

## **Agricultural Advisor to UAE Ministry of Presidential Affairs visits ICBA to discuss collaboration**

Dubai, UAE, September 14, 2017 - Dr. Abdelouahhab Zaid, Agricultural Advisor to the Ministry of Presidential Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, visited the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture ([ICBA](#)) today to discuss prospects for collaboration.

Dr. Abdelouahhab Zaid was welcomed by Professor Abdulrahman Sultan Alsharhan, Chair of the ICBA Board of Directors, and Dr. Ismahane Elouafi, ICBA's Director General.

During the visit, Dr. Abdelouahhab Zaid was briefed about the center's research efforts in such areas as natural resource management, climate change adaptation, crop productivity and diversification, aquaculture and bioenergy, and policy analysis in different regions, including the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and the Caucasus.

He also learnt about the center's activities to optimize water use for agriculture in marginal environments, including date palm production. ICBA has been studying long-term effects on fruit quality and quantity in date palm irrigated with saline water. To date ten most common varieties from the UAE and eight from Saudi Arabia have been evaluated for production and water use.

Scientists also work on a wide range of solutions to reduce losses and maximize use of resources (e.g. agriculture with saline water, integrated aquaculture-agriculture systems).

During the meeting, Professor Abdulrahman Sultan Alsharhan said: "We are delighted to welcome Dr. Abdelouahhab Zaid to our center. We believe this visit will pave the way for stronger partnership and collaboration between our center and the United Arab Emirates University and the Khalifa Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology."

For his part, Dr. Abdelouahhab Zaid said: "I am impressed by the scope of research expertise and activities at ICBA. I look forward to collaboration with the center in different areas, including date palm research."

During her speech, Dr. Ismahane Elouafi said: "Since its establishment in 1999, our center has placed special emphasis on addressing challenges facing agriculture under marginal conditions. In particular, we have actively studied date palm production using saline water and generated water productivity data that helps to reduce date palm irrigation requirements by up to 35%."

During the visit, Dr. Abdelouahhab Zaid toured ICBA's research facilities, including experimental fields for date palm, *Salicornia*, the Integrated Aqua-Agriculture System, the Emirates Soil Museum, greenhouses and net-houses, and the SCADA system.

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### **ABOUT ICBA**

The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) is an international, non-profit research-for-development organization that aims to strengthen agricultural productivity in marginal and saline environments through identifying, testing and facilitating access to sustainable solutions for food, nutrition and income security.

[www.biosaline.org](http://www.biosaline.org)