

## ICBA, Zayed University team up to support sustainable development in UAE

**Dubai, UAE, March 18, 2021** – The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture ([ICBA](#)) and [Zayed University](#) agreed yesterday to join forces to contribute to sustainable development efforts in the UAE.

Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi, Acting Director General of ICBA, and Dr. Khalid Al-Khazraji, Vice-President of Zayed University, signed a memorandum of understanding to this effect in the presence of H.E. Mariam bint Mohammed Almheiri, UAE Minister of State for Food and Water Security, at ICBA's headquarters in Dubai.

H.E. Mariam bint Mohammed Almheiri, UAE Minister of State for Food and Water Security, said: “The food security landscape is evolving at an ever-faster rate, with the adoption and implementation of new forms of technology and advanced research increasingly defining the food ecosystem. This makes human capacity building a priority. Research and technology are the essential underpinning in what ICBA does through its pioneering work into crops with a high nutritional value that can not only tolerate, but thrive in harsh environments. This new partnership between the centre and Zayed University will utilise the expertise of both institutions to further human capacity development, with the ultimate aim being to create a sustainable food production ecosystem in the UAE - a key goal of the country's National Food Security Strategy.

Uniquely positioned to introduce much-needed climate-smart crops and technologies in different parts of the world to alleviate projected food and water crises, ICBA is proving instrumental in enhancing the UAE's food security agenda, as well as in meeting national and international efforts towards the United Nations' second Sustainable Development Goal – Zero Hunger by 2030. I wish the centre every success in the future.”

Building on many years of collaboration between ICBA and Zayed University, the agreement focuses on, among other things, capacity development and agricultural research in areas related to sustainable development.

Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi, Acting Director General of ICBA, said: “By combining scientific expertise available at ICBA and Zayed University, we will be able to do more to support sustainable development initiatives in the UAE. We also hope to bring more young people to the fore of sustainable development and encourage them to pursue different opportunities in such areas as agricultural research and agribusiness. Our partnership with Zayed University will form an integral part of our mission to build the capacities of a new generation of agricultural scientists and agripreneurs.”

Dr. Khalid Al-Khazraji, Vice-President of Zayed University, said: “Through the College of Natural and Health Sciences, the emphasis of Zayed University is to provide a high-quality learning experience, to nurture and develop effective health and environment professionals, and to create opportunities of lifelong learning experiences for our graduates. Our partnership solidates our mission to contribute towards the advancement of the UAE's national agenda through capacity building, research, services, and outreach activities that progress the development of the country's intellectual assets.”

Under the agreement, ICBA and Zayed University will exchange knowledge and technical expertise and organize capacity development events, including training programs, workshops, conferences, and outreach activities.

In particular ICBA will be engaged in halophyte-related projects being implemented by Zayed University and the development of agribusiness incubators to stimulate the creation of competitive agribusiness enterprises.

Moreover, the agreement envisages establishing a joint internship program for students and fresh graduates from Zayed University and disseminating information about ICBA's research and development programs through agriculture-focused clubs at Zayed University.

ICBA and Zayed University have a long-running partnership. Since 2016, about 30 students and fresh graduates from Zayed University have completed their internships at ICBA. In collaboration with Zayed University and other partners, ICBA has also organized a number of major events at Zayed University's campus in Dubai.

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### **About ICBA**

The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) is a unique applied agricultural research center in the world with a focus on marginal areas where an estimated 1.7 billion people live. It identifies, tests and introduces resource-efficient, climate-smart crops and technologies that are best suited to different regions affected by salinity, water scarcity and drought. Through its work, ICBA helps to improve food security and livelihoods for some of the poorest rural communities around the world.

[www.biosaline.org](http://www.biosaline.org)

### **About Zayed University**

Zayed University is a national and regional leader of educational innovation dedicated to the socio-economic advancement of the UAE. Encompassing two modern campuses in both Abu Dhabi and Dubai, enrollment on each campus exceeds 4000 national and international students. A model of educational excellence, Zayed University is committed to providing a first-class educational experience tailored to the individual needs of students, through the application of the latest academic pedagogies delivered by a distinguished faculty of internationally renowned scholars.

[www.zu.ac.ae](http://www.zu.ac.ae)

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