

**Press Release**  
**UK Campaigning Group on Terminator Technology**  
**Immediate Release 20<sup>th</sup> March 2006**

**Canadian Government Told “Drop Support for Terminator Technology”**

The Canadian Government is under attack for aggressive lobbying of other delegations to relax the global moratorium on Terminator technology at this week's Convention on Biodiversity's Conference of the Parties in Brazil

Canada strongly supports a switch to a case-by-case approval system across the world for GM Terminator technology and is heavily lobbying other countries to support this position backed by the US government as well as the UK 's pro-GM government.

The UK Campaigning Group on Terminator technology [1] will hand in a letter at the Canadian Embassy in London at 11.00 on Tuesday 21st March appealing for a last minute shift in Canada's policy and to urge them to stop pressurising less powerful delegations at the Convention on Biodiversity's (CBD) 8th Conference of the Parties (COP8) [2]. Negotiations are due to be completed in Brazil on 22nd March.

The current CBD Decision (V/5) [3] acknowledges the unique capacity of crop varieties containing the Terminator gene to produce sterile seeds which would not germinate if planted. Parties to the CBD recognised that this could have a disastrous impact on the 1.4 billion farmers who depend on saving seeds for their food security, livelihoods and to protect agricultural genetic diversity. The agreement signed in 2000 and supported by Canada, the UK , Australia and New Zealand, recommends that outdoor testing and commercial growing of Terminator crops should not take place until global socio-economic impact studies have been carried out and assessed (CBD Decision V/5 Is widely accepted as a de facto moratorium on Terminator technology). To date there are no published studies on GURTs.

The Canadian government has allied itself to a small group of industrialised countries including Australia, New Zealand and the UK, Influenced by the USA, calling for new wording in the CBD that would allow crop varieties containing Terminator technology to be assessed on a case-by-case and country by country basis. In a statement last month, the UK government announced their support for the case-by-case approach [4].

Critics of the case-by-case approach say that it will fail to assess the cumulative effects of hundreds of Terminator seeds entering the market over a period of years rather like assessing the impact of housing development on a house-by-house basis.

The Group will also make a last minute appeal to the UK government to support Southern nations by rejecting the case-by-case approach.

Commenting for the UK Campaigning Group, Elisabet Lopez, said

*"Case-by-case assessment of Terminator technology goes against the interests of Southern countries where Terminator technology could cause serious social and economic damage and undermine the ability of people to provide food for themselves and their communities.. Case-by-case assessment of Terminator technology as advocated by the UK, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand governments could*

*lead to even greater control over seeds by corporations, where currently we have 10 corporations controlling more than 50% of global seed sales. It is hard to understand the rationale for defending case-by-case assessment of Terminator given that there is still no data on the socio-economic impact of Terminator seeds - poor people of the world need the support of richer nations to hold the moratorium and to prevent Terminator seeds creeping into their countries".*

## NOTES TO EDITORS

Calls to Pete Riley 07903 341065

### **1. PICTURE OPPORTUNITY 09.30 21<sup>st</sup> March at the Canadian High Commission Macdonald House, 1 Grosvenor Square, London W1K 4AB**

The UK Campaigning Group on Terminator Technology includes UK Food Group, Progressio (formerly CIIR), Friends of the Earth, GM Freeze, GeneWatch UK, The Gaia Foundation, EcoNexus, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and Munlochy GM Vigil. Link to [www.eco-matters.org](http://www.eco-matters.org) for free copies of a leaflet on Terminator Technology.

EDM calling for moratorium on Terminator to be maintained has been signed by 207 MPs from all parties.

Copy of the letter available on request.

2. The COP8 of the CBD is being held in Brazil this week. Decisions on Terminator will be Wednesday 22nd March.

3. The global moratorium is CBD Decision V/5 section III agreed in 2000. This decision states that products incorporating Genetic Use Restriction Technologies (GURTs) should not be approved for field-testing or commercial use until assessment of ecological, socio-economic and cultural impacts.

4. The UK Government's revised policy supporting case by case assessment of Terminator was published on 21st February 2006. However, Former Environment Minister Michael Meacher MP has confirmed in an article in The Guardian today that there has been a significant change in government policy compared to the policy he signed up to at the Convention on Biodiversity COP5 in Nairobi in 2000. The present policy supports for a case by case approach to approving GURT varieties compared with the previous position which supported the de facto moratorium pending generic socio-economic research into the impact of the GURTs on farmers around the world who are reliant on seed they save that year for sowing their next crop. Michael Meacher's comment piece in The Guardian can be downloaded from

<http://society.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,1730692,00.html>