



**Teodoro MIANO**

Secrétaire Général du CIHEAM

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*His Excellency, Minister of Agriculture, Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests, Mr. Ahmed EL BOUARI,  
Honourable President of the Governing Board of the CIHEAM, Mrs. Frida Krifca  
Excellencies, Ministers of Agriculture of the member countries of the CIHEAM,  
Heads of the Ministerial Delegations,  
Heads of the International Organizations,  
Honourable Delegates of the CIHEAM Governing Board,  
Invited colleagues of the High Level Meeting,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Before presenting a few general comments about this meeting and the final documents produced to date, I feel the need to wholeheartedly express my sincere thanks to HE Minister of Morocco for sharing with us the idea of re-launching the Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture the CIHEAM member countries and organizing it here in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco.

The convinced commitment and the continuous engagement of the Minister of Morocco teamed with the CIHEAM enthusiastic support in the organization of this significant Reunion.

This meeting provides a crucial opportunity for our organization to engage in discussions, plan, and share **robust and effective** measures to address the significant challenges currently facing the Mediterranean.

In preparation for the 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting, we have undertaken a comprehensive series of consultations. These commenced with a CIHEAM Special Debate held in Malta last July, graciously opened by His Excellency the Minister of Agriculture of Malta, which brought together a panel of distinguished international experts. This initial dialogue was followed by a series of technical meetings with delegates to the CIHEAM Governing Board and representatives from the Ministers' Cabinets.

## Dear Ministers, Dear Heads of Delegations,

The Mediterranean region is experiencing a disproportionate impact from global warming, with temperature increases exceeding the global average. Greenhouse gas emissions [CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O] are the main drivers of this accelerated warming trend.

These emissions are unequivocally linked to human activities, which have profound impacts on the Earth's atmosphere, water systems, pedosphere and biosphere.

At the same time, global and local **conflicts** exacerbate human and food insecurity, particularly affecting rural and agricultural populations. **Strengthening the resilience of food and agricultural systems is crucial to support the most vulnerable populations**, ensuring continued access to natural resources and to food supply chains as part of efforts for recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.

The current geopolitical and ecological situation worldwide is highly intricate. To foster collaboration and diplomacy, particularly in scientific matters, enhanced cooperation should be prioritized. This is crucial for two reasons: to pave the way for a brighter future and to mitigate tensions and risks for everyone involved.

The Declaration we aim to adopt today outlines the primary concerns, challenges, and issues we face in the Mediterranean region, emphasizing the crucial role of solidarity in addressing inequalities, as well as the role of lifelong education, training adapted to the needs of the private sector, in a multistakeholder ecosystems (research, universities, institutions, private companies, environment), capable of identifying local and global needs, and creating new employment opportunities for younger generations.

In this context, CIHEAM is strongly engaged, with all means and through several actions, in finding solutions to the main challenges affecting our Region:

- promoting **capacity building, training and educational programmes at various levels**; advanced and specialised courses, Masters and Master of Science programmes in the field of sustainable agri-food systems, with a strong attention to Water, Soil and Biodiversity in particular;
- participating in the progress of **scientific research**, through numerous research projects, international Doctorates, programmes, networks **through scientific diplomacy**.
- paying a central role in **cooperation and regional development** by promoting synergies between public institutions, the private sector and civil society, allowing capacity strengthening of agricultural, fishing and livestock communities, promoting sustainable agricultural technologies, facilitating exchanges of good practices between Mediterranean countries, resilience approaches to face climate change or

support to women in socio-environmental transitions in rural areas, among others.

- contributing to promote and lead **platforms for dialogue and strategic cooperation, enabling the sharing of data, expertise and knowledge** to meet the urgent and emerging needs of Mediterranean countries in terms of food security and sovereignty.

This is what CIHEAM is able to offer to the member countries, to the international organizations and to the Mediterranean.

## Conclusions

The global context – both geopolitically and ecologically – is so complex that **greater cooperation should be the first action** to promote. Cooperation and diplomacy, also for scientific affairs, are essential for two reasons: moving towards a better future but also reducing tensions and de-risking for all.

We have to keep in mind that mitigation and adaptation have to be addressed in a common move. I would like to conclude with a brilliant quote of a colleague and very good friend (*Sebastien Abis*):

**Mitigation means avoiding the unmanageable. Adaptation means managing the avoidable.**

*At the end of the working session, a very short video will be projected to promote and to invite all of you to a new initiative of CIHEAM on legumes, a vital component of the Mediterranean Sustainable Food Systems and Diet.*

*Thank you.*