

Information Event

The Role of Plant Genetic Resources for Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture in the Middle East

10 November 2014, 9.00 – 16:30h, Dubai, UAE

The purpose of the event is:

- To consider how plant genetic resources can contribute to increasing agricultural productivity, food production and food self-sufficiency in the Middle East.
- To discuss how agriculture can adapt to a changing climate so as to build a sustainable, resilient food production system in the region, by drawing on available crop diversity.
- To inform about the Global Crop Diversity Trust as an essential element of the funding strategy of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

8.30-9.00 Registration

Session 1 (MC: Dr Shoaib Ismail A/Director, Research & Innovation, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture, UAE)

9.00-9.20 Welcome Addresses

- Dr. Ismahane Elouafi, Director General, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture, UAE
- Dr. Marie Haga, Executive Director, Global Crop Diversity Trust, Germany

9.20-10.20 Keynote presentations (20 min presentation+10 min discussion)

- Genetic Resources for the Future: an international perspective on their conservation and use (Dr. Geoff Hawtin, Senior Technical Advisor, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Italy; and Advisor to the Global Crop Diversity Trust, Germany)
- Plant Genetic Resources Conservation for Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture: A Regional perspective (Dr. Nadia Al Saadi, Executive Director, Animal & Plant Genetic Resources Center, Oman)

10.20-10.45 Coffee break/Short videos on GCDT and ICBA

10-45-11.45 Panel discussion (Moderator: Ms. Setta Tutundjian)

A moderated Panel will address the following points, taking in consideration the perspective of the institution the Panelists represent:

1. What are the most important measures that need to be taken to adapt agriculture and food production to the challenges resulting from climate change?

2. What is the role of plant genetic resources in building resilient and sustainable agricultural systems and in adapting agriculture to climate change?
3. How can we elevate the challenges agriculture is facing higher on the political agenda?

- Dr. Ann Tutwiler, Director General, Bioversity International, Italy
- Dr. Ismahane Elouafi, Director General, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture, UAE
- Dr. Marie Haga, Executive Director, Global Crop Diversity Trust, Germany
- Dr. Mark Tester, Professor, Bioscience, Center for Desert Agriculture, Saudi Arabia
- Dr. Sayed Azam Ali, Chief Executive Officer, Crops for the Future, Malaysia
- H.E. Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, Secretary General, Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, UAE (TBC)

11.45-12.00 Wrap-up (Ms. Setta Tutndjian)

12.00-13.00 Visit to ICBA Genebank & Research Station

Lunch break 13.00-14.00

Session 2 (Chairman: Dr. Ali Lawati; Rapporteur: Dr. Dionyssia Aggeliki Lyra)

14.00-14.20 Safeguarding of agricultural biodiversity (Dr. Ann Tutwiler, Bioversity International, Italy)

14.20-14.40 Climate change and food security in the Middle East (Dr. Luigi Guarino, GCDT, Germany)

14.40-15.00 NUS and CWR for food security in the Middle East (Dr. Nanduri K. Rao, ICBA, UAE)

15.00-15.20 *Coffee break*

15.20-15.40 Harnessing diversity – Conventional breeding (Dr. Ahmed Amri, ICARDA, Lebanon)

15.40-16.00 Harnessing diversity – Genomics-assisted breeding (Dr. Mark Tester, Center for Desert Agriculture, Saudi Arabia)

16.00-16.20 Policy issues and gaps for PGR conservation in the Middle East (Dr. Mohammed Tazi, Food and Agriculture Organization, Italy)

16.20-16.30 General discussions and Wrap-up (by Dr. Ali Lawati)