

**DRAFT LETTER to selected HOUSE REPS re: GMO clause in Global Food Security Act**

**If you would like to sign onto this letter, please send an email to Cathleen McCluskey, [Cathleen@panna.org](mailto:Cathleen@panna.org) by TUESDAY MAY 18.**

May XX, 2010

Dear Representative:

The Global Food Security Act (H.R.3077), co-sponsored by Representative McCollum (D-MN), is intended to reform aid programs to focus on longer-term agricultural development, and restructure aid agencies to better respond to crises. With more people than ever before going hungry each day, this focus is commendable. We applaud the bill as currently written for its attention to the needs of women and small-scale farmers, its recognition of the importance of meeting local social and environmental priorities, and its neutrality on agricultural technology.

We understand there is a strong possibility H.R.3077 could be merged in the near future with the Senate version of this bill (S.384). We are writing today to express our support for the Global Food Security Act ***on the condition that it not include a clause which mandates or indicates a preference that research funds be directed towards genetically modified crop technologies.*** The legislation *must* be technology neutral.

On April 13, 2010, we delivered a letter to US senators that expressed opposition to the clause in Sec. 202 of S.384 that would amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to read "Agricultural research carried out under this Act *shall . . . include research on biotechnological advances appropriate to local ecological conditions, including gm technology*" (emphasis added). This mandate directs federal funds towards genetically modified (GM) crop research, while mentioning no other type of agricultural technology or approach.

**Inserting a similar mandate into H.R. 3077 or into a merged version of both bills would undermine the good intentions behind H.R. 3077's broader focus** on reducing hunger and supporting other countries' identification of locally appropriate solutions, without experiencing undue pressure and influence from US interests.

**The trouble with a mandate for GM crops is simple: it will not solve world hunger.** USAID has spent millions of dollars on developing genetically modified crops over the past two decades, with not one success story to show for all the taxpayer dollars spent. A partnership between USAID and Monsanto to develop a virus-resistant sweet potato in Kenya, for example, failed to deliver a useful product for farmers. After fourteen years and \$6 million, local varieties developed through conventional breeding vastly outperformed their genetically modified cousins in field trials. The project did, however, help establish a regulatory environment favorable to other commercial biotech applications. Other GM projects have failed to help farmers on the ground, but have succeeded in creating opportunity for the US biotech industry. It is also important to recognize that developing

countries do not necessarily want GM crops. The current controversy in India over Bt brinjal (eggplant) is a good example. Bt brinjal was developed in part with funding from USAID. After ten years in development, the product caused such an outcry from citizens, scientists and state government ministers upon its commercialization that the Indian national government put an indefinite moratorium on the crop.

**An alternative approach to advancing global food security exists.** In 2008, the World Bank and four UN agencies completed a four-year study conducted by more than 400 scientists and development experts from over 80 countries. Endorsed by 58 governments, the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) concluded that expensive, short-term technical fixes — including GM crops — are unlikely to adequately address the complex challenges that farmers face. Instead, the IAASTD highlighted the need to tackle the underlying causes of poverty, which have many economic, social and political dimensions. IAASTD ***priorities for future agricultural research*** include supporting biodiverse, ecological farming practices; increasing investments in the agroecological sciences; and fostering collaboration between farmers and interdisciplinary teams of scientists to achieve locally, culturally and ecologically appropriate solutions.

*We strongly support HR 3077 as currently written. We urge you to support a final version of H.R.3077 —and a merged bill— that does not include a mandate or signal a preference for GM crop research.*

We understand there has already been discussion by lawmakers of slightly amended language for consideration in a merged bill, as follows:

(a) [Research shall . . . ] include research on technological innovations that are appropriate to local ecological conditions including *but not limited to gm technology as appropriate* (emphasis given to amended text).

We firmly oppose (a) because it is still phrased as a mandate ("research shall . . . include") and because the singular focus on one highly controversial technology remains.

We respectfully propose the following alternate language that would maintain technology neutrality, while still allowing consideration of the range of new and existing technologies:

(b) ...include research on technological innovations that are appropriate to local ecological *and social* conditions.

The text we propose in (b) does not in any way exclude gm crop research from funding; the text simply refrains from elevating one technology above all others. If Congress singles out one technology—arguably one of the most expensive and least effective approaches to reducing hunger and poverty in the world—and attaches it to a pool of foreign aid research money, the pressure on developing countries to ignore local priorities and other scientifically valid options—and to focus their research agendas on and open their markets to that one technology—will be substantial. *Exerting such intense pressure on developing countries undermines the spirit of respect with which the US wishes to engage the rest of the world.*

We believe farmers and communities working with natural and social scientists—not Congress—should identify what technologies are most appropriate locally and what research is needed to meet socially and environmentally sustainable development goals.

We urge the House to support the Global Food Security Act (H.R.3077) and a merged text *without adding a mandate or preference for GM crop research*. This will keep agricultural research funding under the Foreign Assistance Act technologically neutral, and appropriately focused on the local priorities, needs and conditions of small-scale farmers.

