

June 4, 2021

Hon. Gotabaya Rajapaksa
President of Sri Lanka
Presidential Secretariat, Galle Face, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka

Your Excellency,

Allow me to convey, on behalf of IFOAM – Organics International, our warmest congratulations for your decision to transition Sri Lanka from chemical farming to natural farming.

We, as the global agent of change for organic farming, welcome this wise decision as a clear indication of Sri Lanka's intention to make its food systems fully sustainable and inclusive in order to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and the commitment of the Paris Agreement on climate change. Inclusivity means taking care of all stakeholders of these food systems, and first and foremost farmers, who produce the food Sri Lankan people eat every day and whose livelihoods are fully dependent on these food systems.

We have been advising governments on such transformational policies for decades and gathered much experience through this. Please allow us to share some of our thoughts on what steps are necessary, in our opinion, to bring your great initiative to a success.

While such a transition is very timely for any country, the period during which the whole sector can adapt to knowledge intensive techniques used e.g., in organic farming might take 2-3 years, based on our experience. We are closely following the progress made in Bhutan, the Indian state of Sikkim, the Nepali province of Karnali and Juancavelica in Peru, which are all following the route of converting to 100% organic. The pace of their development clearly tells us the need for a careful planning in order for none of the farming families to be left behind. After all, your decision implies nothing less than a major transition with a comprehensive, holistic approach!

We operate a [platform for policy makers](#) around the world to find a safe space to share and have an exchange on transformative policies. Your government officials are highly welcome to join [here](#).

This transition time will allow not only for farmers to build up critical microbial life of their soils, but also to put all the other necessary measures in place to establish the academic basis for natural farming and vocational training at all levels. This includes universities, extension services being capacitated to advise on sustainable management techniques, and funding for

research on locally adapted solutions specific to the main crops produced in the country, as well as subsidies available for farmers to convert to organic agriculture.

Such a stepwise approach would also allow sufficient time for the gradual reduction in the use of synthetic fertilizers and making available and subsidizing the purchase of knowledge, skills and inputs necessary to start chemical free, organic agriculture.

Once again, let us express our admiration towards your courageous decision. Together with experts in Sri Lanka and particularly the Lanka Organic Agriculture Movement, we remain at your disposal to provide you with our experience and further thoughts. We would also be delighted to have experts in your Government join a series of workshops we organize, wherein the Road Map will be discussed and world-known experts will express their support and further suggestions for the transition Sri Lanka is going through. We will send you the details on these in the coming days.

Yours sincerely,



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Copies

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All 46 members of Presidential Task Force for the creation of a Green Socio- economy with Sustainable Solutions for Climate Changes, (Through President Secretariat - Please send copy of this letter to all members)

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Mr M.B Rohana Pushpakumara
Secretary
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Thilak Kariyawasam
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Lanka Organic Agricultural Movement – LOAM