



# The Cairo statement

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## *Climate change actions for resilient Mediterranean agricultural systems*

This document presents the conclusions and recommendations of the closing international workshop of ACLIMAS project, held in Cairo (Egypt), 15-17 December 2015. The Statement is a result of multi-stakeholders discussion of more than one hundred experts from Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon, Italy, Spain and UK. The ACLIMAS project ([www.aclimas.eu](http://www.aclimas.eu)) is funded by the Sustainable Water Integrated Management (SWIM) programme of the European Union and coordinated by the CIHEAM – Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari.

# The Cairo statement on the climate change actions for resilient Mediterranean agricultural systems

The closing international workshop of ACLIMAS project was held in Cairo (Egypt), from 15 to 17 December 2015, at the premises of the Regional training centre of the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation. The objective was to illustrate the project achievements at target areas located in six Mediterranean countries; (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon) and to release a multi-stakeholders driven statement on the adaptation to climate change of Mediterranean agricultural systems. More than one hundred experts covering most of the Mediterranean countries participated in the event. During the event a two days discussion panel was organized, where the participants addressed their ideas, views and suggestions for the continuity of the programme by the Cairo statement concerning climate change mitigation and adaptation in the Mediterranean.

We, undersigned members and representative of major Egyptians research and academy institutions and organizations and the participants from the Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Spain and Italy) and UK recognized that:

1. It is now a fact that climate change will be critical to development efforts. We thus consider that climate negotiations and the post 2015 development negotiations are strongly interconnected and a successful outcome is needed in both tracks in 2015 to ensure efficient and effective action against climate change and for a more sustainable, equitable and rights-based world.
2. The effect of climate change can be felt throughout the developed and developing countries of the Mediterranean facing changing and often deleterious weather patterns, decreased agricultural productivity, rising food prices, food shortages, transportation difficulties and even heightened risk of conflicts. These effects have a severe impact on communities that are the least equipped to deal with new challenges.
3. Climate change represents a key challenge to the sustainability of global ecosystems and human prosperity in the twenty first century. The impacts of climate change and variability are dominantly negative, and exacerbate other environmental challenges such as degradation of ecosystem, loss of biodiversity, and air, water and land pollution.
4. Aware of these facts, for the Mediterranean region there was as urgent need to explicitly identify, evaluate and select possible ways to adapt to the effects of a changing climate searching for measures aiming to increase capacity to withstand climate change, increase resilience to recover from the effect of climate change and strengthen the capacity of coping strategies and the knowledge systems that provide support for adaptation. Those major needs and objectives were formulated in an ambitious project (ACLIMAS, "Adaptation to climate change of Mediterranean Agricultural systems" that lasted for four years coordinated by the Mediterranean Agronomic institute of Bari, Italy, in cooperation with the Mediterranean countries: Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon, Algeria and Syria.

5. The potential impacts of climate change on the ability of agricultural systems, is clear that will threaten their ability, to provide food, feed, fibre and fuel and maintenance of ecosystem services as well as the integrity of the environment are major concern.
6. We strongly stress that crop production will face increasing challenges linked to climate change. Understanding climate change variables and their progressive impact is critical to developing agricultural systems that will sustain productivity even in a changing climate.
7. We emphasize that the outcomes and findings of the ACLIMAS project can be taken as corner stones and strong bases in building our future cooperation programmes. It is quite evident that ACLIMAS project strengthened the adaptive capacity, increased the communities resilience to climate change and promoted principles of climate smart agriculture. Furthermore it enhanced small holder productivity through extensive training and educating programmes, disseminates technologies and techniques to address climate change and strengthen natural resources management.
8. We, the participants of the workshop, are asking for continuation of the activities promoted by ACLIMAS into a new project in order to capitalize the achievements and to extend the good agronomic management practices to other areas and stakeholders in the Mediterranean region.
9. The further programmes should have the following goals:
  - Promote the eco-efficiency, i.e. produce higher economic benefits with reduced greenhouse gas emission per unit of production and water used;
  - Promote innovative and proactive data-based monitoring and management tools (e.g. early warning systems, smart irrigation scheduling and optimization Decision Support System) in combination with site-specific best management practices;
  - Conserve and enrich the organic content of soils and promote efficient water use and improve crop water productivity;
  - Promote ecosystem integrity considering the different socio-cultural and socio-economic vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities within social groups;
  - Assess and measure gender issues related to climate change to lessen inequalities;
  - Encourage central and local government agencies, civil society and academia to develop capacities to address climate change effects by elaborating national local plans and strategies to deal with them;
  - Enhance cooperation among regional and local institutions and stakeholders in order to create of a common knowledge on consequences and risks related to climate change;
  - Support on-ground implementation of research findings through the demonstration actions at large scale;
  - Promote climate change programmes that will build capacity, raise awareness and improve education and training;
  - Ensure effective action to combat deleterious climate change effects on environmental, social and economic integrity to ameliorate the negative impact the climate change potentially has on agricultural production.

10. We promote the establishment of a Mediterranean platform for climate change impact, mitigation and adaptation. The objective is to identify the priorities and to formulate a program for technical and financing support of climate change mitigation and adaptation actions. We would like to assure that the expected results from the new programme could have an important role in improving institutional communications and collaborative efforts to address climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies to make the efforts of these agencies most cost effective. In addition, this new project will assess and develop greater standing of the decision and policy process related to climate change and long range planning impacts of climate change on agricultural systems, crop production and food security.
11. The priority actions for the on-ground implementation should:
- Have realistic and achievable objectives;
  - Identify the areas where the adaptation/mitigation measures could bring the greatest benefits;
  - Identify the site specific adaptation/mitigation measures to adopt;
  - Focus on the concerted actions which merges the best practices related to crop breeding, water withdrawal and delivery, land management, agronomic management (including the use of low quality water, water harvesting);
  - Use the systemic integrated (multi-disciplinary) approach which promote proven solutions;
  - Implement the activities using a combination of demonstration actions and pro-active management solutions;
  - Use the innovative technologies and tools which already demonstrated their applicability;
  - Be able to estimate the positive impact of the proposed solutions on the ground.

*Approved in Cairo (Egypt) on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015.*