



## **Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana**

9<sup>th</sup> April 2024

### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **Approval of GMOs in Ghana will destroy the agricultural sector as Ghanaian farmers will now depend on multinationals for seeds**

The Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana expresses our disappointment and condemns the Government of Ghana's interest in promoting the agenda of multinational seed companies through their agents in Ghana for recently approving the commercialization of 14 novel Genetically Modified (GM) products, comprising eight (8) maize and six (6) soya bean products (<https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/ghana-approves-commercialization-of-14-new-gmos.html>) through the National Biosafety Authority (NBA). This comes on the back of the release of the GM cowpea in 2022, that was also done at the blind side of farmers and Ghanaian consumers. While we find this development disturbing, we are not particularly surprised, as we predicted that neglecting the resistance of key stakeholders against the passage of the Plant Variety Protection Act, 2020, which was just a leeway and a canopy to allow the commercialization of GMO products which are meant to promote the interest of four multinational seed companies; Bayer, Corteva, Syngenta and Group Limagrain that controls over 50% of the seed sector globally (<https://www.grida.no/resources>; <https://www.foodandpower.net/gmos-seeds>)

The decision by the government to go ahead with the commercialization of GM crops is particularly shocking and contrary to the promise made by government on January 14<sup>th</sup> 2020, through the then Minister for Food and Agriculture, who promised farmers that "the nation has capable scientists who could use traditional breeding methods to produce high yielding varieties and disease resistance plants for cultivation by farmers and hence no need for GMOs in the next 100 years in Ghana" (<https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/ghananews-ghana-does-not-need-gmo-to-ensure-food-sufficiency.html>)

Are GMOs crops the problem of the Ghanaian farmer? The answer is big NO. This is because the Ghanaian farmer managed to produce so much food with the farmer saved seeds and new seed varieties released by local seed breeders. In 2023, Ghanaian farmers without any government support managed to produce so much grains, tubers and vegetables and are currently struggling for market. All efforts for government to assist with market access has failed and at the moment, rice and maize farmers are depending on Burkina Faso and Togolese for market. If we can produce so much with our local seeds, why the penchant taste for laboratory seeds that comes with serious negative implications on health, the economy and the environment? Where should the government and Ghanaian scientist be focusing their energy on if they indeed have the interest of Ghanaians and not their stomach.

1. There is serious challenge with climate change and efforts should be made to provide enough water for all year-round farming.
2. Limited mechanization demotivates majority of young people from farming and government's efforts should be directed to support with mechanization services.
3. There is difficulty in accessing finance and it needs urgent attention

4. There are persistent high post-harvest losses and lack of guaranteed market
5. Increasing high cost of inputs and energy. Our scientists should rather focus their energies in promoting alternative power such as solar for all.

The consequences of this approval are dire and marks the beginning of the loss of Ghana's control of our own indigenous agricultural system, leaving it at the hands and control of powerful multinationals, who can decide and dictate the pace of our food system. The experiences of COVID-19 and the Russia Ukraine crises on food nationalism and protectionism should have given our leaders a hint of not sacrificing the control of a country's production system, particularly seeds, into the hands of multi-nationals. We will gradually lose our own indigenous foods and seed varieties, whiles comprising our public health, through the production and consumption of these "deadly" foods.

Moreover, contrary to assertions that, these crops require minimum chemical treatments, evidence from other parts of the world (USA, Argentina, South Africa etc.) indicate that farmers will be saddled with increase cost of seeds, as these GM seeds are extremely expensive and farmers will have to purchase them every season if they want to produce. The much-cherished culture of farmer-saved and exchange of seeds, which has been the beacon and foundation of our agricultural production will be lost forever due to this development. This is because the Plant Variety Protection Act, which we vehemently opposed, but has been passed nonetheless, gives protection to these multinational companies to arrest and convict farmers, who attempt to save and exchange seeds.

**With this disturbing development, the Peasant Farmers Association, will not allow our farmers to be exploited by state officials, who put their personal interest ahead of national interest. The Association, by this press release, demands an immediate response and assurance from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) that the inputs to be supplied under the ongoing PFJ 2.0 shall not include these GM varieties. To this end, the Association is calling on all members to reject any GMO seeds that will be supplied by any company, individual or government.**

**Moreover, we demand that NBA immediately releases to the public the process and procedures for granting these approvals including the appropriate labels for these varieties for both farmers and consumers. This will enable us sensitize our farmers and the general public on the type of input they are buying on the market. The Association will, in a few days, come together with other stakeholders to lay out our next plan of action to resist the attempt and efforts to reintroduce colonialism into our food space in the name of technology.**

Long live the farmers of Ghana

Signed

National President

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