



AFRICA CALL TO RESIST: GMOS CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS FOOD CRISIS:

**RESIST BAYER CROPSCIENCE'S ONSLAUGHT OF GM COTTON
EXPERIMENTS IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

June 2, 2008

The African Centre for Biosafety (ACB) condemns Bayer Cropsciences' spate of no less than 8 permit applications for field trials involving 8 Genetically Modified (GM) cotton varieties. These GM cotton varieties are to be tested in South Africa's Limpopo Province, where the majority of the population is poor and marginalised. The applications come on the first anniversary of Bayer's US\$310 million acquisition of Monsanto's of Stoneville Pedigreed Seed Company - a leading US producer of cottonseeds. We condemn these applications, which will continue to consolidate our agricultural system into the capitalist economy and leave small-scale farmers out in the cold. We also assert that these crops pose inherent risks to human and environmental health.

GMOs DRIVE UP FOOD PRICES AND CONTRIBUTE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) are part of a "Green Revolution" package for Africa where technical and economic solutions are proffered for African agriculture. These solutions, designed by transnational agribusiness, are heavily dependent on inputs such as inorganic fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides and corporate owned seeds. This system is highly energy dependent, directly in the form of fuel for transport and machinery and indirectly in the production of fertilisers and other inputs. Around 500 million kg's of pesticides are applied annually in agricultural monocultures to deal with insect pests, diseases and weeds globally. Such a system of continuous and increasing utilization of an energy intensive agricultural paradigm not only drives up the cost of food production but also contributes to climate change. In spite of this, the agendas of these powerful transnational

corporations (TNC's) continue to shape African agricultural-related policies, institutions and service providers in service of their bottom line.

GMOs ROB FARMERS OF THEIR OWN FARMING SYSTEMS AND SEED

The Green Revolution system has marginalized farmers, farmers' knowledge and ecologically sustainable agricultural systems and serves only to consolidate South Africa's agricultural system into the capitalist economy. We strongly oppose Bayer's applications as being part of the capitalist scheme designed to control the very core component of agriculture, namely seeds. By 2006, Monsanto, Dupont and Syngenta already owned 46% of the total proprietary global seed market. By 2007, Bayer Cropscience was already the second largest producer of cotton seed in the US. More GM cotton production in Africa will only increase Africa's dependency on single agricultural products. In any event, the real prices of cotton in Africa have declined substantially on the world's commodity markets over the last 2 decades.

GM COTTON DESTROYS AFRICAN COTTON FARMERS

As these agricultural TNC's consolidate and grow evermore powerful, largely poverty stricken African farmers still have to compete with one arm behind their backs – heavily subsidised American cotton farmers can sell their cotton unfairly at cut throat prices, destroying African farmers' ability to make their livelihoods.

BAYER HAS A LEGACY OF DUPLICITY

Bayer Cropscience is a subsidiary of German based transnational company, Bayer and is known for its legacy of dumping toxic waste in the South Durban Basin and the GM rice contamination scandal in 2006 when food aid in Africa was also seriously compromised. In South Africa, Bayer has bankrolled GM sugarcane research in the hope of cornering the GM sugar to ethanol agrofuels market and has applied for a permit to import GM rice into South Africa.

GMOs POSE A RISK TO HUMAN HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

Last, we condemn these applications on biosafety grounds because of the inherent risks posed by GM crops to human health and the environment. We also reiterate our outrage that the environment of South Africa continues to be used as an experimental dumping ground for multinational agrochemical and seed companies.

The ACB intends to submit substantial objections to Bayer Cropsciences applications and invite civil society organisations to join us in our resistance to this onslaught. A new agriculture is waiting to be born.

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