

Side Event of
2020 Conference on ‘Building Resilience for Food and Nutrition Security’
May 15–17 in Addis Ababa

**Marginal Land Status: Challenges and potential contribution to the
World Food and Income Security**

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- Speaker:** Dr. Shawki Barghouti, Consultant, World Bank
- Panelists:** Dr. Dyno Keating, Director General, AVRDC, World Vegetable Center
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ASARECA (to be confirmed)
- Moderator:** Ms Fiona Chandler, Director International Cooperation and Partnerships, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture

ABSTRACT

Agricultural systems are in a state of transition to meet evolving challenges of global population growth, the degradation and depletion of natural resources, and the impact of climate change. Over the past five decades, modern agriculture and water production technologies and management practices, which produced the Green Revolution, have generally performed well in meeting these challenges. However, the impact of the Green Revolution has been skewed towards the more favorable lands where either rainfall is adequate and/or water supplies for irrigation are assured.

With the growth in world population, estimated to reach 9.3 billion by 2050, increasing pressure is being placed on available food supplies. This is coupled with the increasing urbanization of populations, changes in lifestyles and food preferences, and globalization of markets and technologies for food production. And despite the impressive progress achieved on high potential areas, more than 800 million poor farmers continue to cultivate in marginal areas in many countries, and many eke out subsistence existence on marginal lands, with inadequate financial or capital resources required for the commercialization of agriculture, and creation of off farm employment opportunities.

The reason why marginal lands have not receive adequate attention could be traced to the complex challenges of producing effective packages of relevant policies and technologies suitable to meet their specific deficiencies. However, investment in marginal areas can be smart business. A White paper on the opportunities and challenges of agriculture in marginal environment has been commissioned by the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA).

The paper *“Marginal Land Status: Challenges and potential contribution to the World Food and Income Security”* provides comprehensive information on physical and socio-economic data along with main typologies of arable lands, marginal lands, fragile lands and degraded lands and the associated demographic and socio-economic data for major regions where these environment types exist. This is accompanied with clear analyses on the economics of using marginal land and water based on case studies where saline and marginal lands have been successfully used for sustaining agricultural production.

The paper makes the case for advancing research and technology development for marginal land as valuable assets for agriculture and the environment. Improving the environmental impacts of agriculture in marginal environments regions involves a complex array of factors and eventually would relate to reducing poverty and food insecurity, and improving livelihoods. This White paper would provide foresight information on different opportunities and potentials to use the marginal environments for playing a major role in water, food and income securities.