



ICBA Strengthens Global Partnerships and Promotes Sustainable Agriculture at High-Level Forum in Uzbekistan

Dubai, UAE, September 9, 2024 – The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture ([ICBA](#)) Delegation led by Director General Dr. Tarifa Al Zaabi, participated in the International High-Level Forum of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) on Food Security and the Sustainable Development Goals, held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Organized by the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan (MoA) in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the forum brought together high-level dignitaries, including government ministers, heads of international organizations, and private sector leaders, to address the critical challenges and opportunities for agri-food systems in LLDCs.

Dr. Tarifa Al Zaabi participated as a key speaker in a side event on “Evidence-Based Policymaking for Sustainable Development in LLDCs”. She shared insights on the critical role of data-driven strategies in shaping sustainable development policies for landlocked countries, which often face unique challenges such as limited access to markets, high transportation costs, and vulnerability to climate change. Dr. Tarifa emphasized the need for collecting and analyzing accurate and comprehensive data to inform policy decisions that can enhance agricultural productivity and resilience. She also highlighted the importance of building strong research capacities within LLDCs to generate local solutions and foster innovation.

In the high-level plenary session titled "The Urgency and Opportunities for Agri-Food Systems Development in Landlocked Developing Countries," Dr. Tarifa emphasized the importance of adopting innovative approaches to enhance the resilience of agri-food systems, highlighting the need for agricultural solutions capable of addressing environmental and economic challenges. She presented ICBA's initiatives focused on developing climate-resilient crops, optimizing water use, and improving soil health. She also discussed the use of advanced technologies such as remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for effective agricultural resource management. Dr. Tarifa reaffirmed ICBA's commitment to advancing scientific research and fostering international partnerships to support sustainable development and food security.



Dr. Tarifa Al Zaabi also extended her gratitude to the organizers of the forum, stating, *“I would like to thank the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan and FAO for organizing this high level event. It has provided a valuable platform for dialogue, exchange, and collaboration among stakeholders committed to achieving sustainable development and food security for landlocked developing countries.”*

On the second day of the forum, ICBA further strengthened its collaborative efforts by signing two significant MoUs following the Investment Forum on Agriculture and Food for Landlocked Developing Countries. The forum, which highlighted Uzbekistan’s potential for investment and export growth in agriculture and food sectors, underscored the value of international cooperation and knowledge exchange to enhance sustainability and resilience in agri-food systems.

The first MoU was signed between Dr. Tarifa Al Zaabi, Director General of ICBA, and H.E. Ibrokhim Abdurakhmonov, Minister of Agriculture of Uzbekistan. This agreement focuses on cooperation in sustainable agriculture, including the development and scaling up of sustainable agricultural production systems, organizing capacity-building events, facilitating research exchange, and empowering women in agriculture through targeted initiatives aimed at enhancing their research and leadership skills.

The second MoU was signed by Dr. Tarifa Al Zaabi and Professor Islamov Sohob Yaxshibekovich, Rector of Tashkent State Agrarian University (TSAU). This MoU aims to promote joint research initiatives, develop internship and fellowship programs, and support a wide range of academic activities such as workshops, conferences, and webinars. It also includes the establishment of an ICBA Youth Engagement Society (ICBA YES) chapter at TSAU, designed to foster youth involvement and leadership in agricultural development.

In addition to the forum events, ICBA delegation met with Mr. Sharof Rajabbayev, Director of the Innovative Development Agency of Uzbekistan, to discuss joint initiatives. The discussions focused on developing innovative projects to improve soil quality in the Aral Sea region, creating internship opportunities for young talents, and organizing international forums and conferences to



facilitate knowledge transfer and cooperation on critical issues related to science, technology, and sustainability.

Reflecting on these engagements, Dr. Tarifa Al Zaabi commented, “These partnerships represent our commitment to working hand in hand with local and international partners to bring about tangible improvements in agricultural practices, enhance food security, and build resilient communities. By combining our expertise and resources, we can address the unique challenges faced by landlocked countries and ensure sustainable growth for the future.”

The ICBA delegation’s visit to Uzbekistan marks a significant step forward in strengthening international cooperation to address the unique challenges faced by landlocked developing countries. Through active participation in high-level discussions, signing strategic MoUs, and fostering partnerships with key stakeholders, ICBA continues to advance its mission of promoting sustainable agricultural practices and food security. These efforts underscore ICBA's commitment to leveraging innovation, research, and collaboration to build resilient agri-food systems and contribute to global sustainable development goals.

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About ICBA

Established by the Government of the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Development Bank, the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) is a unique international not-for-profit applied research-for-development center. The center’s approach integrates strategic alliances, technical expertise, and knowledge empowerment to co-create innovative solutions for sustainable livelihoods and food security in saline and arid environments. The center’s research is at the nexus of soil, water, crops, and climate to prevent, manage and recover from salinity in agricultural lands. Through this holistic and integrated approach, ICBA strives to make a lasting positive impact on the lives and livelihoods of farming communities, ensuring their resilience and contributing to a more sustainable future for all.

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