



Objective and outcomes

Number registered participant: 135

Number of online participants: 70

Countries participating: Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, France, Georgia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Sao Tome an Principe, Senegal Togo, Arab Emirate and USA.

Concept of the session

On 10 December 2020, the Food Policy Forum for Change organized its first event dedicated only to its members, particularly focusing on policy makers and policy advisors. The main goal of the event was to share policy makers' experiences on the role and instruments for country-level action to deliver food security and nutrition in a sustainable manner.

During the session - [Organic Policies Driving Market Development, Innovation and Organic Conversion](#) - we showcased good policy practices, illustrating the key role of policymakers as agents of change when it comes to the long-term and resilient transformation of food and agricultural systems. The focus of the event was on showcasing examples of existing approaches and legal frameworks that supported the development of the organic sector through organic action plans and other comprehensive policy frameworks. Discussing challenges and success factors was another key objective of this session. With this and the upcoming events we would like to foster an open and constructive discussion among the members of the [Food Policy Forum for Change](#) on what factors prevent organic farming and agroecology from being upscaled at political level in many countries.

Objectives of the session

- Provide deeper understanding of existing approaches and legal frameworks to operationalise organic principles at the policy level with a focus on organic action plans and other type of supportive policy frameworks.
- Inspire key decision makers on creating conducive policy frameworks for organic agriculture and sustainable and resilient food systems.
- Facilitate and connect policy makers in order to exchange and innovate on how to move towards true sustainability in agriculture.

Agenda

Time	Topic	Presenter
11:00-11:10	Welcome speech Introduction to the first policy meeting of the Food Policy Forum for Change	Karen Mapusua <i>Vice President</i> <i>IFOAM – Organics International</i>
11:10-11:20	Round of presentation of participants	Moderator
11:20-11:40	Determining the right mix of support measures: National/Regional action plans and other supporting policies for the organic sector	Cristina Andrei <i>Organic Policy and Guarantee senior coordinator</i> <i>IFOAM – Organics international</i>
11:40-12:00	Sikkim: the journey of the first organic state	Sundar Anbalagan <i>Chief Executive Officer, Sikkim Organic Farming Development Agency</i>
12:00-12:05	<i>Break</i>	
12:05-12:25	Organic policy as catalyst for market development, innovation and farm conversion: The case of Denmark	Paul Holmbeck <i>Policy advisor</i> <i>Holmbeck Eco - Consult</i>
12:25-12:45	Uganda: its first organic policy	Alex Lwakuba <i>Commissioner Crop Production</i> <i>Department within the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries</i>
12:45-13:05	Nepal: the transition of the Karnali province towards 100% organic	Dhan Bahadur Kathayat <i>Agri Extension Officer, Ministry for Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperative, Karnali Province</i>
13:05-13:30	Discussions and conclusions	Moderator

Key messages from the speakers

Several speakers, such as Paul Holmbeck, Cristina Andrei and Alex Lwakuba emphasized the **importance of building policy interventions that are bottom-up and able to involve a wider range of actors and stakeholders at the very beginning of each policy cycle, so that the policy processes become an exercise of co-creation** and deliver more meaningful and effective measures. As they both underlined, it is key to have well-thought-out strategic plans in order to ensure a well-balanced mix of measures supporting organic production (“push”) and consumption (“pull”).

Sundar Anbalagan told the story of Sikkim, the first 100% organic state. Their action plan, together with its linked policies, is unique in its boldness to convert an entire state to organic agriculture. The policy package combines **mandatory requirements, such as gradually banning chemical fertilizers and pesticides, with support and incentives for training and certification**. Currently the government of Sikkim is focusing on developing different value chains, for instance by increasing effort in processing and export for some commodities to other Indian states using the state brand “Sikkim Organic”. This is the first example in history where a state set such a vision and also achieved it.

Alex Lwakuba and **Dhan Bahadur Kathayat** highlighted the relevance of **political willingness, commitment and stakeholder involvement as driving forces for a successful policy formulation** through examples of newly adopted organic policies.

Alex Lwakuba presented the recently adopted National Organic Agricultural Policy (NOAP) in Uganda, which aims to **harness the country’s potential in organic agriculture by ensuring a regulated sub-sector that contributes to national development**. The formulation of the policy was initiated by the National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda (NOGAMU). Key elements for the national validation of the NOAP were the involvement of **strong partnerships at all levels** with the willingness to go through such a long-term effort. Challenges encountered during the policy formulation were mostly associated with low productivity, low capacity to meet certification costs and low investment in the organic sector.

