

INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCY IN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE (ITF)

www.unctad.org/trade_env/ITF-organic



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANISATION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS



UNCTAD
UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND
DEVELOPMENT



Private Standards and Government Regulations

- IFOAM Organic Guarantee System
 - Accreditation, 1994
- Government Regulations
 - EU 2092/91 enforcement, 1996
- Trade expansion
- More government regulations
 - (60 and more to come)

Problems and Challenges

- Import discrimination
- Multiple certification
- Multiple accreditation
- Daily difficulties in trade, procedural requirements
- Resource demands on public & private sectors to deal
- Too many resources into international trade topics
- Question of roles between the private and public sectors
- Few equivalency agreements (only a handful of unilateral ones)
- Limitations of currently available mechanisms for equivalence

IFOAM Harmonization Conference, 2001

- FAO and UNCTAD as co-sponsors
- Brought intergovernmental agencies, governments, and private sector together on this topic.
 - Although predominately private sector participated
- Conclusions:
 - Continue private-public partnership to search for a path towards harmonization, look for some models
 - Form International Task Force (ITF)
 - Develop some discussion papers and meet to discuss
 - IFOAM, FAO, UNCTAD as ITF Steering Committee

First Phase: Organizing, Identifying, Analyzing

Four discussion papers

- Overview of government regulations
- Current mechanisms that enable organic trade
- Impacts of harmonization on producers, traders, consumers.
- Models and mechanisms for harmonization

Meetings

- February, 2003 Nuremberg
 - Organizing ITF, work plan
- October, 2003 Geneva
 - Reviewing Papers and identifying next steps

Phase Two: Solutions

- Two Discussion Papers
 - Proposed Model for Long Term Solution
 - New structure - private/public
 - Establish and implement mechanism to rationalize the difference systems
 - Modeled on International Seed Testing Association (ISTA)
 - Short Term Actions to Harmonize

Meetings

- November, 2004 Geneva
 - 41 Participants, 60% national governments
- 28 February, 2005 Nuremberg

Participants

- Intra-government organizations
 - WTO, OECD, UNECE, UNEP, FAO, UNCTAD
- Governments
 - Brazil, Costa Rica, US, Canada, EC, Denmark, Netherlands, Greece, Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, India, Thailand, Indonesia, Phillipines, China Australia
- Privates
 - Certifiers: Argentina, Japan, India
 - Traders: US, Uganda
 - NGOs: IFOAM, IOAS

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Funded by SIDA