



CIHEAM

International Center for Advanced  
Mediterranean Agronomic Studies

# Pathways for the future of food systems in the Mediterranean

[Independant Dialogue, 27 April 2021](#) (FAO, CIHEAM, UfMs, One Planet Network-Sustainable Food Systems Programme, PRIMA Foundation)



## Speech of M. Plácido Plaza Lopez

Secretary General of the CIHEAM ([International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies](#))

“Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

First of all, I would like to thank:

**Jamie Morison**, director of the Food Systems and Food Safety Division of FAO for moderating our dialogue, **Isidro González**, Deputy Secretary-General of UfM, **Ismahane Elouafi**, Chief Scientist, FAO, **Jean-Marc Chappuis**, Deputy Director-General, Federal Office for Agriculture, Switzerland, on behalf of the co-leadership of the One Planet Network-Sustainable Food Systems Programme and **Angelo Riccaboni**, Chair of the PRIMA Foundation.

Thank you for being here today as convenors of this first Independent dialogue, of a cycle of two dialogues on the topic ***Pathways for the Future of Sustainable Food Systems in the Mediterranean***, as our joint contribution to the United Nations Food Systems Summit.

CIHEAM, FAO and UfMs share the same aim of enhancing regional dialogue and cooperation amongst their Member States.

The CIHEAM is implementing different activities relating to Sustainable Food Systems within its Action Plan for the Mediterranean in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



We have prioritized activities on the sustainability of food production and consumption and, in particular, on the sustainability of food systems and diets in the Mediterranean, using the **Mediterranean Diet** as a case study.

Today, the world at a global scale, and in particular the Mediterranean, are facing unprecedented and interdependent challenges that affect food security, nutrition and sustainability and thus the livelihoods of all people.

In light of the new challenge posed by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, which is putting a heavy strain on food supply chains, there is an urgent need to boost more collaborative multi-stakeholder partnerships and innovative actions on the ground.

It appears clearly that the food systems we shaping today will determine the lives of the **future generations**. This seems an obvious statement. However, it is important to formulate it clearly, here and now, as we bear a heavy collective responsibility.

Sustainability of food systems involves the dynamics **“from land and sea to the plate”**, and vice-versa, having regard to the important specific issues of communities, **territories and their interrelationships**.

Indeed, Food Systems cannot be well understood if we overlook the **interconnexions** between the social, economic, health-related, cultural, politic and environmental dimensions they induce.

In the last years, to improve our contribution to meet the main challenges facing the Mediterranean in terms of food security and nutrition, CIHEAM has given a high priority to the **Sustainability of Food Systems** within its training, research and cooperation activities.

We have put a particular focus on our common valuable heritage, the Mediterranean Diet, which constitutes a powerful lever for bridging food consumption and production.

Being aware of the imperious necessity of these transformational changes of food systems, CIHEAM, with FAO and UfM, is strongly supporting the co-development of the **Sustainable Food Systems Mediterranean Platform** as a multi-stakeholder initiative.

Inclusive of all interested actors, it was initiated at the [Second World Conference on the Revitalization of the Mediterranean Diet, organized by CIHEAM-Bari in 2019 in Palermo](#) in collaboration with FAO and UfM and many other international and national institutions.

The [SFS-MED Platform](#) should play a significant role by strengthening regional collaborations and interregional dialogues on both shores of the Mediterranean to redesign tomorrow's food systems and to **trigger collective, context specific multi-stakeholder actions on the ground at the country level**.



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The collaboration between our convening institutions offers today, at this first independent dialogue, a unique opportunity to bring together different, but strongly convergent mandates, to directly contribute to the Summit's vision and objectives and to collectively building up the SFS-MED Platform and its working programme for the coming years.

We hope that this Platform will be an asset in bringing forward a joint vision and common actions on the ground at the country level, **and this will certainly require, more than ever, a stronger regional cooperation.**

*I wish you productive discussions and thank you for your attention”*