

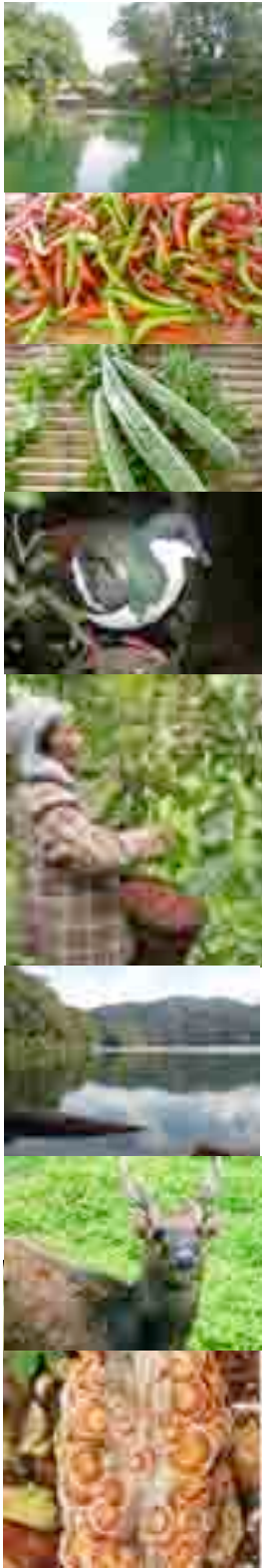
## WHY NEGROS ISLAND (PHILIPPINES) IN 2011

The Philippine Archipelago with its 7,107 islands is described as “GALAPAGOS TIMES TEN” in its biological richness, ranking either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> worldwide in biodiversity per unit area. The Philippines is one of 17 mega-diversity countries containing 70% to 80% of global diversity.

NEGROS ISLAND, situated in the south central portion of the Philippine Archipelago, is approximately 400 kilometers from Manila and about 100 kilometers from Cebu City. It was originally called *Buglas*, meaning cut-off. According to legend, Negros was detached from a larger landmass by the continental drift or post ice-age meltdown. The Spanish explorers who “discovered” the island named it Negros because of its dark-skinned natives.

In the 1940s, the United States Congress granted the Philippines, as a former territory and commonwealth, preferential and guaranteed sugar export quotas. Negros Island, with its traditional mono-crop sugar economy, cleared forests to create more farmland and aggressively pursued increased production using chemicals without regard for the environment. The adverse impact on the island’s ecology resulted in high levels of endangerment to many native species.

The single-minded focus on sugar production created such an imbalance that even the most basic staples like rice and vegetables had to be sourced from neighboring islands. When sugar prices dropped in the 1980s, the economy was devastated and Negros caught the world’s attention with international media featuring severely malnourished “BATANG NEGROS” (Negros children) posters.

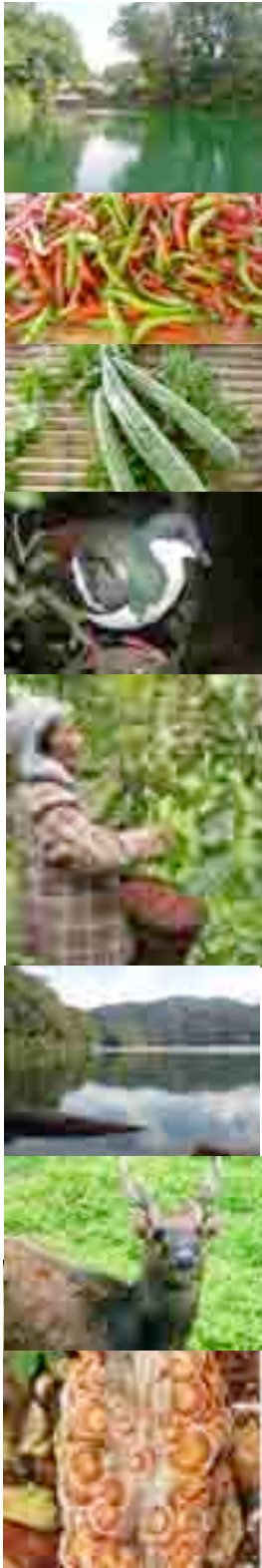


Declining agricultural production despite increased chemical inputs sparked interest in organic farming. It became more imperative with the increasing cost of chemical fertilizers, skyrocketing fuel prices, and continued diminishing production. Farmers who added organic inputs experienced improved productivity, further enhancing interest in organic agriculture.

