



ICBA Marks UN South-South Cooperation Day with Farmers' and Agro-Entrepreneurs Accelerator Graduation in Nukus, Uzbekistan

207 participants graduate from ADFD-supported accelerator, showcasing 25 innovative agribusiness concepts developed from climate resilient crops.

Nukus, Uzbekistan, 18 September 2026: The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) marked the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation with the graduation of 207 participants from its Farmers' and Agro-Entrepreneurs Accelerator in Nukus, highlighting how climate-resilient agricultural solutions into products, enterprises and livelihood opportunities.

Supported by Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD), the accelerator was implemented by ICBA in partnership with Uzbekistan's Agency for Innovative Development (AID) under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation. Women represented nearly 59% of the graduates, with 122 participants.

Over four weeks, participants undertook 16 training modules covering agricultural processing, product quality, packaging, business planning and market access. Building on this intensive program, participants showcased 25 innovative concepts at the graduation exhibition at Nukus Youth Technopark, using climate-resilient crops introduced by ICBA. These included food and feed products and soil amendments, demonstrating how agricultural research can be translated into value-added products and opportunities for local enterprise opportunities. Ten outstanding concepts were recognized during the ceremony.



His Excellency Mohamed Saif Al Suwaidi, Director General of Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, said: “At ADFD, we see development finance as a means of creating the conditions for communities to build sustainable livelihoods and stronger local economies. Our support for agriculture in Karakalpakstan combines investment in sustainable production with the knowledge and skills needed to turn agricultural potential into practical economic opportunities. Through this accelerator, farmers and entrepreneurs are building on climate-resilient practices to develop products, strengthen their businesses and access new markets. Our partnership with ICBA and Uzbekistan reflects the value of South-South cooperation in connecting knowledge, finance and local enterprise, while creating opportunities for women and young people to contribute to the growth of their communities.”

Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi, Director General of ICBA, said: “This graduation demonstrates how agricultural research can translate into products, enterprises and new opportunities for communities. The concepts presented by the participants show what is possible when climate-resilient crops are connected with entrepreneurship and markets. With ADFD’s support and our strong partnership with Uzbekistan, we are helping move science from research and demonstration towards adoption, value creation and sustainable livelihoods.”

Dr. Asror Norov, Acting Director of the Agency for Innovative Development, said: “Karakalpakstan’s farmers and entrepreneurs understand the challenges facing their communities. This program gives them practical support to develop their ideas into businesses, from calculating production costs to meeting quality standards and understanding customers. Our collaboration with ICBA, supported by ADFD, brings



this expertise closer to local communities and encourages women and young people to take a greater role in agricultural enterprise.”

The accelerator builds on the ADFD-funded project, “Development of Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems in Degraded Areas of Karakalpakstan”. The project has introduced a diverse range of food and fodder crops at demonstration sites in Nukus, Chimbay and Muynak, while strengthening the capacity of scientists, extension workers and farmers in soil, water and crop management. The accelerator represents a further step in this work, helping translate the knowledge and agricultural solutions developed through the project into value-added products, enterprise opportunities and potential income-generating activities for local communities.

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About ICBA

Established by the Government of the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Development Bank, the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) is a unique international not-for-profit applied research-for-development center. The center’s approach integrates strategic alliances, technical expertise, and knowledge empowerment to co-create innovative solutions for sustainable livelihoods and food security in saline and arid environments. The center’s research is at the nexus of soil, water, crops, and climate to prevent, manage and recover from salinity in agricultural lands. Through this holistic and integrated approach, ICBA strives to make a lasting positive impact on the lives and livelihoods of farming communities, ensuring their resilience and contributing to a more sustainable future for all. www.biosaline.org

About Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD)

Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) is one of the UAE’s leading development and economic institutions. Established in 1971 under the visionary leadership of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the Fund was founded on a forward-looking belief in the importance of supporting sustainable development in developing countries. ADFD provides concessional loans and managing government grants



to finance development projects across key sectors that drive economic and social growth. The Fund also plays a pivotal role in stimulating investment, supporting the national private sector, and enhancing the global presence of UAE exports through strategic partnerships spanning more than 100 countries, thereby contributing to the national economy and delivering sustainable development impact.

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