



THE PEOPLE'S YEAR OF RICE ACTION (YORA)

PESTICIDE ACTION NETWORK ASIA AND THE PACIFIC IN COOPERATION WITH CEDAC

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT YORA

1. What is YORA?

YORA stands for the Year of Rice Action. It will be one whole year of activities dedicated to saving the rice of Asia.

2. When and where will YORA be celebrated?

YORA activities will be held at various times during the year from 4 April 2009 to 4 April 2010 in 14 countries in Asia: China, Japan, Korea, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

3. Why do we need to have YORA?

Most of the three billion people (half the world's population) who depend on rice as their staple food live in Asia. YORA is needed because rice is the life of Asia and it is under severe threat. The Rice Crisis of 2008 was a huge wake-up call for everyone—Asia is losing its food security and sovereignty! Small-scale rural rice farmers, who have sustained our rice production using ecologically safe cultivation methods for centuries, have been systematically wiped out over recent decades by corporate agriculture and destructive agricultural and trade policies. Our small organic rice fields have been replaced by industrial rice farms filled with synthetic fertilizers and poisonous chemical pesticides while precious rice lands have been lost to special economic zones, development projects and plantations. Furthermore, our local native rice varieties have been replaced by corporate-owned hybrid and high-input varieties. Very soon, genetically engineered rice (which is hazardous to human health and the environment) will be commercially produced unless we stop this from happening. The only way to save our rice heritage and our food(rice) sovereignty is for us to defend our rice **Together**.

4. What is the theme of YORA?

The theme of YORA is "**Rice for Life and Livelihood**"—this reflects the importance of rice to the lives and livelihoods of the people of Asia. "Rice for Life" represents the cultural, spiritual and nutritional significance of rice to Asia. It also implies that rice must be safe for farmers to grow, safe for the environment, and safe for consumers to eat. "Rice for Livelihood" refers to the rights of small rice farmers all over Asia to sustainable livelihoods. These farmers are struggling to survive against all odds, namely in the form of trade liberalization, so-called development projects, cash crop and agrofuel plantations, corporate control of agriculture and seeds, loss of rice lands, and climate change.

5. What are the calls of YORA?

Embedded in the theme "Rice for Life and Livelihood" are the following calls:

- Save the Rice of Asia

- Rice Security and Rice Sovereignty for Asia
- Safe Rice for All
- Preserve Native Rice Varieties
- NO Patents on Rice Seeds
- NO to Genetically Engineered Rice
- Save our Rice Lands
- Assert the Food Sovereignty of Our Small Rice Farmers
- Assert the Food Sovereignty of Rice Consumers
- Organic Rice for All

6. Who is organizing YORA?

The SAVE OUR RICE CAMPAIGN* of Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific (PAN AP). This campaign has network partners in 14 countries in Asia. In each of the 14 countries, 'anchor partner organisations' will be organizing various YORA activities with their own local network partners at different times throughout the year.

**In 2003, PAN AP launched the Save Our Rice Campaign in recognition of the crucial importance of rice to Asia. The foundation of the Campaign is the "Five Pillars of Rice Wisdom": (1) Rice Culture, (2) Community Wisdom, (3) Biodiversity-based Ecological Agriculture, (4) Safe Food and (5) Food Sovereignty. The Campaign is dedicated to saving traditional local rice, small rice farmers, rice lands and the rice heritage of Asia through defending and advancing the cultural and food sovereignty of the grassroots and opposing the powerful threats to rice.*

7. What activities are expected during YORA?

The various activities in the respective countries will include (but are not limited to): mass mobilizations, seminars, workshops, rice festivals, training, competitions, and exhibitions.

8. How does YORA concern me?

Asian or non-Asian, if you eat rice, then YORA definitely concerns you. YORA calls for enough rice for you and your family, rice that is affordable, rice that is tasty and safe to eat, rice for your festivals, rice for your rituals, rice for your life and rice for your livelihood. Rice is our heritage and we have to unite together to protect this heritage. So EVERYONE is called to participate.

The most important thing to remember is that YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. YOU CAN SAVE THE RICE OF ASIA. But if you don't do anything, then we will lose our rice heritage.

9. How can I be a part of YORA?

Below is a directory of our anchor organizations in the 14 YORA countries. Please get in touch with the organization in your country to be a part of its YORA activities. A matrix of all the activities in the different countries is available at our YORA webpage: www.panap.net/yora and a YORA video can be viewed on Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=630otul00cw>

You can also contribute to the YORA campaign through suggestions, articles, songs, drawings or other compositions, or even donate money. Please write to us at panap@panap.net.

For more details, please contact Mr. Yi KimThan via 012 998655

1. What are the YORA anchor organizations in the different countries?

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