

Report on the farmers' track of the 4th African Organic conference

6th November 2018

Saly, Senegal

The farmers' track of the 4th African Organic Conference (AOC) was held on 6th November 2018' in Saly, Senegal, as one of the side events of the conference. The conference was organized by the African Organic Network (AFRONET) with the aim of promoting "Ecological and Organic Agriculture (EOA) Strategies for Viable Continental and National Development in the Context of the African Union Agenda 2063".

The farmers' track took under the auspices of the Inter-continental Network of Organic Farmers' Organisations (INOFO) which played a key role in the pre-conference preparatory work of mobilizing and short listing of presenters, sourcing sponsorships for selected farmers, and organizing and directing proceedings of the track during the conference. This is the second, INOFO organized, farmers' track to be held as a side event at the African Organic Conference.

The objective of the track as one of the pillars of the conference, is but not confined to 'facilitating the sharing of knowledge, information, experiences and skills among all stakeholders in the organic sector'. In fulfilling the above objective, presentations were sourced from East, Central, Southern and West Africa. North Africa did not participate in this forum. However, with Morocco hosting the 2021 African Organic Conference, involvement from the North is expected to dominate the next track. In addition, a paper from Brazil was shared during the event.

Presentations

Farmers shared their experiences through presentations made under the following topics;

- a. Seeds.
- b. Soil fertility management.
- c. Marketing of organic /ecological products.

Summarized below are names of farmers with their papers;

- (i). Munshimbwe Chitalu- **Creating Soil Conditions for Organic Production of Avocados in Zambia.**
- (ii). Patrick Chiwawa- **Keeping Soil Healthy for Organic Farming - Experiences of Tigwirizane Women's Club of Petauke District, Zambia.**
- (iii). Nana Kwaw Adams - **Soil Health and Soil Fertility, Soil Life and Plant Health** - ABOFAP - Ghana.
- (iv). Abdoulaye Faye - **Technique de Compostage** - Senegal.
- (v). Soro Dognime- **Experience Du Reseau Yebe. Utilization des Techniques Pour La Recuperation des Terres Degradees Dansle Nord de la Cote d'Ivoire.**
- (vi). Adeyinka Lateef - **Conservation of Local Seeds.** KAZ Organic Foods & Vegetables – Oyo State, Nigeria.
- (vii). Peris Njeri Kamau – **Seed Banking** – Seed Savers Network – Kenya.
- (viii). Olusola Sowemino - **Marketing of Organic Products in Nigeria: Challenges and Lessons Learnt** - Ope Farm, Nigeria.

(ix). Shonoila Saidat - **Fork to Farm; Understanding Domestic Organic Food Marketing in Nigeria** - Green Skills Centre, Nigeria.

(x). Thales B. Mendonca - **Agroforestry Systems** - Brazil.

(xi). Grace Chitsaka - **Economically Empowering Marginalized Women through Beekeeping Projects in Bandula**- Mozambique.

Participation

The event was attended by more than forty (40) conference participants including the IFOAM Executive Director, Louise Luttikholt, INOFO President, Shamika Mone with seven (7) council members.

Thales Mendonca, Convenor from Brazil, made a special presentation on Agroforestry Systems. A total of more than fifteen countries were represented in the audience.

Support to Farmers and Convenors

Andreas Hermes Akademie (AHA) supported eight (6) farmers to the conference with air travel. In addition, they facilitated travel of nine convenors, (6 African, 1 Asian, 1 Latin America and 1 from Europe), while Naturland sponsored a farmer from Uganda.

Evaluation and Conclusion

Going by comments made by the IFOAM Executive Director and members of the audience, this event was well organized and better appreciated by participants. In this regard, the farmers' track fitted well in the mission of INOFO which is **'To Unite Organic Farmers and Support Their Voices at all Levels of Food Systems Development Towards Producing Healthy Nutritious Food and Preserve Mother Earth'**. The INOFO Team under President Shamika coordinated well, with Julie acting as anchor, Daniel as time keeper while both Julie and Janet recorded the proceedings. Famara as host though busy, ensured all logistics were in place at the right time.

Thales printed INOFO t-shirts for the team, as a surprise gift. These show cased INOFO as an organised team with improved visibility at the conference.

Shamika brought hand tools which were given to the presenters during the closing ceremony of the conference. These were donated by Farmer Dada Wadekar from Maharashtra State in India as a gesture of solidarity to his fellow farmers.

In conclusion, we would like to thank AFRONET for the opportunity, AHA, Naturland and other sponsors for their support to both farmers' and convenors' travel and lodging.

The INOFO council is indebted to Dada Wadekar for the tools and all the farmers for their wonderful effort and sharing of such educative experiences.

We are grateful to the IFOAM Executive Director, Louise Luttikholt, for both her support to INOFO & participation in the farmers track. Thanks to individual Convenors for their dedication and input before and during the conference. We acknowledge a special debt of gratitude to all members of the audience as per attached list.

Charles k. Mubanga, Continental Secretary - Africa

Inter-continental Network of Organic Farmers Organisations, (INOFO)

LIST OF PATICIPANTS AT THE FARMERS' TRACK

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