An aerial photograph of a rural village in Bhutan. A dirt road winds through the center of the village, flanked by small, simple houses with thatched or corrugated metal roofs. The surrounding landscape is a mix of green fields and brown, tilled earth. In the background, there are steep, forested hills. The overall scene depicts a typical rural settlement in a mountainous region.

# **Organic Collection, Cultivation and Processing of Medicinal, aromatic and natural dye plants for household food basket security**

**Ms. Kesang Tshomo  
National Organic Programme Coordinator  
Department of Agriculture  
Ministry of Agriculture , BHUTAN**

***Rome, 20th October, 2009***

**20 3 2009**

# **Role of Agriculture and Rural Development**

- **Food security- net importer of food**
- **Income generation for the rural population**
- **Household food security- nutrition for children**
- **Rural-urban mitigation- unemployment**
- **Natural resource management and conservation**
- **Biodiversity protection**
- **Climate change- global warming concerns**



## Government's approach to Organic Agriculture development.

- Way of farming, use the best and cheapest technology available to produce without long term damages to soil and without economic losses to the farmer.
- Organic promotion with a well packaged information, technical support and a capacity to support the farmers through the whole value chain.
- Local market development with consumer education and potential suitable markets establishment needs high priority.
- Promoting the use of traditional foods to increase use
- In-situ and ex-situ conservation- National Biodiversity Centre
- Environment and biodiversity is Bhutan's strength- cannot compete with others in production- find value- bio-explorations? Geographical indication?- need capacity



# Core interest of NOP

- Promoting OA through low cost technology that reduces external inputs
- Safe food production in a holistic integrated manner as practised by the farmers
- Conservation of soil, water, environment and local varieties and species and biodiversity
- Documentation of local knowledge
- Enhance the sustainability of agriculture
- Find ways to conserve traditional food and medicinal plants by adding value and find markets



# Organic agricultural policy

- **No official policy on organic farming, But Organic is the unofficial policy for the country for agriculture in the long term**
- **National Framework for Organic Farming in Bhutan, MOA**
- **Other policies that favour organic agriculture are:**
  - **The Forest and Nature Conservation Rules of Bhutan, 2000**
  - **The Biodiversity Act, 2004 (no GMO)**
  - **IPM- The Pesticide Act of Bhutan, 2000 (IPM)**
  - **The Water Act – draft**
  - **The Food Safety Act - being developed**
  - **The CBNRM framework for Bhutan, 2002**
  - **The Cooperatives Act of Bhutan 2001**
  - **The NGO act of Bhutan 2001**
  - **Gross National Happiness**
  - **Brand Bhutan- Organic**

**Subsidy for agriculture is less than 0.3% of agriculture GDP,**

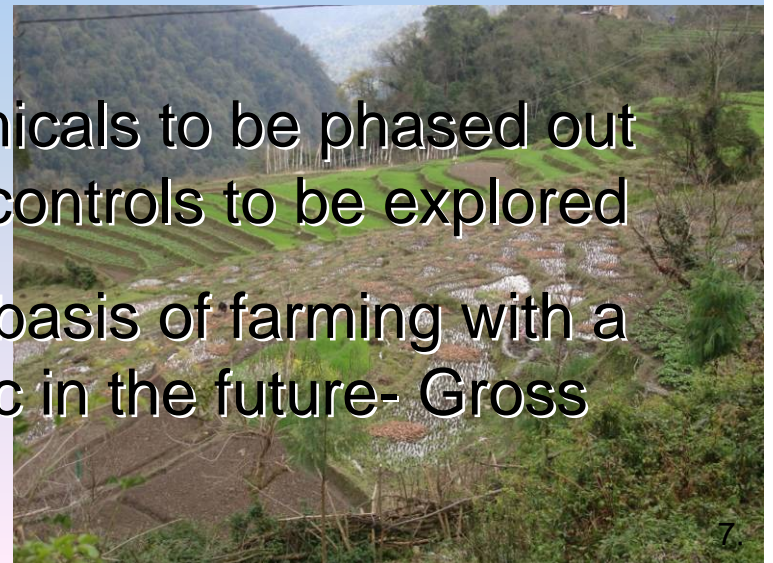
# Programmes of organic promotion

- Low cost and low technology based on natural resources- on farm production of inputs to reduce cost of production
- Research to find alternative practical solutions for problems
- Education and awareness and capacity building- Health and environment, soil, sustainability, biodiversity and ecological balance,
- Rural areas focused on productivity improvement , food security and bio-diverse food basket
- All primary extension to be organic knowledge first
- Home gardens for nutrition
- Open pollinated seed production



# Organisation and structure of the organic sector

- National Organic Programme, MOA is the driving force behind organic development
- Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA) to regulate
- National Organic Standards and Organic sector development strategy under drafting process
- A system of organic certification regulation/ guidance to be developed
- Pesticide Act to be reviewed- All chemicals to be phased out and alternative bio-pesticides and bio-controls to be explored
- IPM and organic agriculture to be the basis of farming with a view to make the whole country organic in the future- Gross National Happiness



# Market development

- Little but a growing awareness of organic food
- No or little premium in domestic market
- Lemon grass oil and cheese certified or export market
- Red rice exported, not certified
- Marketing of Natural wild collection and (MAP and NWFP)
- Need to focus on high value and low volume- transport and labour costs high
- Export market research and trials
- Develop local market based on local origin and link to eco-tourism
- Brand development needed
- Geographical Indicators for indigenous cvs. And spp.
- Certification not a high priority for now





# **Support for organic programme besides RGOB**

- **EU-ASSP, Research, production, education, capacity building**
- **SNV- TA, capacity building**
- **IFAD/FAO-OMADP (Trongsa and Zhemgang)**
  - **OMADP- Organic Production of Underutilized Medicinal, Aromatic and Natural Dye Plants for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (GCP/RAS/208/IFA)”**

# Goal of the project -IFAD/FAO- OMADP

Improvement in

nutrition, health and food security of rural populations in South Asia through organic local farming systems that incorporate MADPs.

## Purpose

- Conservation and sustainable collection of MADPs by selected rural communities
  - Training of small and marginal farmers to incorporate MADPs within their farming systems using organic methods.
- Priorities of production-
- Household food needs
  - Saving seeds (Community seed bank)
  - Specific target crop for market- income generation

- Local value addition to MADP produce and movement up the value chain for enhanced incomes.
- Initiation of an organic dye plants inventory and package of practices for dye plants.
- Product development and marketing of MADPs through community enterprise for viable and sustainable collective income generation.
- Networking of researchers, extensionists, producers and traders working with organic MADPs.
- Capacity building of staff and among producers to value add and increase income-generating capacity.
- Organise groups for efficient production, utilisation, transport and marketing





# Traditonal Natural dyes







nettle



Dyed nettle yarn





A photograph of two golden langurs in a lush green forest. One langur is perched on a tree branch, looking towards the camera, while the other is sitting on the ground in the foreground, eating. The background is a dense forest of tall trees.

*Tashi Delek*

*Thank You*