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.

Prof. Krishnamurthi, India

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?

‘SUPPLY’ lever is my natural choice, considering my scientific strengths aligned to impact the vision of IFOAM. ‘Organic on Every Plate’ requires intense attention from the supply-side perspective, particularly ‘making conversion to organic’ an inevitable option.

Supply-side interventions require scientific validations that establishes ‘Organic systems’ are modern and far fetching than the ‘Green revolution’ motivated chemical/GMO interventions, otherwise believed scientific.

CEORA – Centre of Excellence in Organicology & Regenesis Agroecology is my Organic R&D initiative in India that compels actors to widely accept Organic Systems through evidence-based scientific organic systems. CEORA will be a direct capacity contributor to IFOAM’s levers.

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

My thoughts on roadmap to vision is undoubtedly to create a systemic web of actors for their compelling interdependencies. Across the world, legislations will adapt this compelling role of ‘organic systems’ through IFOAM framework, only if we demonstrate the systemic impact of all the actors. Organic system interventions for Climate change, Nutrition Equity, Bio-diversity and Conservation cannot be an ally to legislative participation, rather a highly influential decisive component. I strongly recommend ‘Organic Systems Metrics’ as a convertible shall compulsively motivate global legislations adapt IFOAM framework. For instance, metrics for gene pollution, nutrition inequity, Soil Life Index, etc. shall pivot policy-makers.

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?

I look at transformation in Agriculture from three aspects as I see it translate through my role as a WB member.

1. Cropping systems, technology and input modulations are still bound to food security perspective (mostly), while the challenges have moved far away in to Nutrition Inequity.
2. Organic Systems for Agriculture require scientifically definitive and validated specifications that marginalizes conventional agriculture practices.
3. Agriculture as a habitual intervention for common man in order for agriculture to cater beyond food, addressing Fuel, Fibre and more, in a regenerative ecology.

I propose intensifying ‘scientific infrastructure/network’ for broad-spectrum organic systems beyond food.
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?

Defending Genetically Modified and positioning organic sector is relatively easy, when gene editing tools are used in an epigenetic development framework within organic sector. Wisdom of technology-use is critical and the technology shall be targeted for Darwinizing instead of Undarwinizing. For instance, instead of genetically manipulating for good fat (say, MCFA/MCT) in an existing crop, locate same genetic instant in an alternate crop. Fortunately, Organic systems operate in diversity space, GMs self-limit itself. Genetic pollution as a metrics can defy the instant gratification from GM drive. Role of organic sector determinate to establishing the temporary and destructive role of GMs.

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?

Professionally, for the last three decades, I have institutionalized two foundations (Krishnamurthi International Agriculture Development Foundation & Indian Society for Certification of Organic Products) witnessing hundreds of advocacy lectures, books & publications, consulting, sustainability audits, R&D in SDG and empowerment missions. We adopt social governance as a model to accomplish SDGs through our foundation, for instance, empowering rural household through ARISE (Agricultural rural Income Sustainability & Employment) camp. I take pride as a soil scientist that my academic, scientific and social accomplishments revolve around SDG. My QOL preferences also targets sustainable models and products in a consumerism dominated Indian population.

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 clearly foresee the significance of IFOAM’s larger vision cannot be limited by Financial resources. My experience in sustaining my own Foundation for the last 30 years, has evidenced sustenance challenges overcoming them successfully with innovative models. Beyond my network of willful donors, I see the ‘Honest Food’ a strategic choice to spin financial models. I can take my experience from ‘OCAF – organic Consumer Awareness Forum’ taking organic system a trendy QOL. My foundation also can take up fund raising events in India/Asia to target ‘Focus Funds’ like SDG or Organic Innovation. Innovative Funding Models, access to CSR funds and Crowd models from interest groups may be strategically evaluated taking my past experiences.