



Celebration of World Olive Day 2023

“The Vital Role of Women in Olive Oil”

Madrid, 23 November 2023, IOC Headquarters, Madrid, Spain

Speech of Ms Frida Krifca, President of the CIHEAM Governing Board

Dear M. Abdellatif Ghedira, Executive Director, of the International Olive Council

Excellency M. Abdel Moneim Balaati, Minister of Agriculture of Republic of Tunisia

Excellency M. Ernesto Abati, Undersecretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Minister of the Kingdom of Spain

Excellency Ms Raghed Basem Antone Al Saqqa, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to Spain

Dear Presidents of Olive Oil Networks

Dear Distinguished participants

I am particularly delighted to be present for this event today dedicated to the essential role of women in the olive sector on the occasion of World Olive Day.

The Olive tree is the symbol of the Mediterranean region. It has a dear and unique place in the hearts of Mediterranean people.

It represents our culture of eating well and living together.

It tells our common history and the millennia of our Mediterranean civilization.

It is of course no coincidence that the CIHEAM logo, created 61 years ago, is an olive tree.



The Olive tree is also the symbol of peace that we all hope for in this Mediterranean tormented by crises and recurring conflicts.

As such, just like the International Olive Council, we are very proud of the initiative embraced with the Garden of Peace association, the objective of which is the creation of gardens with olive trees from all over the world, with the aim to spark dialogue on peace with young people.

- The CIHEAM today has two of them, one at CIHEAM Chania and the other in Zaragoza.

Deciding to focus on the role of women in the olive oil sector which is so important for our region is another reason for the CIHEAM to rejoice.

Therefore, I would like to warmly thank Mr. Ghedira for suggesting and supporting this initiative.

Empowering women and strengthening the place of women in agriculture and food systems is indeed a strategic priority for CIHEAM.

It is an important objective for the CIHEAM because - on the one hand, many Mediterranean countries are a global hotspot of climate change and water scarcity, which weigh on agriculture and food security, and on the other hand, because most of these countries have a high concentration of women in the agriculture workforce.

We know today that climate change, water shortage, degradation of natural resources, or even food or economic crises, do not affect women and men in the same way in rural and agricultural areas, particularly due to certain social and legal norms which create inequalities in access to water or land ownership, to financing and crediting, to training or even in access in decision-making processes.

Mediterranean cooperation and research actors like CIHEAM have made this complex triptych of **climate-agriculture-gender** a strategic axis of work while we work to strengthen our knowledge and actions in this field.

This integration of gender perspective in our projects helps us progressively to better take into account the point of view of our female stakeholders which could have gone



unnoticed if we had not made the effort to ask for it. We want to detect the blind spots that would determine the success or failure of our projects.

There is a great need today to:

- better understand and recognize the invisible work of women in rural and agricultural areas, including domestic work and family care activities,
- better understand how the sexual division of labor in agri-food systems leads to economic and wage inequalities,
- better understand the obstacles in the representation of women (agricultural unions, sectors, etc.)
- creating opportunities for “green” agriculture, more resistant to the climate and compatible with its ecosystem, of which women could be the first promoters
- train students, researchers, project coordinators, trainers and extension agents so that they integrate a gender perspective into their activities.

As such, as CIHEAM, we are delighted to be able to get in touch here today with the many women present to analyze with them the situation in the olive sector and to identify paths for collaboration.

The manifesto they are carrying today is a concrete step in thinking about a lasting, multi-stakeholder initiative that would advance knowledge and recognition of the role of women in the sector. Let's consider it as the premises of a common road map for the work we must do.

CIHEAM, with its education, training, research, cooperation and institutional dialogue activities, is ready to support a joint initiative that would go in this direction.

I congratulate you once again for choosing the theme of strengthening the role of women to celebrate World Olive Day and I thank you for working with g CIHEAM in this great initiative”.