

A CHANGE OF ROUTE



3rd WORLD CONFERENCE
REVITALIZATION OF
MEDITERRANEAN DIET

*TOWARDS MORE SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES*

*THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET AS A STRATEGIC RESOURCE
FOR ACCELERATING THE AGENDA 2030 IN THE REGION*

BARI 28-30 SEPTEMBER 2022

ORGANIZED BY



To celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), the Third World Conference on the Revitalization of the Mediterranean Diet, entitled “*Change of Route Towards More Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems in Mediterranean Countries: the Mediterranean Diet as a Strategic Resource to Accelerate the Agenda 2030 in the Region*” will be organized on 28-30 September 2022, at the Cosimo Lacirignola Campus, CIHEAM-Bari Institute, in Valenzano, Bari.

THE MEDITERRANEAN CONTEXT

The Mediterranean is historically the meeting area of **ancient millenary civilizations**, characterized by a multiplicity of countries with marked environmental, cultural, social, economic and political differences.

Located at the crossroads between Africa, Asia and Europe, today the Mediterranean is a region where growing interdependent challenges are undermining the sustainability of food systems, and negatively impacting on their populations and natural resources.

Across the Mediterranean region, there is an “**inegalitarian drift**” in the current relations between Northern Mediterranean countries and Southern-Eastern ones, where many difficulties are encountered due to the existing economic, social/cultural disparities and conflicts. In the Mediterranean there is a great heterogeneity between countries and an ever-growing gap between developed economies and those that are less so.

The GDP (Gross Domestic Product) / per capita is higher in the Mediterranean countries of the European Union than that of the countries of the South and East of the Mediterranean, which highlights a profound difference between Mediterranean economies which inevitably has repercussions on the social, environmental, and social dimensions of people livelihoods.

Currently, further aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the region is marked by a “**post nutrition transition state**” in which the prevalence of under-nutrition (wasting, stunting, underweight) and micronutrient deficiencies are overshadowed by the prevalence of overweight, obesity and diet-related chronic non-communicable diseases with undesirable impacts not only on the health and related public expenditure, but also on the cultural, social, economic and environmental sustainability dimensions.

Accelerated climate change has further exacerbated existing environmental problems in the region that are caused by the combination of changes in drought and desertification processes, increasing pollution and declining biodiversity.

Disruptions of imports from Ukraine and Russia will further expose Mediterranean countries to food shortfalls with increasing prices, with combined effects on production cuts, export restrictions, energy prices and difficulties in logistics with negative impacts on both producers and consumers, worsening food insecurity in the region.

CHALLENGES FACING THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

1. Environmental Challenges

Over-exploitation of natural resources and adverse impacts of environmental degradation by climate change, water scarcity, desertification and drought, land degradation, carbon sequestration, loss of biodiversity, fish stocks depletion, lack of good sustainable practices in agriculture and fisheries, urban sprawl, chemical contamination, marine pollution, marine invasive non-indigenous species.

2. Economic Challenges

Unequal economic drift between Northern and Southern-Eastern Mediterranean countries, population growth, increased demand for food, poverty and unemployment (especially among young people), conflict areas, food insecurity, migration from rural areas and other countries, urbanization, changing food procurement, predominance of imported food, internationalization of markets, low profitability for smallholders, lack of efficient rural sustainable development policies (particularly for women and youth, in connection to employability and careers) and incentives for ecosystem services, mismatch between education and job market, lack of innovation, food loss and waste, economic shock of hundreds thousands of agro-food SMEs due to the pandemic of Covid-19 and Ukraine’s food export crisis, with expected rise in global food prices.

3. Social and Cultural Challenges

Changes in Mediterranean societies and roles of women (cf. gender equality and inclusion), emerging new unsustainable globalized lifestyle behaviors, population growth, progressive urbanization, migration from rural areas and from other countries, erosion of food cultures and traditional knowledge, lack of social and cultural innovation, education and communication.

4. Health and Nutritional Challenges

Malnutrition and nutrition transition (undernutrition, hidden hunger, and obesity), unsustainable unhealthy dietary shifts, sedentary lifestyles and lack of physical activity, erosion of the Mediterranean diet heritage, food safety and food insecurity, Covid 19 pandemic, growing public health expenditures, diffusion of new emerging pandemic diseases, animal welfare.

