



Ban Terminator  
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## Terminator Rejected! A victory for the people

A broad coalition of peasant farmers, Indigenous Peoples and civil society today celebrates the firm rejection of efforts to undermine the global moratorium on Terminator technologies – genetically engineered sterile seeds – at the meeting of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Curitiba, Brazil.

“This is a momentous day for the 1,4 billion poor people worldwide, who depend on farmer saved seeds,” said Francisca Rodriguez of Via Campesina a global 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 Curitiba. “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 that allow companies to introduce seeds whose sterile offspring cannot reproduce, preventing farmers from re-using seeds from their harvest. The seeds could also be used to introduce traits crucial to plant growth, which would be triggered only if proprietary chemicals were applied.

At the CBD meeting, 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 inserting new wording referring to a “case by case” assessment of such technologies. This text was unanimously rejected today in the CBD’s working group dealing with the issue. The rejection of the “case by case” wording still needs to be formally adopted by the plenary of the CBD on 31 March.

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 is a total ban on the technology once and for all,” concluded Pat Mooney of the ETC Group. “The next step is for all national governments to enact national bans on Terminator as Brazil and India have done.”