

Press Release

81st Cairo Climate Talks

Cairo, 20.04.2022 – On the occasion of the visit of Germany's State Secretary and Special Envoy for International Climate Action, Jennifer Morgan, to Egypt, Cairo Climate Talks co-hosted a Ramadan special event: a joint dinner (Iftar) and panel discussion – with the DAAD Regional Office Cairo's COSIMENA project.

In her opening remarks, Isabel Mering, Director of the DAAD Regional Office's Cairo, said that Cairo Climate Talks has evolved to become an invaluable platform of exchange between government officials, researchers, and civil society, to discuss the pressing issues in the field of climate change and sustainability. She highlighted the crucial role of DAAD in providing scientific findings to policymakers, civil society, and youth for climate action. In his welcome remarks, Philippe Maupai, Head of Science, German Embassy in Cairo, highlighted that COP27 will be an African COP, and its focus is accelerating implementation and climate action. He mentioned how essential to discuss the most prioritized sector for Africa: Agriculture and food security and how sustainable agriculture helps us adapt to climate change and builds resilience. **“Cooperation and partnerships between all state—and non-state actors are crucial for a successful COP27,”** he said.

“We need everyone at this moment of the climate crisis,” Jennifer Morgan said in her welcome remarks. She emphasized that partnering with all stakeholders **would lead to a successful COP27**. She explained how critical **it is** to ensure the pathway of 1.5 C is in sight as per the latest report of the IPCC. **She stressed that Germany and the European Union are committed to the transformation to limit the global temperature to under 1.5 C and that they were doubling their efforts to accelerate climate action.** She mentioned that Germany and Egypt's partnership **working together in the agriculture sector has been going on for more than over 40 years—working together in the agriculture sector.** **She highlighted that it is** critical to discuss sustainable agriculture to mitigate and adapt to the implications of climate change.

Shifting from conventional to sustainable can reduce emissions and preserve the ecosystem's biodiversity. “The challenge is organic agriculture is expensive, but organic farmers are serving the ecosystems in many regards without being paid, as sustainable farming practices mitigate climate change,” Helmy Abouleish, CEO of SEKEM, said. Dr. Shaimaa Hatab, Heliopolis University, explained that selling agriculture **carbon credit** will accelerate this shift. Helmy mentioned that buying carbon could eliminate half of total Egypt's carbon emissions, which amounts to around **150 Mn tons of CO₂**, while increasing the income of organic farmers. He added that the estimated income of sold-out carbon credits could amount to **2.5 Bn EUR**. Dr. Shaimaa said carbon sequestration out of sold carbon credits can turn organic farming to become cheaper and more affordable.

Education, capacity building, finance, and market entrance are barriers to systemic change. Local smallholder farmers represent 90% of the agriculture sector in Egypt. Myriam Fernando, Head of Project Agriculture at GIZ Egypt, explained that capacity building, practical farming schools, and adapting innovations of digital services are critical to accelerating change the mindsets of local smallholder farmers to lead the transition. She said cooperating with the private sector is the driving force in implementing climate action. Financing the crop in winter and summer is challenging. Hussein Abo Bakr, CEO of Mozare3, mentioned embedded finance as a solution to give local smallholder farmers seeds and bio-pesticides to boost the shift. He added using technology to provide support and technical assistance all the time through the mobile app is vital. Climate change represents an opportunity for the Egyptian local smallholder farmers through crop migration is moving to Egypt. He explained that Egypt could become a food hub for the world.

Organic farming represents 2 % of the Egyptian market. **The climate crisis represents an opportunity to accelerate the deployment of organic farming.** Helmy explained reaching 20-25 % of organic farming deployment could be the tipping point that will change the views on organic farming. It is predicted to happen in the next **10 to 15 years.**

All panelists agreed that sustainable agriculture is not a magic wand but holds great potential to address climate change. **They agreed that COP27 is an opportunity to bring the agriculture sector to the center of the negotiations since it is an African COP.** They concluded that **crop selection is essential to adapt to climate change and water scarcity, and a carbon credit** is a catalyst to boost the transformation to organic farming. They agreed that **digitalized education and future schooling** to ensure gender balance would build on existing social media platforms such as Tiktok and Facebook.

To end the fruitful discussion, Dr. Shaimaa said, **“Go organic to save the planet.”**