



PRESS RELEASE

“STRENGTHENING AND ENHANCING QUALITY OLIVE OIL CHAIN IN LEBANON”

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“MASTER PLAN FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF LEBANESE COASTAL COMMUNITIES”

Friday, 4th August 2017, at 10:00 a.m.

Ministry of Agriculture (Beirut), 4th floor, Meeting room

The Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Ghazi Zeaiter and the Director of the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) Bari, Mr. Maurizio Raeli, initialled the operational agreement on “Strengthening and enhancing quality olive oil chain in Lebanon”. On the same occasion, the President of CDR, Mr. Nabil Jisr and the Director of the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) Bari initialled the “Master Plan for the sustainable development of Lebanese coastal communities” financed by Italy. The Ambassador of Italy, Mr. Massimo Marotti, and the Director of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), Ms. Donatella Procesi were also present at the ceremony held at the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture Headquarters in Beirut.

“*Strengthening and enhancing quality olive oil chain in Lebanon*” project is the third phase of two very successful initiatives already executed by CIHEAM, an intergovernmental organization, jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in Lebanon, both financed by Italy for an amount of 1 million euros. This phase will last 18 months and encompasses activities aiming at encouraging income-generating activities related to olive oil, via the support to olive oil chain associations and producers, oil millers and traders. The initiatives will improve the socioeconomic conditions of olive oil operators, whether organized into associations or not, and of their families, and increasing food security level, while strengthening quality of Lebanese olive oil along its value chain.

The “*Master Plan for the Sustainable Development of the Lebanese Coastal Communities*” project will last one year and is jointly implemented by the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), and executed by CIHEAM Bari, in close collaboration with the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). The Master Plan is funded by Italy through a grant of around 500 000 euros.

The *Master Plan* preparation will extend over a period of 12 months and will identify specific sector interventions and setup integrated market systems, while encouraging the sustainable use of local natural resources. It will define significant income-generating opportunities, especially in vulnerable coastal areas within South, Mount Lebanon and North Governorates (especially among fishermen communities). The expected achievements include the production of a “Sustainable Development Master Plan Document”, to comply with the overarching guiding principles of sustainability, social inclusion and social businesses.