

**FORUM:** Environment Sub-Commission 2

**QUESTION OF:** International agreement on organic labeling standards

**SUBMITTED BY:** Chad

**CO-SUBMITTERS:** Armenia, Ethiopia, Latvia, Bosnia, Argentina, Jordan, Niger, UNDP, Belgium, Eswatini, UNIDO, UNEP, South Africa, Syria, Iraq, China, United Arab Emirates, NEPAC, Somalia

THE ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION,,

*Acknowledging* the international agreement on organic labeling standards,

*Bearing in mind* the impact of labels as well as their importance in consumer choices,

*Concerned* that only 64 nations have laws regarding Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) standards,

*Distressed* at the fact that many manufacturers in Less Developed Countries (LDCs) take advantage of lower regulations on organic labeling,

*Recognizes* that multiple Member States do not have any set organic or GMO regulations in place due to a variety of different reasons,

*Informed* that organic produce and foodstuffs cost more than their unnatural counterparts,

*Understands* nation-states difficulty concerning trade and labeling confusion between different regulations,

1. Urges all nations to publish a bi-annual report to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) on their respective national organic labeling standards that will:
  - a) change definitions of Argo-Environmental terminology, in accordance with technological and bio-engineering advancements in agriculture
  - b) specify exceptions to the FAO
  - c) perform and publish these reports by representatives of the FAO in Member States
  - d) encourage non-Member States without representatives of the FAO that may choose to request representatives from other Member States to cooperate to create a report for those states and territories
  - e) publish these reports online to the FAO website and be made easily accessible to the public domain to assist in increasing awareness;
2. Encourages nations to engage in and accept bi-lateral organic equivalency agreements on organic labeling standards to achieve a more sustainable approach to all industries' processes and to achieve consistent outcomes and principles from trade of organic produce, while any disagreements on these set standards shall be adjusted for by the FAO, with further action to be necessitated by the UN Security Council (UNSC) as required;
3. Suggests the creation of a UN body under the FAO called the United Nations Organic Labeling Operation (UNOLO), which shall serve purposes such as but not limited to:
  - a) appointing individuals or organizations to ensure the accurate collection of data from individual manufacturers to be passed on to the UNOLO which shall then assign a label to the product or produce
  - b) ensuring global co-operation in terms of international labeling standards of individual national or regional bloc ones with potential solutions being dual-labeling
  - c) recommending individual cases or manufacturers for closer scrutiny directly to the FAO on the recommendation of the UNOLO
  - d) raising awareness among consumers globally about the differences, pros and cons of producing and consuming goods of different organic labels;

4. Calls upon Member States to heighten awareness about the implications of the consumption of organic products, as well as their benefits and drawbacks in comparison with GMOs through means such as but not limited to:
  - a) digital media
  - b) integration into academia and school syllabi;
  
5. Proposes that all Member States ease the certification process for small-scale farmers and standardize the difference of costs to obtain organic certification as well as the specified regulations used in certifying agencies in different regions by:
  - a) acknowledging that individual certification could be unaffordable and administratively too complex to manage
  - b) adopting group organic certification where groups of farmers implement an Internal Control System (ICS) which is part of a documented quality assurance system that carries out periodic inspection of certification
  - c) subsidizing group certification which shall incorporate cost-sharing programs which may involve reimbursement to allow greater accessibility to organic certification
  - d) introducing training for farmers in small-scale agricultural farms, after permitting it with a contract, to teach them techniques of organic farming that can assist farmers in keeping with and acquiring organic standards;
  
6. Proposes to effectively raise awareness in LDCs and/or small-scale producer nations of organic produce and the various standards of organic labeling worldwide through collaborative efforts between relevant bodies (such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and FAO) by:
  - a) making information about organic produce readily available through
    - i. Codex Alimentarius Commission, a Food Standards Program that is the collaborative effort of the WHO and FAO
    - ii. Fair Labor Association (FLA)
    - iii. Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)
    - iv. technical and social trading
  - b) further updating the FAO website on organic labeling to include a consolidated account of all worldwide organic standards in one place, translatable to all languages with a focus on those not currently present
  - c) partnering with the International Trade Center to organize seminars and conferences to
    - i. disseminate information about organic products and export of the same
    - ii. provide economic and technical information on organic trading;
  
7. Strongly advises the international organic labeling community to take into consideration means of production of products in terms of carbon emissions, ozone deterioration and animal testing and subsequently increase of the variety of labels on products for customer/consumer convenience with labels such as but not limited to:
  - a) "ecologically friendly"
  - b) "low carbon footprint"
  - c) "cruelty-free";
  
8. Stresses the importance of monetary investment in research into organic agricultural practices by organizations such as the International Society of Organic Agriculture Research (ISO FAR) to develop:
  - a) agricultural techniques that permit produce to be grown organically in difficult environmental conditions, such as but not limited to
    - i. cold regions
    - ii. excessively dry regions
    - iii. farming regions that are frequented by pests

- b) techniques that make efficient use of space;
9. Expects all national and international standards to acknowledge/continue to acknowledge that a finished organic product involves organic processes at all the following levels:
- a) arable farming practices
    - i. ground treatment
    - ii. irrigation
    - iii. prevention of damage to organic produce
    - iv. seed and plant propagation
    - v. cleaning organic produce
  - b) greenhouse management
  - c) pastoral farming practices
  - d) manufacturing and packaging of products to obtain the finished organic product;
10. Recommends the cooperation between organic labeling and ethical labeling to produce a bi-label including labels such as:
- a) made with the labor of children or slaves,
  - b) made with ethical labor standards.