THE 3RD WORLD CONFERENCE ON THE REVITALIZATION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

The Conference, as part of the **UN Food Systems Summit movement for change**, will accommodate multiple perspectives to improve the sustainability and resilience of food systems in the Mediterranean. The Conference will involve a **broad spectrum of stakeholders**, equally representing women and men, from both South/Eastern and Northern Med countries, to enable a SFS change of route in the region for coping with growing challenges and accelerating the Agenda 2030.

The Conference **will address priority issues** identified from the reflection initiated at the Second World MD Conference in 2019, and from the three SFS-MED independent Food Systems Summit Dialogues, held in 2021, by CIHEAM, FAO, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), Prima Foundation and United Nations One Planet Network Sustainable Food Systems Program (OPN-SFSP).

National pathways, UNFSS coalitions and commitments of relevant interest to Mediterranean countries from the Summit's process will be also presented within a reinforced multistakeholder regional and inter-regional collaboration perspective.

The Conference will be addressed **to reinforce the movement for change** initiated by the UN Food Systems Summit for a food systems transformation in the Mediterranean region towards sustainability and resilience.

Webinars and independent side events will be staged to allow more voices and spaces for dialogues to the business system and the civil society, to structurally fulfill the Conference's impact.

In line with **the Call to Action of the G20 Matera Declaration**, a change of route towards more sustainable and resilient food systems will be enhanced at the Conference, with the Mediterranean diet acting as a Sustainable Consumption and Production lever, within a collaborative One-Health framework.

Boosted by the 2021 **UN Food Systems Summit's** process, global commitment of the international community for a shift towards more sustainable food systems (SFS) has increased significantly over recent years to accelerate the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development.

However, tackling food system transformation towards more sustainability and resilience is a very complex systemic process that requires considering sustainable food systems as a whole rather than in separate components, **going beyond disciplinary approaches and silos**, and engaging a wide range of interests from different groups and agendas, with diverse institutional settings and agro-ecological constraints in countries and territories on all shores of the Mediterranean.

By considering the **complexity of multiple entangled challenges** facing the Mediterranean, a systemic approach on sustainable food systems (SFS), context-specific for the diversity of the Mediterranean countries, is urgently needed to cut across sectors and create synergies overcoming "silo" effects.

There is a need to overcome **fragmented sectoral approaches**, within the framework of sustainability, ensuring coherence and coordination of actions, regarding **green, blue and circular economies**, linking sustainable food consumption and production through the Mediterranean diet as a SFS-MED lever, within a **One Health** approach.

These growing challenges are **complex and deeply entangled**, and thus require solutions that are systemic and dynamic. This will be especially challenging because of the persistent Covid-19 constraints that are further deteriorating the context.

For coping with these multiple and interdependent challenges, which is putting a strain on food supply chains more than previously, **a change of route is needed**, requiring urgent actions to trigger SFS win-win solutions on the ground at the country level, while taking into account the widely differing cultural and developmental dimensions across the region.

A better understanding of the multidimensionality of the sustainability of food systems, as well as inter-connections between individual Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will allow to strengthen science diplomacy dialogues between Northern and Eastern/Southern countries of the Mediterranean, to accelerate the 2030 Agenda.

Cultural innovation **changes in the mind-set** of people are also required for building the necessary consensus to enable the food environment in the Mediterranean to move to more effective cooperation

among all actors engaged to transform food systems, towards the achievement of the Agenda 2030 SDGs, despite the specificity and diversity of the territorial contexts.

However, Mediterranean countries have a common precious heritage, such as the Mediterranean diet which constitutes a powerful sustainable development resource for young people and women in the region on which the future of sustainability lies in their hands.

Although the fact that the **Mediterranean diet** is well documented and acknowledged as a healthy diet, sadly, it **is abandoned**, mainly by the young generations, in most Northern, Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, in which problems of under-nutrition coexist with overweight, obesity and diet-related chronic diseases.

