UN agriculture agency takes step to help rice farmers bolster production

30 March 2017 – Concerned about global rice production and eradicating hunger around the world, the United Nations agricultural agency today announced that it has teamed up with an international research institute to enhance rice farming and make it more adaptable to climate change.

"With over three billion people across the globe eating rice every day, rice is critical to global food security," said Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General of Climate and Natural Resources at the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

The UN agency announced that it will work with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) to support sustainable rice production in developing countries to improve food security and livelihoods, while also safeguarding natural resources.

According to FAO, the two organizations will work together to assist rice producing countries to "adopt improved and adapted rice varieties, enhance availability of certified seeds and also the transfer of knowledge," including to control pests and through farmer field schools.

FAO and IRRI will also work to help women farmers participate in "viable, safe and dignified" entrepreneurial opportunities in the rice value chain, the UN agency said.

Meanwhile, FAO has developed the Regional Rice Initiative for Asia and Pacific which promotes enhanced crop resilience while increasing efficiency and farmers' income. In Africa and in Latin America the UN agency is engaged in scientific and technical cooperation including the sharing of technologies and best practices to increase production and productivity, including reduction of post-harvest losses and improved grain quality.

For its part, IRRI is engaged in strengthening capacities of all rice sector actors through its capacity development activities, including IRRI Education and the Sustainable Rice Platform, a global alliance to promote resource efficiency and sustainability in trade flows, production and consumption operations, and supply chains in the global rice sector.