

Dubai to host first-ever global forum on marginal environments

Dubai, UAE, 30 October 2019 – Dubai will play host to a global showcase for the latest advances in research, innovation, development and policy in agriculture and food production in marginal environments - areas of the world most vulnerable to climate change, water scarcity and salinity.

Organized by the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture ([ICBA](#)) in collaboration with the Food Security Office and the Advanced Sciences Office of the UAE Government, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD), and the Khalifa International Award for Date Palm and Agricultural Innovation, the Global Forum on Innovations for Marginal Environments ([GFIME](#)) will bring together a select global audience of 250 influential policymakers, decision-makers, scientists and experts who are at the forefront of reshaping agriculture and food production for tomorrow.

Running on 20-21 November 2019, GFIME will look at a growing set of challenges to agriculture and food production in marginal environments such as soil fertility decline, salinization of soil and water resources, and increasing pressure on natural resources due to population growth and climate change.

Commenting on GFIME, Her Excellency Mariam bint Mohammed Almhieri, UAE Minister of State for Food Security, said: "Marginal environments present particular challenges for crop growing and food production because of their harsh conditions that make cultivating plants difficult. However, with the increasing incorporation of technology in agriculture, these marginal environments can become home to facilities that produce a high yield of food with a minimal use of resources."

Her Excellency Mariam bint Mohammed Almhieri added: "Because of the UAE's desert eco-system that is characterized by high temperatures, poor soil quality and low annual rainfall, the country is pioneering the leveraging of agricultural technology to increase its domestic supplies of food - a main pillar of its National Food Security Strategy. ICBA is one of the centers that is leading the way with research into saline and dry condition agriculture and the forging of strategic international partnerships to advance the UAE's food security agenda, which is to take the country from its current position of 31st most food secure nation to being in the top 10 by 2021 and number one by 2051."

Her Excellency Sarah bint Yousif Al Amiri, UAE Minister of State for Advanced Sciences, said: "This forum in collaboration with ICBA provides a platform for research targeting the UAE's research priorities that stem from the need to diversify food production methodologies and systems."

Her Excellency Sarah bint Yousif Al Amiri will join a ministerial panel on unlocking the value and supporting agriculture and food innovation and the future of smart investments.

His Excellency Dr. Bandar M. H. Hajjar, President of the IsDB Group, commented: "The IsDB is delighted to be part of the Global Forum on Innovations for Marginal Environments. At the IsDB, we are committed to investment in science, technology, and innovation-based solutions to address some of the most pressing development challenges, including those in marginal environments, which are facing enormous challenges in terms of food insecurity, poverty and unemployment."

Her Excellency Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, Managing Director of EAD and Chairperson of the ICBA Board of Directors, said: "I am delighted to see a global forum dedicated to marginal environments happening in the UAE. I think the GFIME will undoubtedly serve as a great platform to unlock key innovations to address some of the most pressing issues in marginal environments."

Her Excellency Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak will be participating in the ministerial panel on smart agriculture strategies.

For her part, Dr. Ismahane Elouafi, Director General of ICBA, said: "We are honored to organize the Global Forum on Innovations for Marginal Environments. I am very optimistic that through GFIME, we will be able to identify some of the most innovative solutions to tackle growing challenges such as water scarcity, salinity, climate change, and poverty within the marginal environments."

"Moreover, GFIME will allow the development of valuable policies, partnerships, and projects while showcasing the latest progress made to address Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 and 2 on no poverty and zero hunger, mainly in marginal environments, where an estimated 1.7 billion marginalized people live," Dr. Ismahane Elouafi added.

GFIME will feature high-level panel discussions of ministers and innovators on the future of safeguarding food value chains and how smart agriculture strategies help to mitigate climate risks, increase food production and save the planet.

GFIME also coincides with the 20th anniversary celebrations of the establishment of ICBA by the UAE Government and the IsDB.

More information on GFIME is available at www.gfime.org.

###

Press inquiries:

Mr. Showkat Nabi Rather, ICBA: s.rather@biosaline.org.ae, or +971 55 137 8653

About ICBA

The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) is a unique applied agricultural research center in the world with a focus on marginal areas where an estimated 1.7 billion people live. It identifies, tests and introduces resource-efficient, climate-smart crops and technologies that are best suited to different regions affected by salinity, water scarcity and drought. Through its work, ICBA helps to improve food security and livelihoods for some of the poorest rural communities around the world.

www.biosaline.org