

# Organic Agriculture and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)



## The MDGs

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieving universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

## Organic Agriculture and the MDGs

- 850 million people suffer from hunger
- More than 1 billion people live on less than one dollar a day.
- Sub-Saharan Africa is facing largest and fastest growing food insecurity worldwide

UN Millennium Project, 2005

Organic agriculture can play an important role in helping to achieve the MDGs...

## Definition of Organic Agriculture

Organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved.

# The Principles of Organic Agriculture

## The Principle of Health



## The Principle of Ecology



## The Principle of Fairness



## The Principle of Care



# 1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger (1)

- Organic Agriculture increases farmer's yields over the long term
- Higher yields + premium market prices = higher incomes
- Small holder farmers can increase their income after the conversion period from 30-200%

-Onduru 2002, Parrot 2006



Organic farm in Malaysia

# 1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger (2)



## 1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger (3)

FAO international conference on Organic Agriculture and Food Security, 2007: Organic agriculture can contribute to food security

Badgley et al, 2007: Organic agriculture has the potential to contribute to the global food supply

IAASTD Report, 2008: New agriculture paradigm, focused on the small-scale farmers and agro-ecological farming

UNEP-UNCTAD Study, 2008: Organic farming offers Africa the best chance of breaking the cycle of poverty and malnutrition

## 2. Achieve Universal Primary Education



Organic knowledge sharing in Indonesia

- Organic farmers get higher incomes.
- Higher incomes allow parents to send children to school, especially girls
- Organic agriculture is an important form of education in itself.

### 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

- Empowerment of women through Organic Agriculture .
- Organic Agriculture exposes women to more educational and skills -development opportunities



The Network of Women in Organic Agriculture and Fair Trade in Senegal

## 4. Reduce Child Mortality



Girl holding beans in Tigray, Ethiopia

Organic Agriculture improves child's health through:

- More diversified diets
- Avoidance of the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers

## 5. Improve Maternal Health

Foods derived from Organic Agriculture are diverse and have:

- higher iron, magnesium, and vitamin C contents
- higher quality proteins in cereals
- greater contents of non-saturated grasses

-Aubert and Leclecc 2003



Organic foods in Malaysia

## 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Other Diseases



- Organic Agriculture enhances the reliability of HIV/AIDS treatments.
- Improved nutrition and diets have potential to prolong the asymptomatic phase of HIV infection

WHO 2003

## 7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability (1)

Organic Agriculture contributes to:

- Biodiversity and genetic diversity
- Combating desertification
- Mitigating Climate Change
- Improving natural resource management



Beautiful West Java, Indonesia

## 7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability (2)



Integrated Organic Duck, Rice, and Carp Farming in Japan

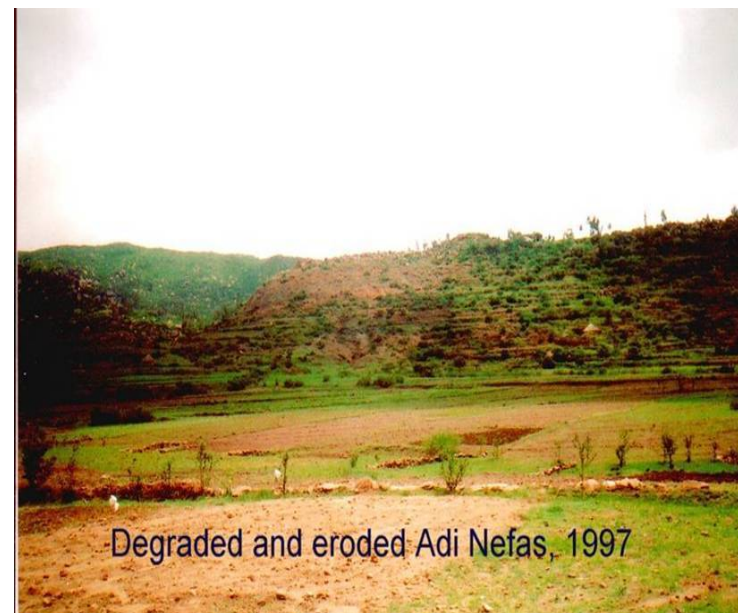
Organic Agriculture practices support biodiversity and genetic diversity through:

- Increasing the number and variety of wild species found on farms
- Maintaining healthy soils and soil fauna, such as earthworms
- Encouraging the conservation and expansion of traditional, locally bred varieties

