

Home > ICARDA Update > Launching the Global Dryland Alliance

LAUNCHING THE GLOBAL DRYLAND ALLIANCE

Jul 08, 2015



GDA brought together ministers of agriculture, environment, and food security and the representatives of international organizations.

Scientific innovation is the key to higher agricultural productivity, food security and climate change adaptation in the dry areas of the world. This sentiment, shared by leading agricultural research centers worldwide, has been given added impetus and is now being pursued on a wider scale by a new international partnership, the Global Dryland Alliance (GDA).

Initiated by the State of Qatar, GDA received support at a Ministerial Conference recently held in Marrakech, Morocco. Attended by ministers of agriculture, environment, and food security, and the representatives of international organizations, the Conference established an ambitious plan to coordinate efforts aimed at reversing natural resource degradation and improving the resilience and productivity of agricultural production systems across the dry areas. Discussions on the establishment of the GDA were started by the State of Qatar two years back with the involvement of ICARDA.

The resulting 'Marrakech Declaration' provided tacit support for the GDA's plans to apply and disseminate innovative scientific approaches and technologies for agricultural development, tackling the combined threats of climate change, land degradation, water scarcity, and food insecurity.

ICARDA contributed meaningfully to key debates during the conference, including: the desperate need for regional and international climate change projects to prioritize dryland areas; the important role that the private sector should play in the improvement of food production, supply chains, and marketing; and the need for civil society organizations to contribute to raising public awareness about climate change among farmers and rural communities.

Dr. Mahmoud Solh, ICARDA's Director General, chaired the session on the establishment of the GDA – its aims, objectives, and approach to agricultural research for development. Participants expressed their full support to GDA and its approach to addressing the challenges of drylands. Most delegations emphasized the importance of actions on the ground that the GDA is expected to support.