SUMMARY OF THE FSN FORUM DISCUSSION

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE
FROM 24TH JUN. TO 14TH JULY. 2008

Proceeding available at
http://km.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/PROCEEDINGS_Organic_Agriculture_ClimateChange.doc

I. ISSUES RAISED

- Difficulties faced by farmers in India: deteriorating environment, unfertile land, erosion, deforestation, water's scarcity etc (P.Pande)

- Agriculture is both **affected** by **climate change** but also **contribute** to it. The continuing emission of greenhouse gasses is changing the world's climate and creating extreme weather phenomena (P. Pande).

- Organic agriculture is a good solution for small holder farmers, the question is how to implement, and duplicate or scale-up various organic farming practices (P. Pande).

II. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

- **Opportunities of organic agriculture:** organic farming could be one of the **coping mechanism** and **adaptations** to climate change (P. Pande, El F. A. Ismail):

  - Organic farming provides safe and secure food and better health status to the majority of the people, especially the pastoral people (A. R. Kakar).

  - Well-known disadvantages of conventional farming: e.g. heavy use of pesticide and fertilizers results in the adulteration of the food chain (A. R. Kakar); difficulties in the control of pesticides and chemical compounds in crop production (F. Mirzaei).

- **Challenges to organic agriculture:**

  - Organic farming practiced by rural farmers has very low yield (productivity) and relatively high cost per unit produced (El F. A. Ismail).

  - Indigenous knowledge, including the one on organic practices could hardly be transferable to other climatic conditions (El F. A. Ismail).

  - One of the main hindrances to organic farming development is absence of an organizing body to oversee the whole range of issues along the supply chain (El F. A. Ismail).

  - There is a pertinent lack of awareness of bio-foods on part of farmers for international markets which have high demand and consequently limits their trading opportunities to local markets (El F. A. Ismail).

- **Suggestions:**

  - Farmers hold the potentiality but need first the policy and recognition of the existing initiatives (Z. Hossain).

- Because of costly activities for installing an organic farming, at first, we should maintain some which are still doing agriculture with less usage of chemical compounds (F. Mirzaei).

- In some cases, the old and organic system is not only a production system but also the part of the heritage and culture of the area. So there is need to conserve this system, its crop varieties and animal breeds according to local people's needs and perspectives (Abdul Raziq Kakar)

III. RELATED CASE STUDIES /INITIATIVES

- **Sustainet (**Sustainable Agriculture Information Network**,** website http://www.sustainet.org/index-en.html**):** It is composed of a German network and three other networks in the pilot regions of India, Kenya / Tanzania and Peru / Bolivia. It aims to establish networks between institutions involved at local, regional and International levels. In India, Sustainet works on issues based on organic farming, creating linkages between farmer and markets, advocating public private partnerships and tackling issues of dry land agriculture by watershed approach keeping in mind the protection of biodiversity (P. Pande).

- **Sudan** (El F. A. Ismail):

  - Recent emphasis organic farming was made by the Arab Authority for Agricultural Development (2001) emphasizes the production of food commodities free of agricultural pollutants, mainly for export

  - Almost all food crops produced in traditional and mechanized rain-fed agriculture can be considered as pollutants free i.e. no fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides or any other chemicals are added

  - Sudan has a good opportunity in trading bio-foods (organic products), hence realizing additional export earnings and enhancing farmers' incomes, food security and rural development.

- **The case of Suleiman mountainous region, Balochsitan, Pakistan** (A. R. Kakar): this is an area famous for organic agriculture and livestock production in pastoral system, since centuries:

  - The majority of the pastoral people (96%) depend upon the organic agriculture and livestock production. All the flood irrigated agriculture is practice without using chemical fertilizer and pesticide.

  - Flood water is used for irrigation. This is a rich source of organic manure composed of soft mud, animal dung and foliage

  - Only local varieties of crops are used as they are disease, insect and drought resistant

  - Food preference: the pastoral people prefer to use their own products mainly based on organic agriculture, rather than the products available in the market.

  - The majority of the farmers follow their indigenous star calendar for the crop cultivation and animal breeding program. About 83% of the pastoral people believed that indigenous knowledge is more reliable, easy applicable and cheaper than western style of medication.

- **Bangladesh, the case of the Farmers' Research Endogenous Institute:**

- Around 20 organisations so far have organic farming projects (Z. Hossain).

- To promote organic farming, the Farmers' Research Endogenous Institute tried to invent some unique methods/style: no project culture, no shiny infrastructure, no compromise, open for all (no groups), practicing with School going children in play mode, news board, continuous discussion in public places like teal stalls, market places ....which have resulted in positive outcomes (Z. Hossain).

IV. REFERENCES

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