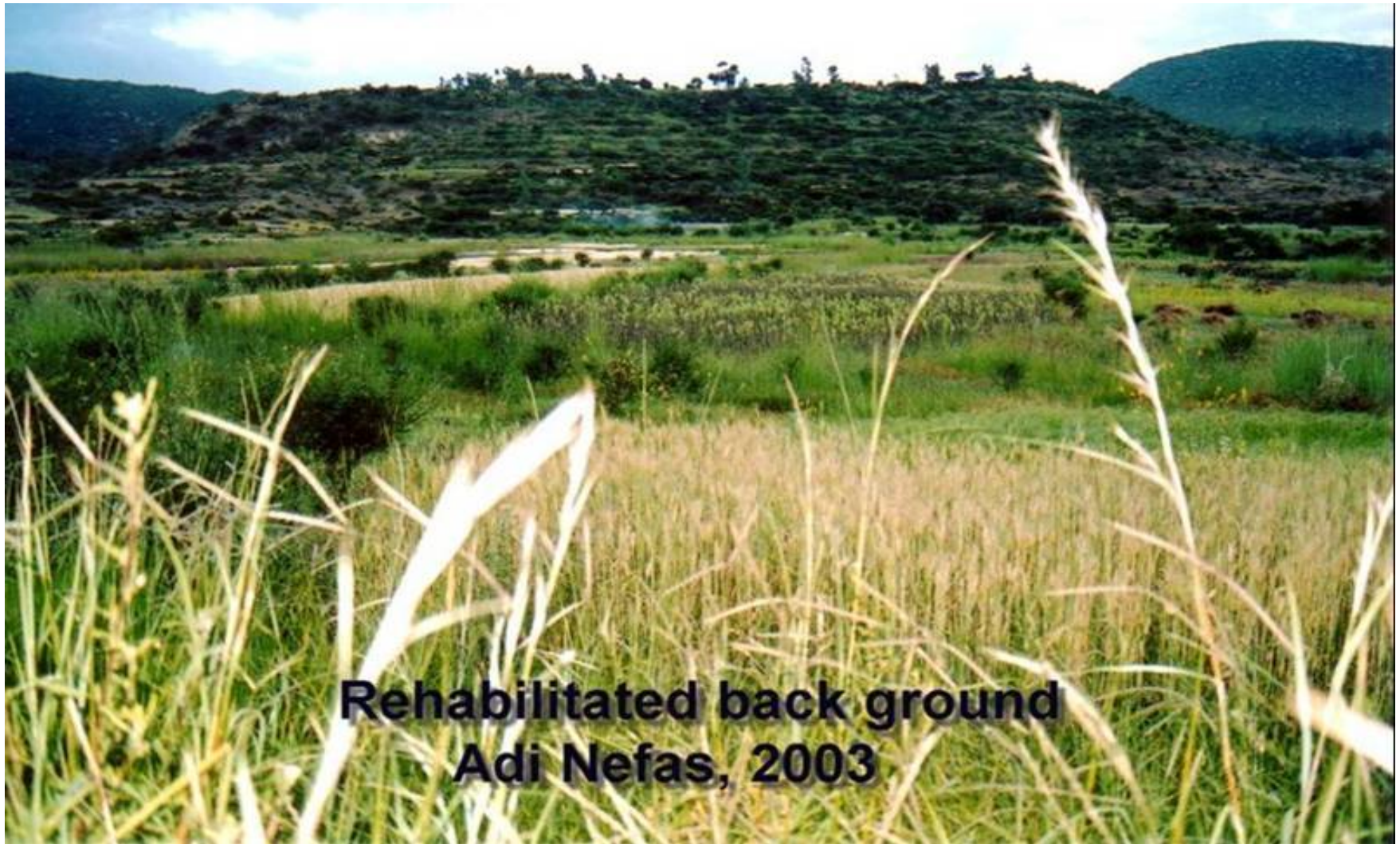
## 7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability (3)

Organic Agriculture prevents soil erosion and land degradation through:

- Improving soil fertility
- Preventing wind and water erosion
- Improving water infiltration and retention capacity



## 7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability (4)



## 7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability (4)

Organic Agriculture mitigates climate change through:

- Reducing greenhouse gases,
- Storing carbon in soil and plant biomass by building organic matter,
- Minimizing energy consumption

Organic Agriculture also helps farmers to adapt to climate change because it:

- Prevents nutrient and water loss
- Preserves seed and crop diversity,
- Minimizes risk as a result of stable agro-ecosystems and yields



## 8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development (1)



Participatory Group Certification Workshop in Brazil

- Certification of Organic Agriculture is by itself a method of building up relationships
- IFOAM promotes Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)
- IFOAM as global network functions as a partnership for development

## 8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development (2)

IFOAM also works with:

- Partners such as IUCN, ISEAL and IFAD
- Member of the International Task Force on Harmonization Standards (UNCTAD, FAO, IFOAM)
- Liaison Office to FAO and IFAD

## The Organic Agriculture MDGs

1. Increase the proportion of organic food in diets
2. Human induced soil erosion to be halted
3. Increase biodiversity, ecosystem health, and resilience
4. Increase the creation and maintenance of diverse market channels for small farmers to deliver organic products
5. Increase and support the active role of women in organic agriculture
6. Increase the proportion of economically and socially just relationships among organic agriculture stakeholders
7. Promote organic extensions services, including training
8. Strengthen financial issues favoring the adoption of organic agriculture



[www.ifoam.org](http://www.ifoam.org)