's mandate."

### **Developing capacities**

The forum also highlighted how the development of technical and managerial skills is key to ensuring the sustainability of value chains. Companies – of all sizes – as well as farmers need to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to access critically important success ingredients such as technological innovation, markets and finance.

**Marie-Alexandra Veilleux-Laborie, EBRD Director in Morocco**, said: "Agribusiness is a priority sector in Morocco. We, at the EBRD, not only provide finance but – together with



partners like FAO – are keen to foster constructive policy discussions and support the development of capacities at all levels of the value chain. This is what we are proposing in Morocco’s olive oil sector, where we hope to introduce changes that are beneficial not only to our clients but to the sector as a whole.”

In Morocco, the EBRD has invested more than EUR 155 million in the corporate sector, including investments in the olive oil, fruit and vegetables and confectionery sub-sectors. With the EBRD’s upcoming EU Trade and Competitiveness Programme, funded by the EU Neighbourhood Investment Facility, it will place additional focus on agrifood value chains and support the creation of value-added, higher food standards and increasing competitiveness.

Pursuing their common objective to promote sustainable agricultural value chains in the Mediterranean region, FAO and CIHEAM will also build on the forum’s conclusions to continue their support towards business-enabling policies and promotion of international best practices in Morocco’s agrifood sector.

Regarding these elements, the CIHEAM would like to launch a new initiative, called the “Mediterranean Pact for sustainable agriculture and food”. The pact intends to bring together several public and private actors around strong engagements for the sustainable development of inclusive value chains and to address food security, sustainable management of natural resources and employment issues.

Forum Website [www.medagri.org/meetings/meknes2017](http://www.medagri.org/meetings/meknes2017)

## CIHEAM

Created in 1962, the CIHEAM is a Mediterranean organization which 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

For more details, contact Yasmine Seghirate El Guerrab, [seghirate@ciheam.org](mailto:seghirate@ciheam.org)