



## **THIRD MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCY IN ORGANIC AGRICULTURE**

**FAO, Rome, Italy (Mexico Room, D211)**

**17-19 November 2004**

The International Task Force on Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture was launched on 19 February 2003 in Nuremberg, Germany. This is a joint initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Conference on Trade And Development (UNCTAD) and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), with the generously supported by the government of Sweden. This allows the preparation of high quality assessments and studies and ensuring fair participation of experts (especially from developing countries) to its meetings.

The Task Force is an open-ended platform for dialogue between public and private institutions involved in trade and regulatory activities in the organic agriculture sector. The objective is to facilitate international trade of organic products. It is a practical response to the difficulties faced by organic producers and exporters due to the hundreds of different organic regulations, standards and labels worldwide, and a follow-up to the recommendations of the Conference on International Harmonization and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture held by the three organizations in February 2002.

At its first meeting, the Task Force formulated its terms of reference and work plan. The second meeting was held at UNCTAD, Geneva, Switzerland, 20-21 October 2003 and review the existing standards, regulations and conformity assessment systems.

The third meeting in FAO, Rome, 17-19 November 2004, seeks to move towards formulating concrete proposals on mechanisms for achieving harmonization and equivalence in the organic sector and means of facilitating access to organic markets, particularly by developing countries and smallholders. Recommendations will be brought to the consideration of Governments, Codex Alimentarius Commission, and relevant bodies of FAO, UNCTAD and IFOAM. Two discussion papers have been prepared for this meeting. One of these proposes a potential long-term solution to the problem of harmonizing organic standards, regulations, and conformity assessment systems. The other suggests steps that could be taken in the short term to increase harmonization.

For more information, please visit: [www.unctad.org/trade\\_env/itf-organic](http://www.unctad.org/trade_env/itf-organic)



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### **Provisional Agenda**

#### **17 November 2004**

- 09:00-11:00 Orientation and review (for new members)
- Overview of current status of conformity assessment systems
  - History and work progress of the International Task Force (ITF)
  - Questions and answers
- 11.00-13.00 Opening and introduction of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ITF meeting
- Presentation of the paper "Impact of Organic Systems on Production and Trade of Organic Products"
  - Presentation of the paper "Harmonization and Trade - Key Definitions and Potential Role of WTO"
- 13.00-14.30 *Lunch*
- 14.30-17.30 Presentation and discussion of the draft paper "Strategy on Solutions for Harmonizing International Regulation of Organic Agriculture" (or long-term vision)

#### **18 November 2004**

- 09.00-13.00 Consensus and conclusions on long-term vision
- 13.00-14.30 *Lunch*
- 14.30-17.30 Presentation and discussion of the draft paper "Short-Term Actions Towards Harmonizing International Regulation of Organic Agriculture" (or short-term action)
- 20.00 *Dinner (hosted by the organizers)*

#### **19 November 2004**

- 9.00-11.00 Conclusions and follow-up
- Wrap-up of long-term and short-term papers
  - Discussions on outline of possible next studies
  - Organizing feedback from participant's home countries for the next meeting

#### **11.00-12:00 GENERAL BRIEFING SESSION TO FAO**

#### **20 November 2004**

- 09:00-17:00 *Excursion to an organic farms in Rome's neighbourhood*