



TURQUIE / TURKEY

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*Distinguished Ministers and Heads of Delegations,
Esteemed Participants,*

First of all, I would like to express my pleasure to meet you on this occasion of the 11th Meeting of the Agricultural Ministers of CIHEAM Member States. I would also like to express my gratitude to His Excellency Edmond Panariti, for the generous hospitality in this beautiful city of Tiran.

The Mediterranean Region is a rich center hosting numerous varying cultures, religions, ethnic societies and economies. The biodiversity, variety of land and water resources as well as the climate of the Region generates potential for sustainable agriculture. The agricultural and nutritional trends in the Region continue to globalize within the years.

Our country remains to be one of the committed contributors to the Region both from an economical and humanitarian perspective.

Esteemed Participants;

The two defined objectives of this Meeting and the final Declaration are appreciated by our side. We are aware of the fact that migration is important for our Region as **Mediterranean Region is at the heart of migration and the effect of migration trend from the rural areas towards the urban areas is inevitable.**

As you may know, **regarding the Syrian refugee crisis, the influx of refugees into Turkey has reached approximately 3 million** and Turkey meets basic requirements such as food, shelter, health and education, as the country hosting the largest refugee

population. In our country, one of the main concerns regarding agricultural development is employment of refugees' nowadays and its negative impact in long-term in the rural area for the labor markets. There are concrete steps taken such as the new legislation allowing the refugees to be employed.

Turkey fulfills its duties regarding this humanitarian tragedy that will be remembered with our Region. At such a point, **I would like to give some brief information about the attempted coup on 15th July. Turkey has overcome this failed but bloody attempt by further strengthening the fraternity of the society. Even though this attempt, our focus to provide humanitarian support and cooperation for the Syrian refugees and refugees from other nations will be persistently and increasingly continue.**

I also would like to underline the importance of efforts towards decreasing the **migration from rural to urban areas as a common issue for all the countries at global scale.**

We are aware of the fact that an exchange of views on migrations is quite necessary with regard to the agricultural development and food security perspectives; it was also one of the concerns raised during **the FAO 30th Regional Conference for Europe** held in Antalya, in May. Better nutrition, food security and sustainable development goals were highlighted. **We believe that we can be successful in tackling with refugees' crisis only if we share the common principles and purposes.**

It is crucial to adopt the necessary policies firstly at national level to achieve sustainable development at regional and global scales. This adoption of policies should primarily focus on rural areas.

The ongoing efforts in supporting sustainable development, specifically focus on increasing qualified employment of **women** and **youth** as well as integration of **smallholders** into the markets.

Furthermore, Turkey provides support to strengthen the rural economy by several programmes, investments, projects. Our government has launched **the Support to Rural Development Investments Programme**. Since 2006, the Programme has been maintaining support for the rural population mainly focusing on small and medium size enterprises (SME's), infrastructures and procurement of agricultural machinery and equipment. The supported areas are the ones covered by the CIHEAM 2025 Strategic

Agenda. Main outcome of this Programme may be referred as **respectable increase in employment**, especially in rural areas. We are ready to share this experience with all of you.

At this point, I would like to say that we appreciate **the global efforts of international organizations** in that sense. One example is IFAD. Cooperation of **IFAD** and Turkey mostly aim better infrastructure and focus on the rural population, decreasing the rural poverty, food security and strengthening the rural livelihoods. Such projects have reached over 1.3 million families.

Esteemed Ministers;

Distinguished Participants;

When we come to **CIHEAM Strategic Agenda 2025;**

We appreciate the inclusive approach of the Agenda and welcome the prioritized areas that this Agenda includes.

As food security and nutrition are covered as one thematic pillar of the Agenda, I would like to mention that as Turkey, together with Pakistan, we proposed to declare the year 2016, **the International Year of Pulses** highlighting the improvement in the global food security, environment as well as healthy diets.

CIHEAM Strategic Agenda is quite **ambitious and inclusive** and **these huge targets can only be achieved by a rational leadership, correct vision and belief.**

Esteemed Participants;

I would like to state that we sincerely believe in the importance of CIHEAM for developing agriculture and sustaining food security in the Mediterranean region and we recognize the significance of CIHEAM's contributions.

Thank you.