The erosion of the Mediterranean diet heritage, by the loss of its adherence among Mediterranean populations, **is alarming** as it has undesirable impacts not only on health, but also on social, cultural, economic and environmental trends in the Mediterranean region.

The revitalization of the Mediterranean diet needs to be strongly enhanced for halting the malnutrition in all its forms, the degradation of ecosystems, enhancing people's livelihoods, counteracting climate change, and stopping the collapse of biodiversity in the region, for the benefit of people and nature.





OBJECTIVES

- ▼ **To enhance a change of route** in the Mediterranean for a shift towards more sustainable and resilient food systems for accelerating the Agenda 2030 at the country level;
- ▼ **To enhance the SFS-MED Platform**, with its Coordination Desk hosted at the CIHEAM-Bari, by strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships across the entire region;
- ▼ **To catalyse more collaborative** multi-stakeholder “**green**”, “**blue**” and “**circular**” SFS- on the ground in Mediterranean countries, MED territorial context specific, within a **One Health** approach development framework with the Mediterranean diet acting as a SCP (sustainable consumption and production) lever;
- ▼ **To foster a change in the current perception of the Mediterranean** diet as a resource of sustainable development in the Mediterranean, at country and regional level, taking in consideration their contextual differences;
- ▼ **To consolidate** the initiative of World Mediterranean Diet Conference as permanent forum for multi-stakeholder and transdisciplinary SFS-MED dialogues and actions to accelerate the Agenda 2030 in the region.

The **SFS-MED Platform**, a multi-stakeholder initiative on sustainable food systems, is a collaborative effort initiated in 2019 as outcome of the 2nd World MD Conference by the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfMS) as an affiliated project of the UN One Planet Network Sustainable Food Systems Programme.

This **multi-stakeholder** collaborative effort, within the **tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** signed by the three Organizations on 14 January 2021, is under codevelopment with the PRIMA Foundation to provide a framework for collaboration among all interested stakeholders, from Northern and Southern/Eastern Mediterranean countries, to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda in the Mediterranean region.

THE SFS-MED PLATFORM INITIATIVE

- ◆ **A forum for dialogue and collaboration** on priority themes for sustainable food systems in the Mediterranean, acting as a neutral facilitator of multi-stakeholder exchange to enhance policy coherence, build trust, and promote the effective implementation of actions.
- ◆ **An ideal setting to rebalance sustainability** and finance. Dedicated support for the co-creation of flagship projects and investment proposals will enable actors in Mediterranean food systems to access funding and scale up sustainable investments.
- ◆ **A network for strengthening knowledge sharing** and capacity building related to sustainable food consumption and production across the Mediterranean.
- ◆ **Opportunities for regional cooperation** for data sharing, science diplomacy, and the advancement of green and blue practices, as well as inclusive and digital innovation.

New forms of innovative multi-stakeholder strategies and transdisciplinary knowledge-sharing will be fostered by the SFS-MED Platform, between the Northern and the Southern shores of the Mediterranean region.

The **SFS-MED Platform** will identify **interlinkages between the SDGs**, challenges, drivers, and trade-offs at every stage of food systems (production, processing, distribution, sale, consumption, including food losses and waste), to enhance innovation, scientific research and data for impact assessments.

The **SFS-MED Platform** will enhance more sustainable food supply chains and the role of the cities as

hubs of innovation and opportunity connecting people and ideas, to accelerate the **shift** towards an **equitable and inclusive sustainable transformation** of Mediterranean food systems in the region.

The development of joint **SFS-MED Platform Flagships**, projects, with a significant transformative SFS impact and high replication potential, will allow to attract and mobilize more private and public investments (investment funds, development banks, national agencies, private partners, etc.), particularly for small scale farmers and fishers, as well as for youth and women in rural areas highly affected by rural migration to cities.

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The development of a **SFS-MED Platform Community of Practice** (CoP) will accelerate the transformation of Mediterranean food systems towards sustainability and resilience, by promoting and disseminating, through technological and organizational innovation, best practices knowledge and the excellence of territories and their actors, linked to food production and consumption patterns, characteristics of the Mediterranean diet.

