

Action in Brazil: Terminator Rejection A Victory for the People

--- In *Taino_News@yahoogroups.com*, "UCTP Office" <la_voz_taino@...> wrote:

Taino'ti Guaitiao (Greetings relatives):

The following article is breaking news from the United Nations Biodiversity Conference in Curitiba, Brazil, which has been taking place this week. Of particular interest to Caribbean Indigenous Peoples is the stand that "peasant" and indigenous rights activists have taken against the testing and sale of so-called 'Terminator' technology, which refers to plants that have had their genes altered so that they render STERILE SEEDS at harvest. Because of this trait, some activists call Terminator products 'suicide seeds'.

As the Taino and other Caribbean Indigenous Peoples are part of an ancient and sacred agricultural tradition, which continues to this day in the Konuko (planting fields) within and out of our ancestral homelands, the UCTP commends the activists in their important and critical work. In solidarity and in Spirit, we join their chant of "Terminate the Terminator" and support their call demanding tough laws against the field testing and sale of so-called 'Terminator' technology.

Oma'bahari (With respect),
Roberto Mucaro Borrero,
President and Chairman,
UCTP Regional Coordinating Office
<http://www.uctp.org/>
<http://www.uctp.org/lavoz.htm>
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Taino_News/
<http://www.uctp.blogspot.com/>

Terminator rejected! A victory for the people

Just an hour ago here in Brazil, the Chair of the UN meeting announced that governments have agreed to reject language that would have undermined the moratorium on Terminator.

Groups, communities and individuals across the world have joined together in this fight to ban Terminator and your action has been effective in this important first step.

Terminator rejection - a victory for the people A broad coalition of peasant farmers, indigenous peoples and civil society today celebrate the firm rejection of

efforts to undermine the global moratorium on Terminator technologies - genetically engineered sterile seeds - at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Curitiba, Brazil.

"This is a momentous day for the 1,4 billion poor people world wide, who depend on farmer saved seeds," said Francisca Rodriguez of Via Campesina a world wide movement of peasant farmers, "Terminator seeds are a weapon of mass destruction and an assault on our food sovereignty. Terminator directly threatens our life, our culture and our identity as indigenous peoples", said Viviana Figueroa of the Ocumazo indigenous community in Argentina on behalf of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity.

"Today's decision is a huge step forward for the Brazilian Campaign against GMOs," said Maria Rita Reis from the Brazilian Forum of Social movements and NGOs, "This reaffirms Brazil's existing ban on Terminator. It sends a clear message to the national government and congress that the world supports a ban on Terminator." "Common sense has prevailed lifting the Moratorium on the Terminator seeds would have been suicidal literally," said Greenpeace International's Benedikt Haerlin from the Convention meeting. "This is a genuine victory for civil society around the world - it will go a long way to ensuring that biodiversity, food security and the livelihoods of millions of farmers around the world are protected."

Terminators, or GURTS (Genetic Use Restriction Technologies), are a class of genetic engineering technologies which allow companies to introduce seeds whose sterile offspring cannot reproduce, preventing farmers from re-planting seeds from their harvest. The seeds could also be used to introduce specific traits which would only be triggered by the application of proprietary chemicals by the same companies.

At the CBD Australia, Canada and New Zealand along with the US government (not a party to the CBD) and a number of biotech companies were leading attempts to open the door to field testing of Terminator seeds by insisting on 'case by case' assessment of such technologies. This text was unanimously rejected today in the CBD's working group dealing with the issue. It still needs to be formally adopted by the plenary of the CBD.

Despite today's victory, there is no doubt that the multinational biotech industry will continue to push sterile seed technology. 'Terminator' will rear its ugly head at the next UN CBD meeting in 2008. The only solution a total ban on the technology once and for all," concluded Pat Mooney of the Ban Terminator Campaign. Now all national governments must enact national bans on Terminator as Brazil and India have done.