

The Production and Consumption of Unsafe Genetically Modified (GMO) Food in Nigeria

Association of Catholic Medical Practitioners of Nigeria (ACMPN) Cautions Nigerians

By [Association of Catholic Medical Practitioners of Nigeria](#)

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At the quarterly press briefing of the Association of Catholic Medical Practitioners of Nigeria (ACMPN), Owerri Archdiocese, on Monday 21st May, 2018, the chairman Academician Dr Prince Philip C. Njemanze MD (Hons) reaffirmed to all Nigerians the need for precautionary approach towards consuming genetically modified organisms (GMO) foods and planting the crops. The ACMPN Annual General Scientific Conference had published earlier the observations arising from the 12th scientific conference and annual general meeting with the theme Genetically-Modified Organisms: How Harmful, Harmless or Beneficial?, that took place at the Catholic Institute of West Africa (CIWA), Port Harcourt from 6th to 8th July, 2017. In attendance were medical doctors, scientific experts in biotechnology and nutrition especially those concerned with food safety regulation.

The general consensus was on the need for precautionary approach towards the introduction of GMO crops into our food system. The participants expressed concern on the rapid introduction of GMO crops into our food system without adequate assurance of safety and declared it highly immoral and a threat to food security.

Experts agree that food safety certification usually takes several decades since effects take place at molecular genetic level before subsequent clinical manifestation. It is therefore irresponsible for any organization or association, medical or scientific to give a risk free certification for any GMO crop to be used as food prior to long-term effects monitoring and continuing experimentation. Moreover, scientific studies in animals fed with GMO foods have shown detectable biological changes of cellular transformation into cancer cells or other forms of biochemical malfunction leading to liver failure and kidney failure. Studies in humans show strong association of GMO food with allergic reactions and mental diseases such as autism spectrum disorders.

The provision of unsafe food is no solution to hunger, but rather results in even greater health hazards. The use of transgenic crops which implies changing genetic material could be used for good and bad purposes. For example, the insertion of a sterilizing gene called Epicyte gene in Corn flex could sterilize children of school age using Corn flex in a school feeding programme, leading to loss of generations of people in Nigeria. These genetic changes are not reversible. There should be heightened attention to food safety in schools with feeding programs. Moreover, school feeding poisoning linked to insecticides have occurred in India.

Experts deplore the unacceptable influx of GMO crops and foods into Nigeria. Nigeria is a signatory to the United Nations Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which is a legally binding protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted by unanimous consent with 135 countries present. The Protocol covers the “trans-boundary movement, transit, handling and use of all living modified organisms that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking into account risks to human health”.

The Nigerian Government established the National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA) in 2015 to provide a regulatory framework, institutional and administrative mechanism for safety measure in the application of modern bio-technology in Nigeria with a view to preventing any adverse effect on human health, animals, plants and the environment. However, the NMBA is grossly ill-equipped, understaffed and has no present capacity to perform her mandate. This is unfortunate since food security is the most important of all national security concerns. The ACMPN therefore advocates increased funding for equipment and higher level of human resources preparedness for the NMBA.

ACMPN affirms that none of the major challenges that Nigeria faces in the agricultural sector can be addressed by deploying GMO or Hybrid seeds in the fields. The challenges mitigating against development of agriculture (poor transportation, land reform, lack of amenities in rural agricultural settings, lack of irrigation technology, lack of fertilizer, poor use of organic farming, lack of preservation technology, poor cost management, improper export and import controls, lack of subsidies and loans, aging manpower, lack of electricity, societal perception, etc) would not be addressed by deploying GMO or Hybrid crops. Rather, new and more complex problems could be introduced including long-term environmental and health hazards (cancers, allergies, infertility, autism spectrum disorders, ecosystem disequilibrium), which has been demonstrated by several groups of scientists in evidence-based studies. Similar precautions have been issued in a report on GMO by a scientific experts’ committee setup by Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) along with the Nigerian Supreme Council on Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) under the aegis of the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC).

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In God we trust to keep us safe.

Signed:

Academician Dr Philip C. Njemanze MD

Committee Chair



Seeds of Destruction: Hidden Agenda of Genetic Manipulation

Author Name: F. William Engdahl

ISBN Number: 978-0-937147-2-2

Year: 2007

Pages: 341 pages with complete index

List Price: \$25.95

Special Price: \$18.00

This skilfully researched book focuses on how a small socio-political American elite seeks to establish control over the very basis of human survival: the provision of our daily bread. "Control the food and you control the people."

This is no ordinary book about the perils of GMO. Engdahl takes the reader inside the corridors of power, into the backrooms of the science labs, behind closed doors in the corporate boardrooms.

The author cogently reveals a diabolical world of profit-driven political intrigue, government corruption and coercion, where genetic manipulation and the patenting of life forms are used to gain worldwide control over food production. If the book often reads as a crime story, that should come as no surprise. For that is what it is.

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