Best Practices of local experiences, living labs generating innovation/research and cooperation, and a community of practice social approach, fostering knowledge shared on green, blue, circular economy and sustainable food systems will be identified and promoted as potential powerful SFS-MED Platform tools.

The SFS MED Platform initiative will be developed through an inclusive, participatory multi-stakeholder collaborative effort, based on knowledges and partnerships, context-specific for the Mediterranean.

The Mediterranean diet will play an important strategic role as culturally diverse countries unite that have embraced this dietary model as a Mediterranean lifestyle, healthy and sustainable, without thereby distorting the identity of each country.

The Mediterranean diet as a lever of change will be enhanced for re-directing demand towards more sustainable food consumption, thereby influencing production and reducing the overall negative impacts on ecosystems, in a context of increasing social disparities and in the shadow of climate bre-

akdown, in which food systems are also drivers of environmental degradation.

Food systems are failing to provide decent livelihoods to large sections of the population in a context of increasing social disparities and in the shadow of climate breakdown, in which food systems are also drivers of environmental degradation.

In the light also of the new challenge posed by the unprecedented **COVID-19 crisis**, which is putting more strain on food supply chains, the **SFS-MED Platform initiative** will be developed through an inclusive, participatory multi-stakeholder collaborative effort, based on knowledges and partnerships, context-specific for the Mediterranean.

CONFERENCE FORMAT

The 3rd World MDConference will have a **hybrid format**, in presence and online, articulated through plenary sessions, working sessions and side-events in four different locations in the CIHEAM-Bari Campus.

All sessions are designed to facilitate synergies, partnerships and collaborations withing a broad range of partners from across the region, equally representing women and men from South/Eastern and Northern Med countries.

All sessions will be structured in thematic working groups as entry points for Identifying game-changing solutions for improving the sustainability and resilience of Med food systems and the Mediterranean diet, to be presented as deliverables of the Conference.

EXPECTED RESULTS

◆ **Issuing a SFS-MED Call for a Common Action: A Change of Route in the Mediterranean to Accelerate the 2030 Agenda;**

◆ **Identifying** game-changing solutions for improving the sustainability and resilience of Mediterranean food systems for achieving the SDGs of the Agenda 2030 at the countries level;

◆ **Strengthening** SFS regional and interregional dialogues between Northern and Southern/Eastern Mediterranean countries towards an equitable transition to a climate resilient society, through better understanding growing interdependent challenges that all populations are facing in the region;

◆ **Unlocking** the potential of research, innovation, sharing knowledge and capacity building, between public and private partnerships from Northern and Southern/Eastern Mediterranean countries, through the **SFS-MED Platform's** activities with a specific attention to support youth, women, small and medium scale farmers, producers and artisanal fisheries, in their access to national and international market;

◆ **Developing a SFS-MED multistakeholder joint action framework** for the sustainability of Med food system and the Mediterranean diet, tailored to multiple sectors and disciplines;

◆ **Implementing** the systemic approach of the SFS-MED Platform¹, context specific, to respond to the multiple and interdependent challenges that MED countries are facing;

◆ **Changing the perception of the Mediterranean diet**, from just only an healthy diet to a strategic resource of sustainable development, linking consumption and production in a healthy and sustainable way, with multiple benefits, and country variations;

◆ **Building up** the initiative of the World Conferences of the Revitalization of the Mediterranean Diet as a permanent forum for SFS-MED regional and interregional dialogues, actions and solutions to accelerate in the region the shift towards the Agenda 2030.

1) <https://www.sfsmedplatform.org/storage/app/media/uploaded-files/SFS-MED%20PLATFORM%20CommonGround%20working%20document.pdf>



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since 2002, CIHEAM-Bari with the Forum on Mediterranean Food Cultures, Las Palmas University of Gran Canarias, Sapienza University of Rome, and ICAF (International Commission of the Anthropology of Food and Nutrition), has developed a continuous collaboration on the Mediterranean diet.

In 2003, the Second Euro-Mediterranean Forum “Dialogues among Mediterranean Civilizations on Food Security” was organized in Corigliano Calabro.

