

1. Background

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) is a network of over 600 participating nongovernmental organizations, institutions and individuals in over 90 countries working to replace the use of hazardous pesticides with ecologically sound alternatives. Its projects and campaigns are coordinated by five autonomous Regional Centers.

This PAN International position paper came out from the working group on Genetic Engineering and Pesticides and was collectively developed by the PAN Regional Centres and their partners. This paper provides PAN's views and analysis on genetic engineering and pesticides, proposes solution and presents the network's commitment to resolve the issue. Other position papers related to the five strategic objectives of PAN as well as supporting technical papers are also available.

2. The problem

Genetically engineered organisms, also called "transgenic", are lab-created new organisms, which characteristics have been altered by the artificial introduction of DNA from a different species. These GMOs could not have appeared naturally and it cannot be predicted how they will interact with the present eco-systems or what will be their consequences in time.

Instead of correcting and avoiding the mistakes of the past, the same trans-national corporations (TNC) that benefited from the Green Revolution (GR), are now promoting the "Genetic Revolution" of agriculture, based on the use of "transgenic" crops patented by those same companies. With the help of genetic engineering, crops have been created capable of tolerating herbicides also produced by the same companies, thus promoting the increased use of herbicides. Also, "pesticide-crops" have been created, capable of producing pesticide toxins within the same plant, increasing thus the presence of pesticides in agriculture and the environment.

Additionally, scientific studies and field trials demonstrate that GM crops do not have a higher yield than natural crops, that they are more polluting and that they introduce new risks to human health and the environment.

This GM agriculture is a recipe to:

- Consolidate even further the corporate control over the agricultural systems, and undermine food sovereignty
- Increase the environmental crisis
- Increase the genetic erosion
- Introduce new risks to human health and the environment
- Transfer income from the producers to the corporations

Genetic contamination of traditional crops is irreversible, impossible to control and means that all their descendants (seeds) will become genetically modified, losing forever traditional GM-free



crops and the option and right to partake of GM-free foods. The industrial mono-crop model of GM agriculture is non-sustainable and expel workers and mid and small-size producers from their lands.

3. The PAN Position

Taking into consideration that:

- GM crops are not necessary either for agriculture or food.
- GM agriculture follows the non-sustainable agroindustrial model, and adds new irreversible risks.
- Contrary to the assurances of transnational corporations, GM crops do not solve the problem of world hunger nor reduce the use of pesticides.
- The growth of herbicide-resistant GM crops promotes the use of herbicides, and in the case of Bt-crops, increases the use of insecticides.
- There are no studies that demonstrate the long-term safety of GMOs, their derivatives and products containing them to human health and the environment.
- The preservation of bio-diversity and genetic integrity of crops is fundamental for food safety and food sovereignty.
- The co-existence of ecological and conventional agriculture with GM agriculture is not possible due to genetic contamination.
- The right of present and future generations to a non-GM agriculture and food is inviolable.
- It is necessary to fight corporate control of the world agricultural systems that undermines producer's independence and the food safety and sovereignty of the peoples.
- It is necessary to promote a non-polluting, sustainable-agriculture, and to preserve the diversity of crops, cultures and agro-systems.
- To preserve the diversity and genetic natural integrity of crops, cultures and ecosystems, is basic for food security and food sovereignty.

4. PAN demands

Applying the precautionary principle, and in order to protect human health, the environment and the right and option to a GM-free food, PAN demands:

A ban on the release into the environment of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) and on the use of GMO, its derivatives and any products that contain them in food and agriculture.

We oppose the genetic manipulation of crops, even in enclosed spaces.

We promote citizens and organized civil society's participation in the adoption of regulations on any activity that involves the use of GMOs, and in the defense of the right to non-GM food and crops.

Faced with the fact that GM crops are already being sown in some countries, we consider it urgent to create GMO FREE AREAS, where no GMO activity will be permitted, nor any of its products or their transport throughout. Ideally, these areas would cover entire nations or regions beyond national borders (geopolitical).

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