

Second coordination meeting for governments and organizations implementing or funding biosafety capacity-building activities, Tromso, Norway, 18-20 January 2006

RESULTS AND FOLLOW UP OF AREA-ED/GTZ PROJECT ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON BIOSAFETY PROCESS IN ALGERIA AND IMPLICATION FOR NBF AND REGIONAL STRATEGY

Meriem LOUANCHI

Coordinator of the project

www.areaed.asso.dz/biosecurite

INTRODUCTION

Involvement in biosafety process with :

■ No understanding of all the issues because :

- Neither opportunity nor an obligation
- Absence of research or production of modern biotech
- Low level of expertise on science and legislation
- GMOs of first generation commercialized not of special interest

■ Preoccupations to become passive consumers and a land of experimentations because :

- Importation of food and agricultural inputs with no control
- Rural development : 1/3 of the population
- Agrarian systems fragil and no adapted to intensive agriculture
- Introduction of new crops as wheat and trees
- Introduction by research sector : adaptative science for research education

BIOSAFETY PROCESS

- May 2000 : Signature of the Protocol
- December 2000 : Moratorium on plants and seeds GM
- 2003 : UNEP-GEF project on development of NBF
- June 2004 : Ratification of the Protocol
- November 2004 : The project of law on GMOs and biological resources rejected in the Parliament
- April 2005 : Acceptance of the NBF project
- June 2005 : Draft of NBF

68 JOURNAL OFFICIEL DE LA REPUBLIQUE ALGERIENNE N° 02 12 Chaoual 1421
7 janvier 2001

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Vu le décret exécutif n° 93-284 du 9 Jomada Ethania 1417 correspondant au 23 novembre 1993, modifié et complété, fixant la réglementation relative aux semences et plants, notamment ses articles 2, 20, 23, 25 et 43;

Arrête :

Article 1er. — Dans le cadre des dispositions des articles 2, 20, 23, 25 et 43 du décret exécutif n° 93-284 du 9 Jomada Ethania 1417 correspondant au 23 novembre 1993 susvisé, l'importation, la production, la commercialisation et l'utilisation du matériel végétal génétiquement modifié sont interdites.

Article 2. — Au sens du présent arrêté, on entend par matériel végétal génétiquement modifié, toute plante vivante ou parties vivantes de plante, y compris les yeux, griffes, greffons, tubercules, rhizomes, boutures, pousses, semences destinés à la multiplication ou à la reproduction et ayant fait l'objet d'un transfert artificiel de gène en provenance d'un autre individu appartenant à une espèce différente voire d'un gène bactérien, mené dans des conditions telles que le caractère nouveau gouverné par ce gène se perpétue de manière stable dans la descendance.

Article 3. — Les institutions scientifiques et les organismes de recherche peuvent, à des fins d'analyses et de recherche, sur leur demande, être autorisés à introduire, détenir, transporter et utiliser du matériel végétal génétiquement modifié dans des conditions qui seront définies par décision du ministre chargé de l'agriculture.

Article 4. — Le présent arrêté sera publié au *Journal officiel* de la République algérienne démocratique et populaire.

Fait à Alger, le 28 Ramadhan 1421 correspondant au 24 décembre 2000.

Saïd BARKAT.

« ...import, production, dissemination, marketing and utilization of genetically modified plants materials are prohibited »

OTHER REGULATIONS RELATED TO BIOSAFETY MEASURES

- Algeria involvmed on African Model Laws:
 - on biological resource access, local communities rights and benefits sharing through the Ministry of Trade
 - on biosafety and common biosafety system for Africa of benefits, through the Ministry of Agriculture
- Although independent negociation for WTO leads to UPOV like regulation :
 - Patent act (2003)
 - Plant and seed Law (feb 2005)

CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION

Because of the lack of information, CSOs have a key role in informing and training all the stakeholders.

AREA-ED initiative plays an important interface role between farmers, NGO's, experts and policy makers into the process of information and training and by their involvement into the institutional commissions.



AREA-ED

Created in 1994, AREA-ED works in order to build both a citizen network and create opportunities to consider and exchange information concerning environment and sustainable development

Since 1999, the association is involved on issues related to GMOs and biosafety by:

- Organization of the first conference (1999)
 - Participation at international conferences and at experts meetings on the two African Model Laws (2000, 2001)
 - Coordination of 1 project funded by GAIA-GRAIN on capacity-building of AREA-ED on biosafety process (2002)
 - Coordination of 1 project funded by GTZ on participation of civil society to biosafety process in Algeria
- From the beginning, AREA-ED was assisted by two french NGOs, BEDE (Montpellier) and Inf'OGM (Paris)

Project: *Enabling Civil Society in Biosafety Process in Algeria*

- Funded by GTZ, started in October 2003 for 2 years
- Aims at enforcing information means and increases the public participation to build a national biosafety system.
- Very strong opportunity to strengthen the NBF project
- Activities consist of:
 - Information work which aims to strengthen the skills of stakeholders
 - Enhancing public debate, formations and exchanges
 - Participation in the general biosafety process

1. Information work:

Select, translate, condense and distribute the information throughout a newsletter and a web site.