Dhan Bahadur Kathayat gave us an insight into the **Organic Agriculture Act of Karnali Province** in Nepal, which is at its early implementation stage. The act intends to establish an organic agriculture directorate committee as well as an organic certification unit to develop organic standards. This is done with the objective to prohibit the use of in-organic fertilizers and pesticides and to transform the province into 100% organic. A **clear organic mission plan, acting as an interface among the three dimensions of organic agriculture** is an essential factor for success. He also highlighted the importance of **research and technology extension** in advancing the enforcement of the policy and their conclusive intention to set up a research institute as well as a university dedicated to organic agriculture.

Panel Discussion

1. Paraguay has a national strategy for organic production but there is no budget to implement it. The agricultural extension services do not have any area to take the issue. Any recommendation to turn this policy framework into an implementation one?

- To press for budget, we need to focus on capacity building in form of advocacy within the organic NGOs together with transformative alliance with governmental organization and consumer interest. There is no one to do that except the organic sector. (Paul Holmbeck)
- The importance to have clear action plans, can help to press for budget (Dhan Bahadur Kathayat)
- In the case of Uganda, the policy will be implemented within the extension agricultural extension delivery, by using the existing system. The private sector can also support the implementation and financing. Uganda did that during the planning of the policies. (Alex Lwakuba)
- Clarity of role, partnership of stakeholder and public. Strong political will behind the national action plan. Just a draft national action plan is not enough without a strong political will. It is a long-term effort and the willingness to go through challenges need to be there. (Cristina Andrei)

2. How do we include the stakeholders during policies planning phase? And how do we insure the participation of smallholder farmers in such process?

In the case of Denmark, the organic council represented small and larger farmers. During the policy development process, we spread out the information in different places around the countries in order to involve many producers and smallholders' farmers. Afterwards, it occurred that many of the farmers initiated their own organic life outside the council. This however was a start of a broader collaboration. (Paul Holmbeck)

During the process of formulation of the policy we carried out stakeholder's consultation at national and regional levels. We had some small farmer representative of that participated in the identification of the issues affecting organic agricultural in the countries. We got ideas and proposal from them. This consultation meetings were attended by a cross section of stakeholders. (Alex Lwakuba)

3. What is Intention of the Nepalese province to phase out the use of organic fertilizers? What was the reaction of the national government?

The federal government is in supporting the Karnali province. They are not putting pressure on providing chemical fertilizing subsidies. Instead, they already give directives to support organic subsidies for organic production. (Dhan Bahadur Kathayat)

4. What Sikkim did to support more the certification in the state?

The government was bearing all the cost of certification of the last 10 years. If the government are to play an important role here it will go long way. There is a very big political commitment on this. Now, Sikkim is also thinking to reduce the cost without affecting the farmers. (Sundar Anbalagan)

Conclusion remarks

The impetus to develop an organic action plan may either come from the government (top-down) or from the sector (bottom-up). The panelist presented very different scenarios, ranging from a political process fully driven by the government, like in Sikkim, to one fully initiated by the national organic agricultural movement in Uganda.

In addition to this, stakeholder involvement is a crucial condition to the development of good organic action plan or organic policy. However, stakeholder engagement, especially of small-scale farmers, remains a challenge in most policy processes. It might be necessary to allocate financial support for key civil society stakeholders and for capacity building throughout the policy cycle. Setting goals and consequently the priorities of a policy framework is always a crucial step. The speakers presented broader spectrum of objective at the foundation of the policies adopted. There is indeed a strong interest in building the OA export sector as to tap into the global market demand ensuring economic benefits for producers converting to organic (Sikkim, Uganda, Nepal). But we also see the raising local consumer awareness and the creation of strong local demand for organic products (Denmark, Uganda).

Not all supporting measures presented by Cristina are suitable in all contexts. The stage of development of the organic sector, how is organic agriculture regulated, the culture of government intervention in the agricultural sector and the logic behind the policy interventions all play an important role in deciding and prioritizing which measures should be adopted. In general, capacity building for farmers, input development and market development remains among those policy measures implemented in every context.

Despite the fact that the presentation did not address it specifically, it is important to ensure that monitoring and evaluation (M&E) issues are addressed appropriately from the outset and that resources are allocated for them. This remains one of the biggest challenges of proper policy implementation. I would be interesting to dedicate in the future event only on this topic which is complex and crucial.

[The food policy forum for change](#)

The initiative is a **policy forum where policy makers can have a peer-to-peer exchange, meetings and webinars through a community of practice on how they handle in their localities policies for agroecology and how to get rid of policies contradicting policies.** The policy forum will provide access to coaching by policy peers, regional and international champions, experts, case studies, tools and evidence.

More information about the Food Policy Forum for Change can be found here: <https://www.agroecology-pool.org/policy-forum/>

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