


Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)

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Establishment of a National Commission for Tunisia

05 June 2017

The Tunisian GIAHS National Commission was officially established during the GIAHS National Workshop on February 16, 2017. The newly established Commission brings together various ministries of Tunisia, including Local Affairs and Environment, Agriculture, Culture and Heritage, Tourism and Education, as well as the Tunisian Union of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade and Handicraft, the National Commission on Education, Culture and Science and Environmental and development associations. The establishment of the GIAHS National Commission marks the national commitment of Tunisia to develop the program across the country.

The main objective of this Commission is to develop policy, strategy and national activities of the GIAHS in Tunisia and to improve the relevance and impact of the programme in the country. The Term of references and its Action Plan has been developed for 2017-2019.

In addition, Ghar El Melh was presented as a potential GIAHS site during the workshop. Ghar El Melh site has already been recognized as a RAMSAR City referring to the Convention for the Conservation of Wetlands. The future GIAHS designation may bring further collaboration among FAO, WWF, UNDP and governmental bodies for the protection of Tunisian coastal area.

As second step, GIAHS was honoured during the occasion of the International Day of Biodiversity, 23rd of May in Bizerte in Tunisia with conferences and a field visit of a potential site.

Following various presentations on the GIAHS programme and the presentation of potential Ghar El Melh site, participants were given the opportunity to take a guided tour to the Ghar El Melh site's eco-museum in one of the city's three historic areas. The visit highlighted the cultural and historical heritage of the city and its importance for global biodiversity. Indeed, this RAMSAR city is a very important area for migratory birds and a large endemic and threatened wildlife.

A visit to the potato fields was then organized. Located on the seafront and surrounded by salt water, the lagoon cord system is the result of the development of arable land made of manure and sand, making it possible to farm in such a context. Without irrigation, the ingenuity of such a system allows farmers to produce many fruits and vegetables on a large surface moving in a boat from one plot to another.

You can view the photos of the visit on the following website:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/giahs/albums/72157684163810716>

The expansion of the GIAHS program seems to have a bright future in Tunisia

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