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## At the General Assembly

*With the mandate to cover the development of organic standards, certification, accreditation and regulations, The Organic Standard was inevitably drawn to the International Federation of Organic Movements' (IFOAM) General Assembly held in Adelaide, Australia on 25 to 27 September 2005. Being a gathering of organic activists, TOS had to be there!*

The new IFOAM World Board, which will serve for three years, was elected at the General Assembly (GA). The outgoing President of the IFOAM World Board was TOS publisher, Gunnar Rundgren. Gunnar joined the IFOAM World Board and made it onto the Executive Board as Vice President at the IFOAM GA in 1998. He became President in 2000 and retired last month as IFOAM's longest serving President to date. TOS Commissioning Editor, Ong Kung Wai, a first time candidate, was elected to the World Board.

In addition to the elections for IFOAM's new leadership (see page 11), the GA had an agenda that was possibly the most defining of the last decade. Some of the motions tabled for debate and decision included Principles of Organic Agriculture (see page 8); the Organic Guarantee System revision (see page 3), revision of Policy 20 (IFOAM Basic Standards setting policy), which represents a culmination of a thorough review and make over of the movement's values and orientation. No radical change of values occurred. The motions voted in were not really new in content but some – such as IFOAM's stand-alone and overarching set of core principles – were new in expression. The Principles replace the former 'add on' list of

principle aims, which had grown longer over the years and were becoming harder to remember. And finally after all these years of setting standards, the question of whether they should reflect majority practice or introduce leading best practices to improve organic agriculture was answered. This was not ground shaking, but nevertheless IFOAM's direction has been made clearer and that in itself is leading.

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### IFOAM busts its budget

An expansionary budget for 2003 to 2005, where some 'investment' or dissolution of reserves was planned for, was approved at the last IFOAM General Assembly in Victoria, Canada 2002. Nevertheless, a deficit – of 94,000 Euros in 2003 and 187,000 Euros in 2004 – was unexpected, and wiped out the reserves IFOAM had accumulated up until 2002.

It appears that the investment to increase activities and hence project funds went out of control as expenditure drastically exceeded income. The appointment of an Executive Director who resigned after five months and the move of IFOAM head office from Tholey-Theley to Bonn were reportedly contributing factors.