Biosécurité-dz (French/Arabic)

N°0: bases of civil society participation in biosafety process.

N°1: risks and controversy around GMOs.

N°2: Biosafety process in Algeria and public participation.

N°3: COP-MOP and the future of Cartagena protocol.

www.areaed.asso.dz/biosecurity

- Created in November 2004.
- Developed an African francophone citizen watch.
- IT is a permanent access tool to information on GMOs and Biosafety.

2. Enhancing public debate, training and exchanges

- Awareness : **OGM.DZ** : Scientific and cultural manifestation on GMOs, throughout 6 Algerian cities.(16-17 April 2005)
 - Educational exhibition “Les OGM en question” explaining Biodiversity, Biosafety and Ethical concepts.
 - Public debate and scientific conferences
 - theatre play « Le péché ogémique » explaining in simple and funny way controversies around GMOs.
- Training and exchange workshops

Participation of the large public to the biosafety: Information and traceability. (Algiers, December 2003)

Impact of GMOs on peasant agriculture and participation of the public in the process of biosafety and protection of genetical resources. (Gharadaïa, September 2004)

Options for implementing a regulation framework for GMOs control and protection of biological resources. (Tipaza, April 2005)

Prevent the biotechnological risks on agriculture ; participation of Maghrebian civil society in the biosafety process. (Algiers, 14-15 January 2006)

3. Participation in the general biosafety process

- At an international level
 - MOP-COP 2 in Montreal : Presentation of the project under the GTZ side-event
 - Participation at several conferences at regional and international levels: WESCANNA, Mediterranean and francophone African regions

 - At a national level
- Member of the national committee of coordination of the UNEP-GEF project on development of NBF

RESULTS & FOLLOW-UP

- After two years of workshops, meetings and discussions throughout the country with many stakeholders, a national platform for the public debate on biosafety is currently set up by civil society organizations.
- Recalling the state sovereignty and its responsibility to implement a precautionary policies for the preservation of national genetic patrimony and public health, two major issues concerns: regulatory measures, and public participation on biosafety process

1. Biosafety Regulatory frameworks.

- ❑ Complete the opening conceded with the open market of WTO, by regulatory system of control of GMO and protection of genetic resources with taking into account the other international treaties (TIRPAA, African model laws) and which is based on precautionary principle, socio-economic consideration and public participation.
- ❑ Before the setting of a complete biosafety regulatory system, including labeling, traceability and liability, responsibility and reparation regulations, the moratorium should be strengthened with efficient control measures
- ❑ Harmonization of the regulatory framework in the Maghrebian countries and strengthen capacities of delegations in COP-MOP (number and expertise)
- ❑ Set up public participation mechanisms in the regulatory framework and identification of the concerned actors (farmers, consumers)
- ❑ A specific laws to protect traditional varieties and farmer rights. Creation of register of local varieties and required 0 % contamination for seeds.

Almost of these recommendations was extended to Morocco and Tunisia in the last workshop in Algiers.

2. Public participation in biosafety process

Maghreb - biosécurité : a plate-forme of maghrebian civil society networks

- ❑ **Agri-Research** : Responsible research based on precautionary principle, novative research on modern biotech including biosafety and alternatives of biotech agriculture
 - ❑ Creation of REMDO : Réseau Maghrébin de Détection des OGM. Two laboratories (INA-Algiers and ISBM-Monastir)
 - ❑ Project of training course for francophone countries in the spirit of GENOK training course
- ❑ **Education** : Conception of pedagogical tools in arabic and french
 - ❑ Creation of cercle of teachers and perspectives of introduction on pedagogical programs (AREA-ED)
 - ❑ Follow the work of translation in arabic and french (several NGOs)
- ❑ **Information Network through the Web site of AREA-ED**
 - ❑ Citizen watch on biosafety and biological resources protection
 - ❑ Regional network for exchange of experiences (wescana, francophone Africa, Mediterranean countries).
 - ❑ Action of awareness : organization of public debate (National assembly, Chambre nationale de l'agriculture, farmer organizations)

