



*International Planning Committee (IPC) for Food Sovereignty*

*Working Group on Agricultural Biodiversity*



18<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## *International Planning Committee (IPC) for Food Sovereignty*

### *Informal session of the Twenty-fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-24)*

#### *IPC Declaration*

#### *Item 4, Synthetic Biology*

The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) is an articulated space representing 6000 grassroots organizations and social movements of Indigenous Peoples and small-scale food producers.

It has been almost a decade since the CBD began tracking developments in synthetic biology. However, today the significant development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation have serious implications for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Therefore, there is a urgent need for governments to intervene on the potential disruptive effect it may have on millions of peasants, farmers and harvesters, as well as on the biodiversity they manage. Three issues must be taken into accounts by governments:

The **potential socio-economic damage** from the substitution of natural products by products generated from synthetic biology should be a priority of the CBD and the Parties, as they should guarantee the rights of farmers to protect the biodiversity they manage.

The **safety, traceability, requisition ability and liability** must be ensured in order to protect the small-scale food producers and the custodians of agricultural biodiversity from the contamination of biosynthesized ingredients.

The **synthetic biology products must not be presented as natural products**, explicitly rejecting the "natural" labelling of synthetic biology products. This would keep the consumers informed and will leave freedom to the small-scale food producers to sell their products.

The governments should take responsibility in the framework of the CBD and clear any discussion about the false claim of "natural" in synthetic biology products. This should be the



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approach that this forum should have in tackle synthetic biology.

We are here for safeguard the conservation of nature and its biodiversity, the one on which small-scale food producers count for their subsistence and to feed the people. We are not here for create a new “nature”.

We hope that the results of the AHTEG will be welcomed by this forum and we claim that starting from the following AHTEG, small-scale food producers, meaning those that manage the largest part of agricultural biodiversity together with Indigenous Peoples, will be included in the discussions and that the Horizon Scanning procedures could include this group in assessing the technology and the introduction in the fields.