The 2017 General Assembly of IFOAM - Organics International passed a recommendation to ask all candidates running for the World Board the same questions regarding our strategy, policies and positions, for the voting members to know more about the people they vote for.

Henry Chang, USA

1. The strategic plan of IFOAM - Organics International 2025 refers to 3 key levers to promote the principles of organic agriculture: supply, demand and policy. On which lever would you like to put the emphasis in your work for IFOAM – Organics International, and why?

The lever I would like to emphasize in my work with IFOAM is supply. Through education, organic culture can be planted in every corner of the world. It must be deeply rooted in everyone’s mind, and not limited to intellectual elites, scholars and experts. Increasing supply will allow the organic lifestyle to become mainstream and more available to people of all socioeconomic levels.

2. Please share your thoughts on which actors in our movement could contribute to which parts to make our common vision come true.

Christof Bernau is a professor at the Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems at the University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC). I have worked with Professor Bernau for many years to promote organic education internationally and to participate in the work of IFOAM. I will invite him, other professors of UCSC, and more organic agriculture experts to come together and collaborate regarding sustainable organic farming systems in line with the transition to Organic 3.0.

3. What do you propose in order to get a real transformation in agriculture, in general, and more specifically, in your role as a WB member?

In the world, there are still so many remote areas that remain pristine and unpolluted. We should educate farmers in these areas on the organic culture and educate the public on the hazards of consuming chemical food. Specifically, in my role as a WB member, I would like to take on projects that handle grassroots, organic farming.

4. Reflecting on the development of new GM breeding techniques such as Crispr CAS: where do you see challenges and issues for the organic sector?

GM techniques are essential for current food systems to thrive. Challenges to the organic sector include greater supply and more favorable prices of conventional versus organic food. However, through education and lab data analysis, consumers will not eat GM foods. Without a market, GM foods will naturally disappear. The general public tends to scrutinize anything they put into their bodies, it is time for conventional foods to be put under that same scrutiny.
5. The SDGs of the United Nations are aiming at sustainability in all areas of life and development. How do you make the SDGs a reality in your own life?

The UN’s SDGs include 17 goals and 169 targets. It is a very large, necessary, and urgent project, which cannot be completed by individual or small teams. My hope is that IFOAM will continue to collaborate with relevant UN agencies. I firmly believe education is the first step for change and advancement. Goals 2, 4 and 12 resonate in my own life. I have an organic fruit and vegetable garden in my backyard. I have a longtime relationship with UCSC and have awarded scholarships for many students over the years. I make a conscious effort to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

6. The work of IFOAM-Organics International is partly financed by membership fee, and for a greater deal by donors and foundations. What experience and skills can you bring to support acquiring financial resources?

I have the ability to fundraise and donate. Before the pandemic, I was invited to give speeches in various countries each year to promote the organic culture and organic lifestyle. My speeches attracted audiences of over 10,000 people.