



## **ICBA at COP29: Advancing Climate Resilience and Sustainable Agriculture**

**Baku, Azerbaijan, 27 November 2024:**

The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture ([ICBA](#)) participated in the 29th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan. Through a series of high-level events and strategic meetings, ICBA emphasized the critical role of climate-resilient agriculture in addressing the growing challenges of climate change, food insecurity, water scarcity, and land degradation in arid and saline environments.

**Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi, Director General of ICBA**, commented: "The escalating climate crisis necessitates urgent, innovative, and inclusive solutions, driven by the mobilization of substantial climate finance to support the most vulnerable communities. Through science-driven approaches, we can empower societies to adapt and thrive amid increasing challenges. ICBA's initiatives, such as integrated agri-aquaculture systems, stress-tolerant crops, and capacity-building programs for women and youth, provide transformative pathways to enhance food security, rehabilitate degraded ecosystems, and build resilience against climate impacts. COP29 was a pivotal platform to foster global collaboration, unlock climate finance, and advance sustainable agricultural practices that leave no one behind."

### **Creating Sustainable Impact in Arid and Saline Environments in Central Asia: The Power of Partnerships for SDG17**

At the UAE Pavilion, ICBA hosted the session "Creating Sustainable Impact in Arid and Saline Environments in Central Asia: The Power of Partnerships for SDG17." Moderated by Dr. Charbel Tarraf, ICBA's Chief Operations and Development, the panel featured Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi; Mr. Bekmurat Turdishev, Director of the Karakalpakstan Agrarian Research Institute (KARI); and Dr. Marguba Rejapova, ICBA Post-Doctoral Fellow.

Supported by the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD), the discussion highlighted pioneering strategies to combat soil salinity and water scarcity, enhance sustainable agriculture, and strengthen climate resilience in Central Asia. The panel emphasized the pivotal role of climate finance in facilitating such partnerships, enabling transformative projects that address the impacts of climate change while enhancing agricultural productivity and food security.



## **Empowering Women and Youth for Climate Action**

ICBA, in collaboration with ICESCO, hosted a panel titled “Unlocking the Potential of Youth and Women in Transforming Food Systems for Climate Action” at the ICESCO Pavilion. Moderated by Dr. Charbel Tarraf, ICBA’s Chief Operations and Development, the session brought together diverse voices, including representatives from ICESCO, Azerbaijan’s Genetic Resources Institute, Green Republic Farms Nigeria, and ICBA Project Development Specialist, Ms. Nour El Jundi.

The panel highlighted ICBA-led initiatives such as LCOY UAE 2023 and ICBA YES, which empower women and youth to adopt sustainable agricultural practices and lead climate-smart transformations. Discussions underscored the importance of equipping youth and women with the tools and resources needed to foster innovation and build resilience in the agricultural sector.

## **Tackling Climate Challenges through the WEFE Nexus**

During a high-level panel organized by ICESCO, ICBA shared its expertise on the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus. Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi participated as a panelist, emphasizing the importance of integrated approaches to managing resources efficiently in water-scarce regions.

The session included esteemed speakers including Mr. Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research at the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Ms. Ilhama Gadimova, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of Azerbaijan and Member of the COP29 Organizing Committee in addition to distinguished speakers from global organizations such as FAO, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). The session underscored the need for targeted climate finance to support the implementation of WEFE-based strategies, ensuring sustainable resource management for vulnerable communities.

## **Strategic Collaboration with WorldFish**

ICBA also held a bilateral meeting with WorldFish, a CGIAR member, to explore synergies in agri-aquaculture systems. Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi and Dr. Essam Yassin Mohammed, Director General of WorldFish, discussed ways to enhance food security and resilience in coastal and saline environments. The meeting highlighted ICBA’s expertise in Integrated Agri-Aquaculture Systems (IAAS) and WorldFish’s leadership in aquatic food systems, aiming to develop innovative and sustainable solutions for vulnerable communities.

## **Showcase at the UAE Pavilion**



At the UAE Pavilion, ICBA showcased its extensive stress-tolerant seeds (drought-, heat-, and salt-tolerant), including millet, quinoa, amaranth, Buffel grass, wheat, and maize, among others. Developed and tested to thrive in saline, arid, and water-scarce environments, these seeds provide practical solutions to enhance food security and agricultural resilience. Through years of rigorous experimentation and field applications, ICBA has introduced and scaled these seeds, directly addressing the challenges posed by climate change and resource scarcity in vulnerable regions.

### **Advancing Agricultural Sustainability**

With over 25 years of expertise, ICBA continues to lead research and development efforts to address the challenges of saline and arid environments. Its active participation at COP29 highlighted its commitment to empowering communities through inclusive initiatives, fostering international collaboration, and scaling science-driven solutions for sustainable agriculture.

For more information, visit [www.biosaline.org](http://www.biosaline.org).

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