We look forward to working with you to resolve this issue and to advancing the worthy goals underlying the Global Food Security Act.

Respectfully,

[DRAFT LIST OF ENDORSING ORGANIZATIONS, subject to revision]

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### ***US organizations***

Agricultural Missions (NY)

Alaska Community Action on Toxics (AK)

California Food and Justice Coalition (CA)

Californians for GE-Free Agriculture (CA)

Californians for Pesticide Reform (CA & National)

Center for Environmental Health (CA)

Center for Food Safety (DC)

Clean and Healthy New York, Inc. (NY)

Community Alliance for Global Justice (WA)

The Cornucopia Institute (WI)

Cumberland Countians for Peace & Justice (TN)

Dakota Resource Council (ND)

EConsulting (KY)

Eden Foods, Inc. (MI)

Environmental Partnerships (MA)

Everybody Eats! (CO)

Family Farm Defenders (WI & National)

Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (TX)

Farmworker Association of Florida (FL)

Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc. (FL)

Food & Water Watch (DC & National)

Food Chain Workers Alliance (CA & National)

Food Democracy Now! (IA)

Food Empowerment Project (CA)

Food First (CA)

Friends of the Earth US (DC & national)

Full Belly Farm (CA)

Galveston Baykeeper (TX)

Grassroots International (MA & national)

Greenpeace US (National)

Health Care Without Harm (National)

Indiana Toxics Action (IN)

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (DC & MN)

Institute for a Sustainable Future (MN)

Institute for Responsible Technology (CA, IA)

International Society for Ecology and Culture (ISEC) (CA)

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (IA)

Jacobs Farm / Del Cabo (CA)

Justice from Farm to Plate (VT)

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (ME)

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (DC)

Minnesota Food Association (MN)

National Family Farm Coalition (DC & national)

National Organic Coalition (national)

Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility  
of United Church of Christ (TN)

NOFA/Mass (Northeast Organic Farming Association/Massachusetts chapter, Inc.) (MA)

Non-GMO Project (CA)

Northeast Organic Farming Association Interstate Council (CT)

Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance (ME, New England, Mid-Atlantic states)

Ohio Conference on Fair Trade (OH)

Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility (OR)

Oregon Toxics Alliance (OR)

Organic Consumers Association (MN)

Organic Seed Alliance (WA)

Permaculture Activist Magazine (IN)

Partners for the Land & Agricultural Needs of Traditional Peoples (WV)

Pesticide Action Network North America (CA & National)

Pesticide Free Zone, Inc (CA)

Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles (CA)

Safe Alternatives for our Forest Environment (SAFE) (CA)

Science and Environmental Health Network (IA)

Sierra Club (CA, DC, & National)

Slow Food USA (National)

Southeastern Efforts Developing Sustainable Spaces (SEEDS) (NC)

Sustainable Living Systems (MT)

Taos County Economic Development Corp (TCEDC) (NM)

TEDX (The Endocrine Disruption Exchange) (CO)

The Edmonds Institute (CA, national)

The Oakland Institute (CA, national)

The Organic & Non-GMO Report (IA)

The Pontiac Agriculture Network (MI)

The Victory Garden Initiative (WI)

Washington Biotechnology Action Council (WA)

Western Organization of Resource Councils (ND, SD, WY, MT, CO, ID & OR)

WhyHunger (NY)

Women's Environmental Institute (MN)

### ***Development organizations (outside the US)***

African Centre for Biosafety (South Africa)

Agrar Koordination (Germany)

AS-PTA (Brazil)

Biowatch South Africa (South Africa)

Brazilian Platform on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights (Brazil)

Butere Focused Women in Development (BUFOWODE) (Kenya)

Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (Tunisia)

Consumers Union of Japan (Japan)

Diverse Women for Diversity (India)

Doctors for Food Safety and Biosafety (India)

Eco-TIRAS Intl Env Assn of River Keepers (Moldova)

Environmental Rights Action/ Friends of the Earth Nigeria (Nigeria)

ETC Group (Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration) (Canada)

Farmer-Scientist Partnership for Development (MASIPAG) (Philippines)

GMWatch (UK)

Green Foundation (Bangalore, India)

Initiative for Health , Equity and Society (India)

International Peoples Health Council (South Asia)

Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre (Zambia)

Nature's Path Foods Inc. (Canada)

Ng'ombe na Mahindi (NGMOA) (Kenya)

NO! GMO Campaign (Japan)

Organisation Béninoise pour la Promotion de l'Agriculture Biologique (OBEPAB) (Benin)

Pesticide Action Network Africa

Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific

Pesticide Action Network Germany

Pesticide Action Network UK

Plaguicidas y sus alternativas de américa Latina RAPAL-PAN Internacional

Practical Action UK

Red de Acción en Plaguicidas y sus Alternativas para América Latina (RAP-AL)- PAN Latin America

