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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 three hundred member organizations from 16 countries and territories in Asia, IFOAM Asia, deeply welcomes the recent and very opportune decision of your esteemed government to adopt more regenerative organic farming practices “to transform Sri Lanka into a Green Socio-Economy with Sustainable Solutions for Climate Changes”.

As of December 2020, more than 110 countries in the world have come up with national strategies of achieving carbon neutrality by the year 2050 and transformations into more sustainable and organic agriculture are now taken into consideration as one of the pathways to achieving this goal and to deliver on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

As an example, the “European Green Deal” was published in December 2019 as a roadmap to achieving zero carbon. It includes the “European Organic Action Plan” which aspires that 25% of agricultural land in Europe to be organic by the year 2030. It also calls for a reduction by 50% of both the use of chemical pesticides and the use of more hazardous pesticides by 2030.

There are any similar action plans in Asia where national governments are taking measures to achieve zero carbon. In Asia, the Japanese and South Korean governments have unveiled their strategies of decarbonization achievable within twenty years. The State of Sikkim became the first state in the world to become 100% organic and Bhutan is on its way to becoming fully organic.

IFOAM Asia as the leading regional organic organization in the continent has assisted many central and local governments in formulating organic policies and implementing action plans in the field. The recent launch of the Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) of the Philippines as part of its national organic regulations is such an example of working in long-term partnership with a central government; and through the Asian Local governments for Organic Agriculture (ALGOA), IFOAM Asia has worked closely with local governments to implement central government policies and to link up with the organic farmers and other stakeholders in the organic sector through capacity-building, technology assistance and building up of local markets.

In addition, IFOAM Asia has positioned **the role of our smallholder farmers** as vital in the transformation to regenerative organic agriculture as our smallholder farmers are the backbone of our society - as providers of the food we consume, as caretakers of our health and as the stewards of Mother Earth.

Our smallholder farmers are often the poorest of the poor, disadvantaged with little or no access to their own land. They also have limited access to public services such as education, health and other social benefits and uneven access to market opportunities. This becomes more severe within indigenous populations and other marginalized groups.



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Globally, 90% of farms worldwide are less than two hectares and more than 2 billion people depend on them for their livelihoods. There are some 500 million smallholder farms worldwide and these small farms produce about 80 per cent of the food consumed in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

This means that smallholder farmers can be part of the solution to global food security, helping to feed the world by improving productivity and crop diversity. But they cannot do it alone.

Your Excellency,

Nothing is important in this era of the COVID-19 than health and immunity of the people. The world has been united to protect the lives and health of humanity and the concept of “One Health” and “One Planet” has gained prominence. This can be seen in the increased sales of organic food in many countries, and it is local and organic food that has been the key in maintaining health, immunity, and nutritional balance of the people, and the sustainability of our world.

And that has been only possible due to our smallholder farmers. It is now time to recognize fully the role of the smallholder farmers

IFOAM Asia urges your esteemed government to recognize the multi-functional roles of our smallholder farmers and to implement policies and support measures to facilitate the transformations into regenerative organic agriculture.

As an experienced and leading organic organization in Asia, IFOAM Asia is aware of the challenges involved in the transitioning from chemical to a more sustainable and organic agriculture in a country level.

IFOAM Asia and its members, sub-organizations and sector groups pledge full support to the Presidential Taskforce “for the creation of a Green Socio-economy with Sustainable Solutions for Climate Change. We will always be on standby to provide assistance in regional and international networking, policy development capacity-building, technology supports, regional trainings, etc. to assist your esteemed government in achieving your goals in sustainability.

Respectfully Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zhou Zejiang".

Zhou Zejiang,
President, IFOAM Asia