



## World Food Day @ ESF No GMOs @ FAO

London, 16 October 2004

On World Food Day 2004 at the European Social Forum in London, speaker after speaker criticised FAO for promoting GM crops as a solution to hunger.

In the context of 840 million people going to bed hungry each night in a world with 1.5 billion overfed people that spends \$900 billion a year on weapons and war;

- recognising the immense contribution of, presently highly threatened, smallholder and peasant farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples and other natural resources users to the development and management of the freely accessible agricultural biodiversity that feeds the world;
- also recognising that this agricultural biodiversity, the first link in the food chain, is also threatened by contamination from proprietary genetically modified organisms controlled by Trans National Corporations;
- aware that investments in genetic engineering are skewing resources away from research in sustainable agroecological food production systems that can be developed and controlled by local farmers;
- recognising that European consumers and taxpayers have rejected GM crops and foods;
- and recognising that only through food sovereignty policies will the problems of hunger and poverty be addressed effectively;

Delegates unanimously supported the transmission of a clear and unambiguous message to FAO:

**In solidarity with peasant and smallholder farmers' organisations and joining the hundreds of organisations and social movements across the world that have already criticised FAO for the contents of its 2004 SOFA report on biotechnology, delegates at the European Social Forum 2004 World Food Day events condemn the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) for promoting the development and use of genetically modified crops for eradicating poverty and hunger; and call on the FAO immediately to reject the agendas and the direct and indirect influences of Trans National Corporations in its normative and operational work; and to reorient all its efforts to tackling the root causes of hunger, promoting sustainable agroecological technologies and defending agricultural biodiversity.**

*Coordination of the publicity of the World Food Day events at the European Social Forum was undertaken by the UK Food Group, which also co-sponsored two Seminars*