

**MINISTRY OF TERRITORIAL
ADMINISTRATION
AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

**SIKASSO REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
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MALI**

**Republic of Mali
« Un Peuple-Un But-Une Foi »

Recommendations

A Citizens' Space for Democratic Deliberation on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and the Future of Farming in Mali, - a Citizens' Jury. Sikasso, 25-29 January 2006.

This document presents the recommendations of the 45 men and women farmers from all districts of the region of Sikasso who met at the Centre Charles Lwanga, from 25 to 29 January 2006, to cross-examine specialist witnesses and deliberate on the issue of GMOs and farming futures in Mali.

These citizen hearings were organised by the Regional Assembly of Sikasso (the local government body), with conceptual and methodological support by the Réseau Interdisciplinaire Biosecurite (RIBios) of the Institut Universitaire d'Etudes du Développement in Geneva (Switzerland) and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in London (UK), and with financial support from the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS).

The recommendations of this citizens' jury were made by four different groups of farmers:

- Group A: Large scale producers (7 jurors)
- Group B: Medium scale producers (14 jurors)
- Groups C and D: Small scale producers (10 jurors)
- Women's Group: All farm size categories (14 jurors)

Group A

- Considering that in Mali the number of small scale producers represents 98% of the farming population and that the technology (crop genetic modification) is only viable for large scale producers, - who represent only 2% of the farming population-, this new technology should not be introduced.
- Given the existence of seeds produced by our researchers, stored and not yet in use, and given that the risks associated with the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are not yet understood and under control, we recommend that research puts much more emphasis on improving existing seeds rather than on developing GMOs.

- Considering the lack of appropriate research facilities and inadequate equipment available to Malian researchers, the technology (of GMOs) should not be introduced.
- Considering the ethical and religious beliefs of our society, taking an unknown gene from an animal to introduce it into a plant is a process that goes against our wishes, us farmers.
- Considering that the technology of organic cotton cultivation is already used in Mali, and given that it is highly viable in terms of women's participation, availability of a market and minimum guaranteed price, - the cultivation of Bt cotton should not be encouraged, it should be stopped.
- Considering that the Malian farmer should be trained in the use of new technologies in order to be an expert on his own farmland, we do not accept the introduction of other foreign bodies unknown to us farmers.

Group B

- Focus research programmes on improving and giving value added to traditional crop varieties instead of working on transgenic crops.
- Centrally involve farmers in the entire research (R & D) process
- Policy makers and farmers should develop strategies to promote organic farming centred on giving value to local produce and on ending the use of external chemical inputs.
- Disseminate the recommendations and findings of the 'Citizens Space for Democratic Deliberation on GMOs and the Future of Farming in Mali' to farmer organisations and federations, the Regional Assembly (local government), the National Assembly, the President of the Republic and the media.

Group C and D

Given the evidence presented by the different specialist witnesses,
 Following the concerns we have,
 Given that some powerful countries have rejected GMOs,
 Based on our understanding that some of our foods contain GMOs,

We recommend the following:

- Do not undertake any scientific research on GMOs in the name of Malian producers because we, Malian farmers, are against GMOs;
- Do not authorise research programmes on GMOs in Mali;
- Establish mechanisms for the control and monitoring of imported food products to detect the possible presence of GMOs;
- Disseminate the findings and conclusions of the 'Citizens Space for Democratic Deliberation on GMOs and the Future of Farming in Mali' to all public authorities and decision makers in Mali;
- Establish effective ways and means of sharing the results of the citizens' jury with local communities.

Womens' Group

- Conserve local seeds to ensure that they do not disappear;
- Focus research on improving and giving value to local crop varieties;

- Follow and control the flow of genes from GMOs into our local crop varieties;
- Decision makers must ban the introduction of GMOs in Mali;
- Burn genetically modified crops grown by recalcitrant farmers and punish the illegal cultivation and distribution of GMOs;
- Sharing and dissemination of the citizens' jury results through publications and the media;
- Establish a system to track and monitor food produce imported into Mali;
- Spread technical know-how for the production of organic cotton and sesame in all the districts of the Sikasso region;
- Give women farmers the technical training needed to produce organic sesame and cotton;
- Spread Farmer Field School-based learning and action to more women farmers;
- Involve women in decision making fora.

**“Yes to traditional seeds! No to GMOs!”
“We do not want GMOs in Mali at all”**