

PREFACE

The Ministers of Agriculture from the 13 CIHEAM member States, or their representatives, convened in Rabat on 25 October 2024. This meeting, the first in eight years since 2016, was held at the invitation and under the co-presidency of H.E. Mr. Ahmed EL BOUARI, Minister of Agriculture, Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests of the Kingdom of Morocco, and Ms. Frida KRIFCA, President of the CIHEAM's Governing Board. Several high-ranking representatives from International and Regional Organizations were also present.

The publication of the Proceedings from this 12th Meeting presents an opportunity to delve into the central theme: "A Mediterranean Approach to Food Sovereignty: Concerns and Impacts on Sustainable Agri-Food Systems." It highlights methods for expediting the shift towards sustainable and resilient agricultural and food systems, including the "blue transformation," in response to challenges like climate change and water scarcity. The Proceedings also emphasize the importance of integrating rural communities, especially youth and women, throughout the agri-food value chains.

The unique composition of CIHEAM, this ministerial meeting, and the resulting Proceedings facilitate the presentation of proposals aimed at fostering dialogue and cooperation among CIHEAM member states. Additionally, the perspectives shared by representatives from International Organizations enriched the discussions during the meeting.

In the concluding declaration, which received unanimous support, Ministers and representatives from both international and regional organizations put forth recommendations directed towards Mediterranean countries and the CIHEAM. They expressed their endorsement for CIHEAM's endeavors, focused on sustainable food systems, and actively encouraged the involvement of youth and women in sustainable agricultural and fisheries practices.

By organizing these ministerial meetings, CIHEAM aims to create a platform for Mediterranean dialogue, recognizing the need for collaborative and unified responses within the region. Initiated in Rome in 1999, these ministerial meetings have since been held in various Mediterranean cities¹, culminating in the 12th meeting in Rabat in 2024.

This series of multilateral encounters serves as a testament to the unwavering commitment of Mediterranean countries to prioritize agriculture, food systems, and rural communities – with a particular emphasis on youth and women – within their cooperative framework. The forthcoming meeting in 2026 will further solidify the enduring and dynamic dialogue established 25 years ago.

Teodoro MIANO
Secretary General

¹ Rabat 2000, Athens 2001, Beirut 2002, Paris 2004, Cairo 2006, Zaragoza 2008, Istanbul 2010, Valletta 2012, Algiers 2014 and Tirana 2016
