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International Demonstration

“For biological diversity – local, fair, GMO-free!”

Monday, May 12th 2008 in Bonn, Germany

Speech Prof. Dr. Hubert Weiger

(Chairman BUND, Friends of the Earth Germany)

Dear Madam and Sir, dear friends of GMO-free farming!

There is no better place for our demonstration. Bonn is one of 133 GMO-free communities in Germany. In December 2006, the local authority decided not to grow GMOs on their own land. Also in the leases is declared: Genetic engineering is forbidden.

And so Bonn is in good company:

- 133 communities and municipalities ban the cultivation of GMOs on their property.
- German farmers founded 180 GMO-free regions und practice guaranteed GMO-free agriculture on one million hectares farmland.
- The protestant land churches oblige their tenants to do GMO-free farming and the Catholic Church is getting involved to proclaim liberty from genetic engineering on their land.

The movement for agriculture without genetic engineering is one of the biggest grassroots-movements of the last years. It is powerful and grows among the society.

Wherever Monsanto, Pioneer or BASF try to cultivate their GMO-crops, an opposed citizen action group will be founded. For Germany, it is clear: Who sows genetic engineering, harvests opposition.

Why do farmers, churches and communities say “no” to genetic engineering? Why do farmers sign legally binding self-obligations not to grow GMOs? Why do churches and communities ban GMO-crop-growing from their land?

- They all feel betrayed by policy. Policy in Germany and the EU favors six multinational biotech-companies over the interest of the majority of European citizens. In the EU nobody wants GMOs on fields and plates!
- Farmers, churches and communities know: coexistence of farming with and without genetic engineering is a sham. In practice, it doesn't work. So they cannot be deceived: Who says coexistence, literally means contamination.
- Farmers, churches and communities do not want this model of agriculture which genetic engineering stands for. Year after year, on large-scale monocultures grow the same crops, patented seeds, which force farmers into economic dependence of agro-multinationals, and they are planted with an immense use of pesticides and fertilisers – agrarian deserts without trees and bushes on which field hare and field lark

find no more place - this is not at all their image of agriculture. And they are completely right with that and can be sure of our full support!

Dear Madam and Sir!

Who sows genetic engineering, harvests opposition. This is an experience that even the EU-Commission cannot ignore. It is due only to the opposition of European citizens that the Commission has refused to give admission for the cultivation of three more genetic engineered plants last Wednesday.

But we demand more:

- We demand: Also the cultivation of the only GMO-plant which can be grown in the EU commercially must be immediately forbidden. The ban of the maize Mon 810 of Monsanto is overdue; the proofs of its environment-damaging effect are oppressive.
- We demand: Finally, GMO-free-regions must be protected legally!
- We demand the self-determination right of every region in the EU to ban the cultivation of GMO-plants on their territories.

Dear Madam and Sir!

The EU has for twelve years – since there are GMO-plants – not opened their gates for genetic engineering. We achieved that all with

each other. We can be very proud of it. The fact that it keeps to it,
for it we will fight on. Do not let us rest until the entire EU is one big
GMO-free-region!