Negros is the only island in the Philippines that belongs to two separate regions: Negros Oriental to the Cebuano region and Negros Occidental to the Ilonggo region. Geographically divided by mountain ranges, proximity to Cebu and Bohol made it more convenient for the eastern (oriental) side to integrate with the Cebuanos, while the west (occidental) linked with the Ilonggos of Panay. In 1890, Negros was formally split into Negros Oriental and Negros Occidental, effectively dividing the island politically and culturally.

The organic movement is now bonding the two provinces in a shared mission to make Negros the 'Organic Food Island' of Asia. The respective provincial governments and civil society groups have embarked on a partnership to popularize the methods and practices of organic farming in the entire island of Negros.

NISARD (Negros Island Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Foundation) was founded to fulfill the Negros Island vision of "an ecologically-balanced, peaceful, progressive Negros Island characterized by an empowered, healthy and self-reliant citizenry with a globally-competitive agro-industrial, diversified economy anchored on sustainable development under a responsive and accountable governance promoting gender equality and social justice shared by a dynamic civil society."



The organic movement is proving to be an effective solution to the food security problem and the concomitant social issues. Going back to nature, understanding the ecosystem, and preserving biodiversity is making a significant impact in improving the lives and health of the locals, especially in the marginalized sectors.

The success of the movement, particularly in small farming communities, is a testament to the government's political will and civil society's commitment to assist in creating a sustainable and secure food source for the people, while preserving the biodiversity and ecology of the island.

Hosting the 2011 IFOAM Organic World Congress will allow NEGROS ISLAND to showcase what a partnership between government and civil society can accomplish to propel the cause of organic agriculture; a model that other islands and developing countries can emulate.

## **THE NEGROS ISLAND BID IN BRIEF**

### **Synergizing the Land and the Sea**

As an island, Negros is a microcosm of the world and stands witness to the fragile interdependence of the land and sea — whatever is done on land ultimately affects marine ecology and vice versa. Thus, it is imperative that the organic movements of the world take a closer look at holistic (land-sea relationship) approaches in the development of organic standards and protocols. This is the rationale behind the proposed title and the main theme that Negros Island is setting forward for the 17th IFOAM Organic World Congress.



## Proposed Dates and Venues

- April 20 to 22 Dumaguete City (Negros Oriental) for the Organic World Congress
- April 25 to 27 Bacolod City (Negros Occidental) for the General Assembly

## What we offer freely:

- Conference venues
- Simultaneous interpretation
- Venue shuttle services
- Cultural programs
- Souvenir kits
- Overseas communications (VoIP, Internet, etc.)

## Side Activities

- Sports Activities (Trekking, diving, spelunking, kayaking, etc.)
- Tours (city tours, organic farm visits, etc.)
- Scenic Road Trip (from Dumaguete to Bacolod with stops at places of interest)

## Possible Sponsors

- National Government (Office of the President, Department of Agriculture, etc.)
- Senators and Congressional Representatives
- Provincial Governments (Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental)
- Non-Government Organizations
- Private Corporations



### Possible Subcontractors

- Microdata Systems and Management for audio-visual and translation equipment
- Negros Oriental Hotel and Restaurant Association for the catering of the OWC
- Hotel and Restaurant Association of Negros Occidental for catering of the GA

NISARD is prepared to take on conference promotion, public relations and publication of the event. Negros Island, in cooperation with IFOAM, its regional members and affiliates, through financial and logistical support from government and the private sector, is ready to host the IFOAM OWC and the General Assembly in 2011. Infrastructure, technology and experienced manpower with proven capability are in place to make the IFOAM OWC in 2011 an unforgettable event.

### OWC VENUE: DUMAGUETE CITY, NEGROS ORIENTAL

Dumaguete City has a track record of hosting sports and educational events with local and international participation. It is home to Silliman University, a center of academic excellence in the Visayas that was founded by American Presbyterians in 1901.

In April 2008, Dumaguete City hosts the 6<sup>th</sup> Youth for Environment Summer (YES) Camp for about 2,000 elementary and secondary students from all over the country. It is also the venue of the Visayas Qualifying Games for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Philippine Olympic Festival.



Retaining its university-town ambiance while embracing modern technology, foreign expatriates have settled in the area as academics or entrepreneurs, making Dumaguete a cosmopolitan city.



