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

June 7th, 2021

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the 250 local governments who are members of the Asian Local Governments for Organic Agriculture (ALGOA) in 18 countries in Asia and Central Asia, I would like to convey my most sincere congratulations on your decision to transition from chemical farming to natural farming applying principles of sustainable organic agriculture.

ALGOA (www.organicgovts.com) was launched in 2015 and is an alliance of local governments in partnership with the private sector and civil society groups, with the purpose of making the transitions into organic agriculture. Almost all ALGOA members have adopted legislation banning pesticides and implementing progressive organic policies and action plans. Many have seen great successes in their organic policy implementations and due to the resilience of the organic farming systems and well-established local markets, have performed better than most in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Your Excellency,

I would like to share some amazing success stories when central and local governments make the decisions to adopt organic farming.

First is the incredible success story of Dumingag Municipality in Mindanao Island, Philippines which decided to adopt organic agriculture as its centrepiece and managed to bring down the rate of poverty from 96% to less than 30% in the space of 4 years and eliminated hunger.

Second, in the case of the Municipality of Kauswagan, Philippines, the “Arms to Farms” organic farming program turned rebels into exemplary organic farmers and brought much needed peace and prosperity to the war-torn and hunger-stricken municipality.

Third, in East Asia, pro-organic mayors worked with local organic farmers to provide organic vegetables and rice to school lunch programs. An initiative that was first started by New Taipei City, expanded to all schools in Taiwan to provide organic vegetables in school lunches and greatly increased organic vegetable production in the country. In Japan and South Korea, mayors linked up with organic rice farmers for the provision of organic rice to school lunches.

Fourth, an interesting program that was initiated by the South Korean government was the pilot “Pregnant and New Mothers’ Organic Food Scheme” as part of the COVID-19 recovery package. The project started from 1st January 2020 and targeted 80,000 pregnant women and new mothers. The idea was to provide access to organic food from inception to birth and through all the school years.



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The examples in the above are just but few of the success stories I have encountered when central and local governments undertake progressive organic policy implementations and specific action plans.

Your Excellency,

The decision of your esteemed government to transition into more natural, sustainable organic agriculture would have wide impacts on the lives of your people, the economy, on the environment and in the global organic sector.

The decision has galvanized the global organic movements into action to support in every way your country's goal "to transform Sri Lanka into a Green Socio-Economy with Sustainable Solutions for Climate Changes". This will also make Sri Lanka one step closer in achieving its goals of carbon neutrality and delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals.

As I close, in all humility, I would like to extend an invitation to Your Excellency to grace the **7th ALGOA Summit** to be held from Oct 12th to 16th, 2021, under the theme "Regenerating More Resilient, Sustainable Local Food Systems". This Summit will be held in conjunction with the Global Alliance of Organic Districts (GAOD) based in Italy.

Once again, ALGOA pledges its full support to Sri Lanka for transitioning into organic agriculture!

May I wish Your Excellency good health and happiness!

Yours Respectfully,

Mayor Lee Cha Young

President, ALGOA