

ICBA hosts Youth Circle on sustainable agrifood systems

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, June 7, 2023 – The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) hosted a Youth Circle event titled “Sustainable Agrifood Systems under Climate Change” today in collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MoCCaE) and the Federal Youth Authority of the UAE.

This Youth Circle event aligns with the UAE’s Year of Sustainability and its “Today for Tomorrow” theme, a principle shared by the Youth Circles initiative. It took place at the auditorium at ICBA’s head office and provided a platform for young leaders across the UAE to discuss the transformative potential of agrobiodiversity and the role of sustainable food systems in the face of climate change.

A notable range of thought leaders and experts were present, including H.E. Mohammad Saeed Al Nuaimi, Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi, Director General of ICBA, and Dr. Augusto Becerra Lopez-Lavalle, Chief Scientist of ICBA. Representatives from the ministry were also present at the event.

H.E. Mohammad Al Nuaimi said: “Climate change is a pressing issue that affects us all, particularly the future of our food systems. The Youth Circle event embodies the UAE’s commitment to engaging our young people in developing innovative, sustainable solutions to these challenges. This echoes the spirit of the Year of Sustainability’s theme, ‘Today for Tomorrow’, by reinforcing our resolve to build a greener and more resilient future.”

He added: “As we gear up for COP28, this event highlights our steadfast dedication to fostering a generation that is aware of climate change and its impacts and actively involved in mitigating them. We are confident that their collective effort will contribute significantly to the sustainable and resilient future we aspire to.”

Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi, Director General of ICBA, said: “We must tap into the huge potential of the younger generation and engage them more actively in efforts towards sustainable development. This is why our center focuses a lot of efforts on providing young people with skills and opportunities to become future scientists, agripreneurs, and leaders through initiatives like ICBA YES. We want to empower them to grow into agents of change and contribute to sustainable agricultural development and innovation.”

The Youth Circles initiative encourages youth participation and solutions-oriented dialogues in response to global challenges, centered around diversifying diets and curbing food waste. The event underlined the critical need for climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies to achieve food security and nutrition.

The discussion primarily tackled scientific and innovative approaches to making agrifood systems more resilient and sustainable and ways to engage youth in developing climate-smart solutions for agrifood systems.

The event was specially designed for young people interested in sustainability, climate change, and agrifood systems. This initiative represents a significant step in the lead-up to COP28 and a continuation of the UAE’s commitment to sustainability and climate action.