

DIRECTOR GENERAL - High-Level Statement International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)

30th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Belem, Brazil

At COP30, ICARDA continues to champion climate action for resilient, global dryland agri-food systems. Across more than 40 countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central and West Asia, ICARDA works alongside governments, farmers, and research partners to deliver innovative solutions that secure food, protect water resources, and strengthen livelihoods in some of the world's most fragile landscapes.

I'm proud to share that this month marks 50 years of ICARDA, celebrating five decades of pioneering research, transformative innovation, and enduring partnerships that have shaped agriculture across Central and West Asia and North Africa (CWANA) and beyond.

Through cutting-edge research, climate-resilient cropping systems, sustainable rangeland and livestock management, and drought-tolerant crops, ICARDA has advanced climate-smart, socially inclusive innovations that serve to strengthen smallholder farming communities across the global dryland. For instance, ICARDA's Integrated Desert Farming Systems model has been shown to improve water productivity by thirty-five percent with solar-powered irrigation and high-efficiency drip systems, achieved yield gains of over sixty percent in protected vegetable cultivation, and restored more than one thousand hectares of degraded rangelands in Central Asia. These efforts demonstrate that even severely degraded drylands can be returned to sustainable production through integrated technological and ecological interventions.

In order to scale our successes, adaptation policies and climate finance must reach those who are most vulnerable to water scarcity and land degradation to create a future that is equitable, sustainable, and resilient. Critical action is required to scale science-generated, proven solutions across the global drylands, thereby translating the Global Goal on Adaptation into concrete outcomes.

Accordingly, we call for bold investments in agriculture that serve as a force multiplier, ensuring that financing directly reaches smallholder farmers and low-income communities while advancing market and non-market solutions.

At ICARDA, we have always believed that when science is grounded in partnerships and driven by purpose, it can truly transform lives. COP30 in Belem provides a real opportunity to elevate global action on climate-resilient agriculture through the advancement of sustainable food and water systems, and by ensuring that the unique challenges of the world's drylands are prioritized in global climate solutions, fostering resilient, productive, and sustainable landscapes for communities everywhere.

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