In 2005, the Third EuroMed Forum “Dialogues between Civilizations and People of the Mediterranean: The Food Cultures” was organized , at the Sapienza University of Rome”.
At the end, “The Call of Rome for a Common Action on Food in the Mediterranean” was issued.

In 2009, the 3rd International CIISCAM Conference “The Mediterranean Diet Today: A Model of Sustainable Diet”, was organized by CIISCAM, in collaboration with the Forum on Mediterranean Food Cultures, CIHEAM-Bari, Bioversity International, and the technical support of FAO.

In 2010, the talk show “BIODIVERSITY? Sustainable Food for All: The Mediterranean Diet, an Example of a Sustainable Diet”, a TV Talk Show was organized at the Parco della Musica, Rome within the Biodiversity Week.

In 2010, the International Scientific Symposium “Biodiversity and Sustainable Diets: United Against Hunger” was organized at FAO in Rome, in which a scientific consensus on the definition of “sustainable diets”, with the Mediterranean diet as an example was reached.

In 2011, the international CIHEAM-FAO workshop on “Guidelines for the Sustainability of the Mediterranean Diet” was organized at the CIHEAM-Bari in which the Mediterranean diet was identified as a joint case study for the characterization and evaluation of the sustainability of food consumption and diets in the Mediterranean.

In 2014, the International Workshop “Assessing Sustainable Diets within the Sustainability of Food Systems. New Challenges For Mediterranean Diet And Organic Food was organized at the CREA-NUT in Rome.”

In 2015, the International Conference “Does the Mediterranean Diet Still Exist? Nutrition-Health-Quality-Sustainability-Innovation-Evolution” was jointly organized at the Milan EXPO by CIHEAM-Bari, CNR, CREA, ENEA and Forum on Mediterranean Food Cultures, On this occasion the “**Med Diet EXPO Milan 2015 Call: Time to Act**”, was issued by CIHEAM and endorsed by 81 institutions.

In 2015, at the **EXPO Milan**, CIHEAM and FAO jointly published “Mediterranean Food Consumption Patterns: Diet, Environment, Society, Economy and Health”, as a white paper of the priority 5 of the Feeding Knowledge Programme of the Milan EXPO Legacy.

In 2016, the First World Conference on the Mediterranean Diet “Revitalizing the Mediterranean Diet from a Healthy Dietary Pattern to a Healthy Mediterranean Sustainable Lifestyle” was organized in Milan by IF-MeD (International Foundation of Mediterranean Diet), in collaboration with CIHEAM, FENS (Federation of European Nutrition Societies) and the technical collaboration of FAO. On this occasion, **The Call for Action on the Revitalization of the Mediterranean Diet** was issued and endorsed by 37 scientific societies, research institutes and national and international organizations.

In 2017, the FAO /CIHEAM International Workshop on “Development of Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainability of the Mediterranean Diet in the Mediterranean Region” was organized at the CIHEAM-Bari, the in the context of the One Planet Sustainable Food Programme Systems of the United Nations (OPN-SFSP).

In 2019, the Second World Conference on the Revitalization of the Mediterranean Diet “Strategies towards More Sustainable Food Systems in the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean Diet as a Lever Bridging Production, Transformation and Consumption in a Sustainable and Healthy Way”, was organized in Palermo by CIHEAM-Bari and Forum on Mediterranean Food Cultures.

In 2019, a program of web dialogues “Towards a **Joint Design of a Conceptual Framework** for a Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) Approach, Context-Specific for the Mediterranean Region, for the Co-Development of a Mediterranean Multi-stakeholder SFS Platform, was organized from October to November by CIHEAM-Bari with FAO and Union for the Mediterranean.

In 2019-2020, the codevelopment of the SFS-MED Platform was initiated by CIHEAM, FAO and Union for the Mediterranean with a common ground paper.

In 2021, three SFS-MED independent Food Systems Summit Dialogues on “**Pathways for the Future of Sustainable Food Systems in the Mediterranean**” were organized on 27 April , 21 June and 9 December by CIHEAM, FAO, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), Prima Foundation and One Planet Sustainable Food Programme Systems of the United Nations (OPN-SFSP).

3RD WORLD CONFERENCE
ON THE REVITALIZATION
OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET


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