For the 2011 IFOAM Organic World Congress, it is proposed that the plenary conferences be held at the Luce Auditorium (1,000 seating capacity) and at the Provincial Convention Center (1,500 seating capacity), which also features 45 VIP Rooms for visiting dignitaries.



The lower level of the Provincial Convention Center and the nearby Macias Sports Complex will serve as the Organic Trade Fair and Exhibits area.



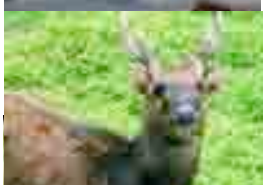
Traveling to Dumaguete City is easy. It is just about an hour's flight from Manila; is accessible by sea from Manila, Bohol and Cebu; and by land from Bacolod.



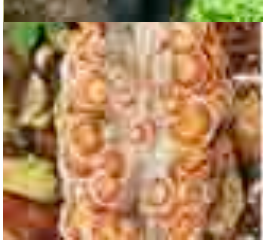
Within the city, the preferred mode of personal transport is the motorcycle. Commuters may travel via tricycle (a motorcycle fitted with a sidecar) or the Easy-Ride (a mini-van seating up to 10 passengers). For-hire cars and vans are also available.

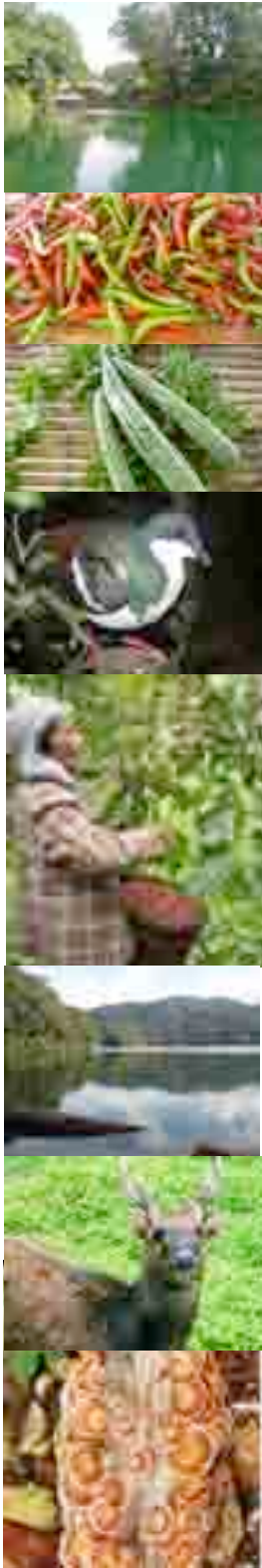


Locals communicate well in English, although the native language in Dumaguete City and the province of Negros Oriental is Cebuano.



Dumaguete City's tourist facilities will be able to accommodate the more than 2,000 delegates expected for the OWC. The city's inventory currently stands at 1136 rooms in 14 hotels, 9 pension houses, 12 lodging houses, and 4 resorts. With students out for the summer break in April, many of the dormitories will also be vacant during the conference. Other delegates with their own transportation may also opt to stay at hotel-resorts in the nearby cities and municipalities. Internet





services as well as other communications facilities are readily available.

Delegates will be entertained with cultural shows featuring the multi-awarded Rondalla Ensembles of Negros Oriental, the Silliman Dance Troupe, and presentations from the various festivals of the province.

Sporty and adventurous types may choose between scuba diving in Apo Island, considered one of the best dive sites in the world, or whale and dolphin watching at Manjuyod or Bais. Those seeking peace and quiet can go for a leisurely trek around the pristine shores of the twin lakes of Balinsasayao, or relax at Balanan Resort's historic lake created by a huge earthquake in 1925.

Visits to the organic farms and aquaculture areas in Bayawan and nearby towns as well as the training center and demo farm at the Government Agriculture Development Center (GADCENT) in Siaton will be available to delegates interested in observing the vibrant organic agriculture initiatives in Negros Oriental

### **GA VENUE: BACOLOD CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL**

Bacolod, the City of Smiles, is known as the Convention Center of the South because of its central location in the Philippine Archipelago.

Also known as the Football City of the Philippines, Bacolod has hosted numerous international sports events including the 2006 Asian Cup Qualifiers. During the 23<sup>rd</sup> SEA (South East Asian) Games in 2005, it was the host city for boxing, weightlifting, indoor volleyball, beach volleyball and football.



