



2nd International Agrobiodiversity Congress (15-18 November 2021)

Statement: Plácido Plaza, Secretary General, CIHEAM

"Ladies and gentleman,

Dear colleagues,

It is a pleasure and an honor for me to address the Second International Agrobiodiversity Congress

CIHEAM is an international organization created in 1962 dedicated to sustainable agriculture and fisheries, to sustainable food systems and to inclusive development.

The preservation of agrobiodiversity is a major issue for the CIHEAM and appears as a transversal objective in our Action Plan for the Mediterranean in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We have prioritized our activities of training, research, cooperation and institutional dialogue 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.

Agrobiodiversity in the Mediterranean region is a fundamental pillar in this process which interests us in a particular way because it is the key to food self-sufficiency and in achieving a sustainable and balanced diet.

It contributes to ensure a good agroecological transition towards more sustainable food systems and it is finally the assurance of a sustainable resource for communities living of agriculture.

Without agrobiodiversity, there is no longer genetic diversity, no more agroecosystem specificities and therefore no more diversified products typical of our region which has made unique contributions to the world food heritage.

Agrobiodiversity can pave the way for more resilient communities and a better distributed wealth.

As the COVID 19 crisis has shown us how fragile and unbalanced our production and consumption systems are, we firmly believe that the transition to a MORE SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM in the Mediterranean region will only be possible if agriculture can rely on ecosystem services, on the know-how of land and food artisans, and if agriculture takes into account the specificities of our environment.



Agrobiodiversity is one of the pillars on which to work together to achieve food security by adapting to the climate changes and to the scarcity of natural resources. It can contribute to the empowerment of the most vulnerable populations who can become major players in its preservation and promotion.

Agrobiodiversity and local varieties can provide genes to increase cropping system's resilience in adapting to changing and unpredictable weather conditions.

Better adapted varieties can decrease agriculture's environmental impact, input requirements and pollution. Local varieties of underutilized species can provide access to local food, support more nutritious and balanced diets and help to develop new value chains that will contribute to stabilize and improve farmers' incomes and to valorize local cultural heritage.

Those are essential elements in the frame of achieving more resilient communities.

In the global scenario illustrated by the 2nd Agrobiodiversity Congress, the CIHEAM has chosen to offer its contribution on some fundamental topics such as the revitalization and enhancement of sustainable diets, the promotion of innovation and entrepreneurial capacity and to devote a particular attention to natural resources management at the territorial level.

Open innovation and synergies between research and the field are important in the process of achieving higher resilience. An innovation supportive environment, the dialogue and collaboration between stakeholders can change the face of food systems driving towards higher sustainability performances.

So, if we had to choose one action, we would opt for "Open and share innovation at the service of Mediterranean agrobiodiversity"

I wish you all an excellent work"