



MALTE / MALTA

Roderick GALDES

Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights

Excellences,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to thank his Excellency, the Albanian Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Edmond Panariti, for hosting the 11th Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of CIHEAM'S Member Countries.

Last Monday, world leaders met at the UN headquarters in New York to discuss an issue that we, Mediterranean countries, have been dealing with for over a decade. With the issue of Refugees and Migration being discussed at UN level, world leaders have shown that Migration is not only a Geographic specific phenomenon but have acknowledged the fact that it has become a global issue.

CIHEAM, as one of the main actors in the Mediterranean has not only acknowledged the issue of migration but, for the past years it has been studying this phenomena and tried to identify ways and means that this institution can become a contributor to mitigate migration by focusing on its area of expertise, agriculture.

The strategic agenda 2020 being presented today is a witness of the concrete actions that CIHEAM will be focusing on to contribute towards the mitigation of this phenomenon. Migration is a result of people moving in search of a better life. People move away from conflict areas but also from areas that are facing poverty and hunger; where opportunities are inexistent. These cases are common in rural areas with limited resources, knowledge and difficulty to access market.

A well-developed agricultural sector is pivotal in improving the quality of life in rural and remote communities, which this can contribute to breaking the cycle of rural poverty and hunger. This means strengthening our rural areas but also ensuring that these are

resilient in a way that they won't only break the poverty and hunger cycle, but also provide the means for economic and social development.

Investments in new generations and marginal territories, boosting sustainable agriculture and food, the struggle against brain drain and the waste of natural resources and food all contribute towards the prevention of risks and in the managing tension. This holistic approach can help mitigate the risks of migration and the misery that follows.

The strategy being put forward by CIHEAM takes a holistic approach to the development of the rural areas and we, as a country want to contribute towards these goals.

The Strategy also addresses the challenges brought by climate change. This subject has been on Malta's agenda for years, in fact, it was during the CIHEAM Ministerial Meeting on Food Security held in Valletta that, a broad agreement, between all the Ministers of CIHEAM member countries and EU Commissioners was reached, that adaptation to climate change challenges is a key element for a strategy to build resilient rural areas in the Mediterranean.

We are pleased that these priorities are being brought to the forefront of the Mediterranean regional political agenda which priorities are in line with Malta's. And in line with these priorities we have been working in close collaboration with CIHEAM in the past months to coordinate our efforts in setting up a proposal for a centre of Excellence in Malta that will support CIHEAM with its agenda.

Climate Change in the Mediterranean is bringing with it a depletion of important resources such as water which is one of the natural resources that need to be safeguarded. This is a reality shared by most of us, Mediterranean countries. Water needs to be managed in the most efficient of ways and we need to focus our efforts and expertise to continue studying water and its use in agriculture. This resource is extremely important for Malta being one of the world's most water depleted countries where we rely heavily on the technology of reverse osmosis.

On the other hand, we as a country in recent years have seen a huge investment in information Technology making Malta a hub in this area. It is in this light that Malta is seeing great potential in coupling its information technology set-up to and uses this position to focus IT on studies related to water and agriculture.

It is a very ambitious task and I am confident that with your support and the support that has been given by CIHEAM will bring this project to fruition.

This initiative, which has been conceived by my dear friend the late Prof. Salvino Busuttli, goes hand in hand with CIHEAM's affiliated centre initiative and will contribute actively to the CAPMED 2025.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank CIHEAM for their work and commitment for a better Mediterranean and reiterate that the agenda presented will contribute to a greater cooperation within the Mediterranean region. I would also like to thank you honourable minister and delegates for supporting our initiative that will be beneficial to Mediterranean countries but will also be contributing to CIHEAM's Strategic agenda.

Thank you