There are several flights to Manila and Cebu daily through the new Bacolod-Silay Airport. Sea travel is also a snap: various shipping companies ply the Bacolod-Manila route, and the nearby island of Panay is accessible on fast seacraft that leave every 1½ hours.



Within city limits, air-conditioned meter taxis are plentiful. Jeepneys with preset routes also offer commuting convenience. Several bus lines cater to travelers to the outlying towns.



Bacolod City is able to handle more than 4,000 visitors at any given time. Tourist facilities include 2,010 rooms in 18 hotels, 27 tourist inns and pension houses, and 2 resorts.



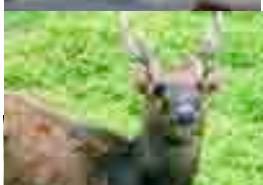
Although Hiligaynon (Ilonggo) is the primary dialect spoken in Bacolod and nearby towns, English is WIDELY spoken and understood by the populace.



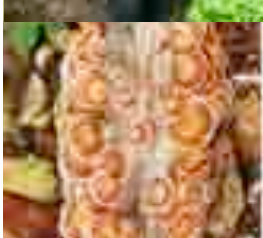
For the 2011 IFOAM General Assembly, proposed venues in Bacolod City are the St. John's Activities Center and the University of St. La Salle Coliseum, both seating more than 2000 participants.

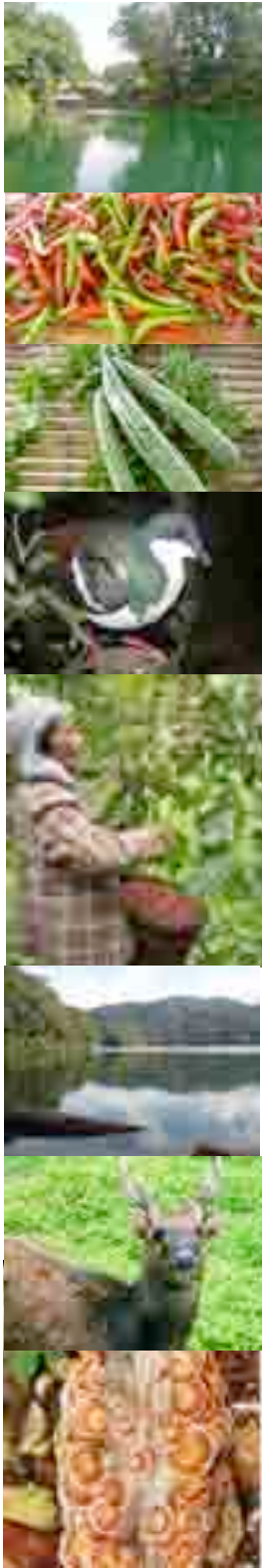


Both venues have large adjacent areas suitable for outdoor exhibits and several audio-visual rooms appropriate for breakout sessions or side events for 100 to 200 participants per room.



PANAAD (Hiligaynon for fulfillment of a vow) SA NEGROS is traditionally celebrated in the last week of April. It is the biggest festival in Negros Occidental, featuring all of the 32 festivals of its 13 cities and 19 municipalities. Coinciding the IFOAM General Assembly with PANAAD SA NEGROS will let IFOAM delegates get a glimpse of the richness of Negrense culture and experience the best of what Negros





Occidental has to offer.

Delegates interested in the silk-making process will have the opportunity to have a first-hand look at how silk is produced from the worm to the cocoon to silk thread, at the OISCA compound Tabunan, Bago City. All Philippine silk comes from OISCA.

Those who are into nature appreciation may want to visit the Mambucal Nature Resort, located at the foot of Mt. Kanlaon, an active volcano, with its 7 waterfalls, hot sulfur springs and cool spring pools; as well as similar nature parks around the province.

Delegates who are interested in studying government – civil society partnership in organic farming may observe it in Sagay City with its organic villages, organic muscovado factory, and dairy farm. This city is also home to one of the biggest marine reservation areas in the country.

## **IFOAM 2011**

Negros Island has a lot to offer to the organic world. Delegates will not only be able to share with one another the new developments in the worldwide organic movements. They will also be able to see the rich biodiversity of the Philippine archipelago, and Negros Island in particular. They will have opportunities to observe and learn from the experiences of the local practitioners. And, above all, they will enjoy the fabled warmth of Negrense hospitality and savor its culinary richness.

Finally, the recognition that IFOAM will bestow on the people and farmers of Negros Island will be a legacy that will help realize its dream of becoming the Organic Food Island of Asia.

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