Safe Food Coalition, South Africa

South African Freeze Alliance on Genetic Engineering (South Africa)

Southeast Asian Council for Food Security & Fair Trade (SEACON) (Malaysia)

Third World Network (Malaysia & International)

Uganda Network on Toxic Free Malaria Control (UNETMAC) (Uganda)

Vredeseilanden (Belgium)

Women for Sustainable Development (Tunisia)

49th Parallel Biotechnology Consortium (Intl)

### ***Independent scientists and development experts\****

Dr. Hans Herren, President Millennium Institute\* and Co-Chair, IAASTD

Dr. Molly D. Anderson, College of the Atlantic,\* IAASTD Coordinating Lead Author, North America & Europe Report (USA)

Mariann Bassey, Environmental Rights Action/ Friends of the Earth Nigeria\* (Nigeria)

Dr. Philip Boreano, Professor Emeritus, University of Washington,\* Roster of Experts, UN Cartagena Biosafety Protocol (USA)

Rachel Berger, Schumacher Centre for Technology and Development\* (UK)

Dra. Michelle E. Chauvet Sánchez Pruneda, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana\*, IAASTD Coordinating Lead Author Latin America & Caribbean Report (Mexico)

Elenita Dano, Participatory Enhancement and Development of Genetic Resources in Asia\*

IAASTD Lead Author, East Asia & Pacific Report (Philippines)

Barbara Dinham, IAASTD Review Editor, North America & Europe Report (UK)

Dr. Bruce Ferguson, El Colegio de la Frontera Sur San Cristóbal de Las Casas\* (Mexico)

Prof. Catherine Finnoff, University of Massachusetts Amherst\* (USA)

Dr. Harriet Friedmann, University of Toronto,\* IAASTD Review Editor, North America & Europe Report (Canada)

Dr. Mario Giampietro, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona,\* Institute of Environmental Science and Technology\*, IAASTD Lead Author Global Report (Spain/Italy)

Dr. Tirso Gonzales, The University of British Columbia Okanagan,\* IAASTD Coordinating Lead Author, Latin America & Caribbean Report (Canada/Peru)

Dr. Falguni Guharay, IAASTD Lead Author, Latin America & Caribbean Report (Nicaragua)

Benedikt Haerlin, IAASTD Advisory Bureau (Germany)

Dr. Jack Heinemann, University of Canterbury,\* IAASTD Lead Author Synthesis Report (New Zealand)

Dr. S. Ryan Isakson, Saint Mary's University,\* (Canada)

Dr. JoAnn Jaffe, University of Regina,\* IAASTD Coordinating Lead Author, North America & Europe Report (Canada)

Christopher Jones, Agricultural Christian Fellowship\* (UK)

Dr. Jack Kloppenburg, University of Wisconsin\*

Dr. Carol Landry, Ohio State University\* (USA)

Dr. Kathleen McAfee, San Francisco State University\* (USA)

Dr. Philip McMichael, Cornell University\* USA

Khaddouja Mellouli, Center of Arab Women for Training and Research, IAASTD Advisory Bureau member (Tunisia)

Dr. Douglas Murray, Colorado State University,\* IAASTD Review Editor, Global Report

Dr. Eva Novotny, Cambridge University\* (United Kingdom)

Dr. Gerardo Otero, Simon Fraser University\* (Canada)

Dr. Ivette Perfecto, University of Michigan,\* IAASTD Coordinating Lead Author, Latin America & Caribbean Report (USA)

Dr. Romeo F. Quijano, College of Medicine, University of the Philippines, IAASTD Advisory Bureau (Philippines)

Catherine Rutivi, IAASTD Advisory Bureau member, Sub Saharan Africa (Senegal)

Sérgio Sauer, Brazilian National Rapporteur on Human Rights on Land, Territory and Food

Dr. Gerald Smith, University of Michigan\*

Dr. William Stafford, Proteapermaculture (South Africa)

Dr. Koa Tasaka, Pesticide Action Network Japan

Dale Jiajun Wen, International Forum on Globalization, IAASTD Coordinating Lead Author, East Asia & Pacific Report (US/China)

Dr. Angus Wright, California State University, Sacramento,\* IAASTD Coordinating Lead Author, North America & Europe Report (USA)

Dr. Susan Wright, University of Michigan Ann Arbor\* (USA)

Dr. Rym Ben Zid, Tunisia, IAASTD Coordinating Lead Author, Central West Asia & North Africa Report (Tunisia)

***\* Institutional affiliation provided for identification purposes only.***

Cc: Members H.R.3077 Co-Sponsors, US House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and US House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs.

*Please direct return correspondence to: Dr. Marcia Ishii-Eiteman, Senior Scientist, Pesticide Action Network, [mie@panna.org](mailto:mie@panna.org) (415) 981-6205 ext 325. Your response will be forwarded to the groups and individuals signing this letter.*