

## "SA's new GM experiments cause for great concern"

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Dear friends

It is with extreme disquiet that the African Centre for Biosafety (ACB) notes the recent spate of new applications for GM experiments in South Africa, see below. We are extremely concerned that our government has laid our country open to the wholesale experimentation involving a whole new range of GM applications, in a context where there is no room for public debate and consultation.

Part of an adequate biosafety response to the introduction of GMOs into South Africa is the application of the precautionary principle. We note with bitter disappointment that the recent amendments to the GMO Act do not change the current status where decision-making continues to ignore South Africa's obligations under domestic and international environmental policy for caution to be exercised when dealing with a contested technology such as Genetic Engineering. This situation is all the more worrying in the light of the recent Environment Outlook Report published (July 2007), which shows that South Africa's biodiversity is already under extreme pressure and threat from a range of developments, with many species facing extinction.

South Africa has become a free for all-a place where genetic experiments are welcome and embraced in order to show off to the rest of the world that South Africa has arrived on the global Science and Technology scene!!

These experiments with new GMOs not only place human populations and the environment at great risk, but continue to reinforce a flawed development paradigm, which seeks to introduce hi-tech products to 'fix up' deeply rooted systemic socio economic problems.

The new experiments that will be discussed at the next meeting of the EC include the following:

- (a) ARC:OVI - 07/001: Contained use of Spunta potato (G2).
- (b) Biological Control Products - 07/001: Trial Release of GM Mosquitocide.
- (c) Afriflowers - 07/001, Contained Use of GM flowers and bulbs.
- (d) Stellenbosch - 06/011: Field trials with GM Grapevine (GUS).
- (e) Triclinium - 07/009: Trial release of GM Measles Vaccine, MVA-mBN85B.

In addition, the EC will discuss the Warren Chem's General release of malolactic wine yeast (ML01) to which ACB has objected 17/3/1-WITS-07/019: Extension permit for trial release MRKAd5 HIV-1 vaccine to which ACB has objected (first application), and extension permits for Syngenta Extension permit for import and trial release of maize event GA21; and D& PL - 07/108: Extension permit for import and trial release of maize event BGIIxRRFlex and RRFlex.