



ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS ACTION
Friends of the Earth, Nigeria

NIGERIA GMO SITUATION REPORT

Presented
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at Cameroon National GMO Workshop, Yaoundé
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The ground of our core philosophy



article 24 of the African
Charter
on Peoples and Human
Rights:
**All people shall have the
right to
(a) generally satisfactory
environment
favourable to their
development**



releases

- No official release of GM crops into the Nigerian environment.
- There are two facilities for contained testing at IITA and SHESTCO (Sheda Science and Technology Complex).



trials

1. From information available to us there is an application with the Ministry of Environment for the contained testing of cassava varieties being modified to fight cassava mosaic disease. Besides this there are no publicly known GM crops being released for experimental or commercial purposes.



INROADS

1. Market shelves monitoring of products
2. A clear source of potential introduction of GM materials is via commercial imports of food or as food aid containing ingredients from corn and soy.
3. There is potential presence of GM ingredients in our country through food aid.
4. Nigeria receives rice from the US as food aid. In 2003 Nigeria received 11000.6 Metric Tonnes of soy meal as food aid from the United States, under the US title Food for Progress. Taking into account that over 80% of soybeans in the US is genetically modified we strongly suspect Nigeria has been receiving GM products probably without even the Government being aware of the fact.
5. Inadequate or lack of appropriate regulatory authorities or agencies
6. Institutionalization of the genetic modification of protocols at the SHESTCO complex



REGULATIONS

1. The Nigerian government currently relies on the Nigerian Biosafety Guidelines (2001) as a regulatory framework.
2. a draft Biosafety Bill is currently in the making and will come into force after passing through the executive and the legislature.

MoU

1. In 2004 Nigeria signed a memorandum of understanding with USAID for cooperation in the area of biotechnology.
2. ERA doesn't have a copy of the MoU,
3. We learned that it was signed on behalf of Nigeria by National Biotechnology Development Agency. Part of the intended program is to assist Nigeria in the area of capacity building in Bio-Safety with a main focus on biotechnology in Agricultural Development.
4. The process is been driven by International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). The IITA is the manager of the grants given for this project on behalf of Nigeria (probably so that Nigeria may not mismanage) and the major link between Nigeria and them is the Biotechnology Development Agency.



Challenges & Responses

- ERA has had to force space for intervention in government consultations and participation in the Federal Ministry of Environment activities pertaining to GMOs
- ERA also has had to attend a Biotechnology Summit, solely for the purpose of giving alternatives view and circulating documents against GMOs
- Regular issuing of statements
- Publication of report
- Coordination of FoE Africa efforts. Eg issuing open letter to ECOWAS ministers at their biotech meeting in Bamako with the support of FoE Cameroon, Ghana and Swaziland
- Planning a National Workshop for November 2005
- Recent publication of a report Titled GMOs: The African Challenge

Other Challenges

- Public awareness still low
- Challenge of influx of farmers from nations like Zimbabwe without controls
- Need for coordinated and enlarged national campaigns
- Great interest shown by the Federal Government on Morden Biotechnology



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Merci

