



पंजीयन संख्या-9355

लघु सीमान्त कृषक मोर्चा, उत्तर प्रदेश

(इण्डियन ट्रेड यूनियन ऐक्ट 1926 ई० के नं० 16 के अन्तर्गत पंजीकृत)

लोहिया मजदूर भवन, 557, डा० तुफैल अहमद रोड, नरही, लखनऊ (उ०प्र०)

पत्रांक ७१०६० -६०६७७०००००/ ३२ बी /१२

दिनांक...३।१०।१२..

To:

To Whom It May Concern:

Supreme Court of India.

In the case of Aruna Rodrigues Vs. Union of India

(Writ Petition (Civil) No. 260 of 2005)

Sub: The Interim Report of the Technical Expert Committee appointed by the Supreme Court on Field Trials of GM crops – Support and Plea for Order on Recommendations – reg.

The Laghu Seemant Krishak Morcha (LSKM) is a farmer's organization based in the Uttar Pradesh, with a membership base of more than 2 lakh farmers. We have been in the forefront on various developmental and farmer welfare activities in the region, and represents mostly small and marginal farmers. We are also affiliated to the Hind Mazdoor Sabha, which is the oldest trade union in India, with a membership base of 80 lakh people.

The Morcha perused through this very important report submitted to the Honorable Supreme Court in the aforementioned case. We also had detailed discussions, and find that the report has very accurately, sensitively and in detail captured the real situation on the ground in India, in the context of which one needs to look at the application of Genetically Modified Crop technologies, including its open air field trials, the specific matter under discussion in the Court now.

The report, in our understanding has an in-depth, clear and complete analysis of the current risk assessment regime in India and the lack of monitoring and other capabilities of the regulators in the country. We welcome the report and believe that the Court will now pass appropriate orders after accepting the interim report's recommendations in toto.

It has very clearly invoked the provisions in the Cartagena protocol, the Precautionary principle and the Risk to the Environment, especially the issue of contamination, which through many cases across the world, we know is a reality, and most of the time unavoidable as well. As a farmers organization representing small holders, we are in full support of the fact that it will be the small holders who will be worst affected, when this technology is field trialed or openly released, as small holders will not in any way be able to implement many of the costly bio-safety regimes that are presently being suggested. And without such bio-safety

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protocols, contamination can cause immeasurable loss, as is evident from experiences worldwide, even among larger farmers: The reports references to such small holdings and impacts are welcome.

The report also brings to our attention, the facts of the matter regarding our regulatory system. Our regulatory systems are so poor, and our systems so inadequate and it was a surprise to us that the report actually listed all the inadequacies of the bio-safety regulatory system. In such a situation, we wish to raise before the Honorable Court that there is no way; contamination from foreign GM organisms can be prevented.

In this context, we had also perused through the Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture on the GM Food. We were quite relieved that even this document has come up with a very pro-farmer, pro-consumer, national-welfare approach, and has given similar recommendations. In fact, this report has also asked for a moratorium on GM Field Trials, setting up adequate, rigorous bio-safety systems before taking these up.

We also recognize that this technology is at present associated with large monopolistic companies, and rigid IPR systems over seeds. This we must state is an extremely risky proposition, and is a policy that India must desist from. Such policies will have very fatal impact on our farmers and their livelihoods.

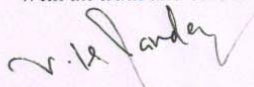
Farmers such as ours, also sustain a lot through self-reliant seeds and GM crops are invariably a threat to native diversity, and hence our self reliance.

Here, we wish to bring to the attention of the Hon'ble Supreme Court that for centuries, the Indian farmers have been cultivating and protecting their crops through various innovations, that are mostly domestically developed and hence resilient and less costly. With the advent of modern agriculture, we have become more dependent on external technologies and have lost not only our livelihoods but our economic security, leading to debts, losses and suicides. In such a situation, using innovative organic methods, we are in the process of reviving our farming and making it sustainable, and we have many alternatives for the same. In this situation the need for such risky technologies such as Bt crops and HT crops need to be very seriously evaluated before even deciding to allow it for research as well.

Such decisions will be in the larger welfare of the farmers in India, especially the small and marginal farmers, who are the largest of the farming population in India, and hence the biggest stakeholders in the process.

Finally, we wish to state that we welcome the TEC report, asking for an immediate stoppage of field trials of various GM crops. We plead to the Hon'ble Supreme Court to pass orders on the basis of the recommendations of the TEC.

With all truth and sincerity,



Vijay Kumar Pandey
General Secretary