



Agroecology Across Three Continents: Showcasing Good Policy Practices

Website of the event: <https://orfc.org.uk/session/agroecology-across-three-continents-showcasing-good-policy-practices/>

Recording in English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jwzslwv8tw&t=258s>

French translation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hc2T8J-l2qA>

Concept of the Session

Governments are beginning to recognise the urgent need to transform our food systems, which has become even more pressing by the current health and economic crisis caused by the COVID pandemic. Currently, there are good, but rather scattered examples of governments around the world that have been developing conducive and innovative policies aimed at introducing and implementing agroecological and resilient principles.

In this session, three leading policymakers from three different countries (India, Denmark and Uganda) explained the good policy practices they are helping to put in place, which make possible the long-term transformation of the food and agricultural systems of their countries. Chaired by IFOAM – Organics International, the speakers explored the key entry points and drivers of transformational policies including the multifaceted crisis, climate change, health, and environmental pressures.

The speakers included Prof. Rajeshwar Singh Chandel, member of the Himachal Pradesh state's Government in India, about their initiative to turn the food systems of the entire state into a sustainable one, Mr. Alex Lwakuba of the Ugandan Government about their brand-new policy on organic and Mr. Paul Holmbeck, the director of Holmbeck Eco-Consult on how Denmark's consumers became the most pro-organic ones in the world.

Key Messages

- Agroecological and organic farming is on the rise in all three countries,
- In Himachal Pradesh, conversion to agroecology was successful within the framework of Palekar Natural Farming,
- In Uganda, after 16 years of development, a policy on organic farming was successfully launched in 2020,
- In Denmark, NGOs were an important driver of the country becoming the world leader regarding organic sales.

Case Studies

Prof. Rajeshwar Singh Chandel, Government of Himachal Pradesh in India

Prof. Chandel was presenting Himachal Pradesh's Sustainable Food System Platform for Natural Farming. Under this framework, already over 95'000 farmers have already changed to natural farming.

The state was using the framework of Subhash Palekar Natural Farming (SPNF), which consists of four pillars: a culture of fertility creating microorganisms (Jeevamrit), a soil cover with live mulch or crop residues (Aachhadan), soil aeration mixed with water vapours (Waapsa) and seed treatment by microculture (Beejamrit).

The success of the programme is remarkable: Already over 100'000 farmers have been trained, together farming more than 5000 ha of area.

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The big picture of the policy can be painted as follows: it addresses at the same time the production base, which it embeds in farmer-producer organisations and organised markets. An IT platform provides direct links of producers to consumers and entrepreneurs.

Alex Lwakuba, Uganda Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries

Mr. Lwakuba presented Uganda's policy for organic agriculture, which after 16 years of development has been launched in 2020. The policy is now disseminated on the regional level. The potential is huge, 210'000 farmers already having changed to organic. The policy has been initiated to harness the country's organic agriculture potential, with the vision of a sustainable and profitable organic subsector.

The government has invoked the policy amongst others because of the low productivity on small-scale farms and because of the low investments in organic input manufacturing. It comprises seven areas: enhancing research and technology development and dissemination, promoting organic agriculture education and training, enhancing organic production and technology support, improving post-harvest handling, addressing standards, market development and promotion as well as sustainable use of natural resources and conservation of indigenous knowledge.

Paul Holmbeck, Director of Holmbeck Eco-Consult in Denmark

Mr. Holmbeck, former director of Organic Denmark, has talked about organic policy and NGO mobilization as drivers for organic farming and market breakthroughs. These two elements have been essential for Denmark becoming the world leader regarding organic sales with 12% market share and with still high potential for development, as at least 50% of consumers buying organic food every week.

The growth and innovation on the farms has been driven by policy and NGOs, leading to a doubling of organic area since 2007 with the new goal being to double the organic area again by 2030.

The promotion of organic agriculture in Denmark consists of a varied policy mix, both on the farmer and the market side. On the farmer side, education, conversion payments as well as research, including "grassroots research" were important, while on the market side building NGO capacity for market development, collaboration with retail, production innovation and building consumer awareness were key.

Another important element was a broad platform for involvement, the Organic Food and Agriculture Council, which is deeply rooted in the organic movement. An example of NGO mobilization was political support for 60% organic in public kitchen, through financing and a national organic cuisine label, but also guarantee for supply, education in organic schools for companies and in the kitchens.

This webinar has been organised as part of the Food Policy Forum for Change initiative. For more information, please visit <https://www.agroecology-pool.org/policy-forum/> or email food.policy.forum@biovision.ch.

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