



15 June 2022

Dear Mr President

We humbly urge you to uphold the promises of your New Dawn Government to transition to Sustainable Food and Agriculture Systems and halt the validation of the new GMO policy

We implore you to maintain the ban on live Genetically Modified Organisms in Zambia and halt the validation of the revised GMO policy planned. This process was initiated under the previous regime in an undemocratic manner with vested interests. The current *Draft Policy* remains technically unsound, with fundamental issues that have been raised by stakeholders since 2017 still unaddressed. These will put both your Ministry of Green Economy and Environment AND our people and country at significant risk.

GMOs have been in existence for 50 years. After receiving more funding than any other technology of its kind, they have failed to address the problems they always promised to. **In the same time, Zambia has created an extraordinary market opportunity for itself, with its global export priority guaranteed GMO-free status.**

As the UPND has soundly recognised, Zambia's agriculture system is the backbone of the country. Prioritising Zambian farmers, especially women and youth remains a central principle. However, if passed, the new Biotechnology and Biosafety Policy will negate this, facilitating foreign corporate control and extraction of Zambia's food and agriculture sectors and benefit an elite minority at best. It will downgrade Zambian farmer systems, raise input costs, contaminate resilient seed systems, undermine local markets, violate Human Rights, and expose our country to huge trade losses and potentially country-wide unintended, unpredictable effects and ecosystem degradation and collapse.

Overarching policy concerns

- Stakeholders have raised concerns regarding the Policy Revision since 2017, and these remain unaddressed. *Specifically, this relates to maintaining the ban on live GMOs and environmental release; upholding the Precautionary Principle and strong Liability and Redress mechanism, as a matter of fundamental principle relating to any work on genetic engineering and GMOs.*
- Many Zambians who have not been consulted, feel they have a right to be in order to express their position that Zambia should remain GMO-free.
- The policy change rafting, ongoing since 2017, was initiated and funded from outside of Zambia, and stakeholders feel strongly that this is a national issue, which must be nationally determined and driven.

The ZAAB has therefore requested that The Ministry of Green Economy and Environment halt the proposed validation of the Policy immediately.

We implore you to uphold the vision of the New Dawn Government. Support the transition to *sustainable* food and agriculture systems whilst building resilience to climate change, *prioritise* economic development for the majority not a minority, and ensure democracy and genuine democratic participation in matters of concerns for all. The GMO issue and passing of the new GMO policy in its current form will totally undermine these UPND promises.



We humbly seek your help and supportive intervention in this process.

In solidarity



Fr. Dr. Gabriel Mapulanga

ZAAB Chairperson

On Behalf of the Zambia Alliance for Agroecology and Biodiversity, and undersigned supporters