

Candidacy Statement: **Paul Holmbeck**

With gratitude for support letters from Dr. Vandana Shiva, Navdanya (India); Biovision Foundation for Ecological Development (Switzerland); Asian Local Governments for Organic Agriculture (South Korea); Organic Sweden and Organic Denmark, I would like to serve you as a member of the IFOAM World Board.

The organic movement is creating solutions for sustainable farming and communities all over the world. One person, one farm, one community at a time. A unique movement of unequalled diversity working together for health, climate, fair trade, food security, biodiversity and other goals—all at the same time. We have made great strides. But there is so much more to do. This is why I am seeking a seat on the World Board.

Stepping down after 25 years of leadership in Organic Denmark, I will bring political, market, and organizational experience to the World Board, but I also look forward to tuning into members' needs, living by the Danish saying "there is a reason that we are given two ears and only one mouth."

After speaking with IFOAM members from around the world, I see two areas in particular where I will focus my efforts if I have your support.

The **first** is **strengthening our members' capacity to make change**. IFOAM is only as strong as our members. With a focus on capacity building, training, and sharing best practice, IFOAM can empower our member NGOs to drive education, political policy, market development, agenda setting communication, and membership growth. If IFOAM were a plant, our members make up the soil that nourishes it. We must attend to soil (& members) diversity, health, and robustness.

Empowering members should be a central goal in IFOAM structural reform and project development. IFOAM's regions must have a mandate, doing what they do best, and some need help strengthening cohesion and capacity. It is an exciting time, as visionary regional organic initiatives are joining together, scaling up and going global. The Asian Organic Youth Forum and Young Organics, forming Young Organics Global Network. ALGOA and other regional and local collaborations became in 2020 the Global Alliance of Organic Districts.

To this first effort—strengthening our members—I will bring decades of hands-on experience with NGO leadership, capacity building and lobby work in a transformative organic NGO, Organic Denmark, as well as experience advising NGOs on 4 continents in political advocacy, coalition building, fundraising and market development.

My **second** focus is IFOAM's mandate to **position organic farming and agroecology in the global sustainability agenda**. Not least the UN climate and food security fora, that are beginning to give our members powerful arguments in debates on climate and hunger. IFOAM must continue to rise up to the heights of global debates, shading and protecting the movement.

This requires strategic focus and tactical abilities so we can create alliances in international fora and win the very real battles with global corporations determined to control our food, our land, our lives.

To this effort I bring international advocacy and coalition building experience, going back to my role in the successful campaign for a total EU ban on GMOs in organic production, and in combating myths about organics and climate. A recent result: a commitment from many of the worlds largest cities to work for både climate friendly **and organic** food, in the Declaration from the C40 Climate Summit (2019). This was based on the Danish model for **organic** meals in public kitchens, with less meat, more plants, and much less food waste.

The work in our very diverse World Board and membership, requires a culture of respect and curiosity. To this work I will bring experience in working with and uniting people across national, religious, racial, and ideological divides, respectfully finding common ground and fighting together for real change. From diverse inner-city neighborhoods in the USA to international fora. I take it seriously.

In Denmark, this approach has ensured support from 10 of 11 political parties in parliament and from the many allies necessary to advance organics, from the retail sector and NGOs for nature, consumers, and farmers to the trade unions for workers in farming and public kitchens. These **healthy market and advocacy ecosystems** have created the world's highest sales of organic food and the strong organic policies in Denmark that won a Future Policy Award for advancing organics and agroecology (FAO, IFOAM, World Future Council 2018).

I would like to contribute to the important work in IFOAM at the global level. Empowering members and creating a more supportive global market and political ecosystem allowing organics to thrive. I will continue to fight for organic integrity, so we deliver more benefits for people and our planet-- watchful of initiatives that undermine organic principles. I support and actively use our ambitious agenda, Organic 3.0.

More info: [www.paulholmbeck.com](http://www.paulholmbeck.com)