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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Seventh Ordinary Session
28 June – 2 July 2005
Sirte, Libya

EX/CL/205 (VII) Add.6

**THE DANGER OF IMPORTED SEEDS IN THE AFRICAN
CONTINENT**

**(Item Proposed by the Great Socialist People's
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)**

THE DANGER OF IMPORTED SEEDS IN THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

Seeds are very significant agricultural production inputs. An improved seed industry will therefore enhance agricultural production in terms of quality and quantity. It could be argued that future agricultural development, food production and food security in the world in general, and in the developing countries in particular, now more than ever before, will depend on the development of improved seed industry and its wider use.

Although improved seeds have played a crucial role in increasing the level of production, particularly during the 20th Century, this role was limited and modest in Africa which has always suffered from severe food crisis and food insecurity.

In its more sophisticated and integrated sense, the seed industry is still one of the industries dominated by the developed countries. However, in view of its importance to the developing countries for food production and optimal investment of their material, natural and human potentials, they too badly need to develop their own seed industry.

Sustainable development in Africa and the achievement of the Continent's objectives informed by the relevant decisions of the Sirte Extraordinary Summit, depend, to a large extent, on the development of the seed industry and the harnessing of all available scientific potentials to break the monopoly of this industry. This will contribute to the improvement of production levels and access to the world market, which requires a level that does not currently obtain in most African countries. The present monopoly of the industry puts Africa before a great challenge as available statistics reveal that trade in seeds in the last decade stood at 15 billion Dollars, 40% of which went to America, 33% to the European Union and 27% to the rest of the world. Within the European Union, France's share was about 30% followed by Germany, Italy and Britain which shared 40% among them with the remaining percentage going to the rest of the Union Member States. 5 out of the multinational seeds companies, belong to the United States of America, 4 to France 2 to the Netherlands and Japan, respectively and one to Germany.

Recent developments in the seed industry and its monopoly by these companies have led them to reserve the industry's ownership rights through various legal and technical means, including the introduction of genetical factors that allow for the use of commercial seeds only once. This denies the developing countries the opportunity to use farm seeds and resulted in diminished plant biodiversity hitherto enjoyed by a number of developing countries. The danger of monopolising this industry lies in the fact that it will in the long run, reduce the total area of arable lands and Africa's share of agricultural commodity trade, thereby limiting its competitiveness in the world market.

Effects of the Monopoly of the Seed Industry on Agricultural Development in Africa

The present monopoly of the seed industry has multifaceted ramifications that hinder the attainment of sustainable development and food security on the Continent.

Increasing their profits is the main objective which underpins the policies and activities of the multinational companies that continue to monopolise the seed industry. This policy is at variance with the socio-economic and political imperatives of Africa's development. It is within this context therefore that the African Union adopted at its Sirte Extraordinary Summit, important decisions on food security, sustainable integrated development and investment of the continent's huge resources in tackling the challenges of hunger, poverty and disease. Curtailing the level of production and price increase are some of the major undesirable economic dimensions of monopoly which is also harmful from the technical, political and economic perspectives as it gives these companies whose only objective is to make profits at the expense of Africa's development strategic targets, the power to take decisions on matters relating to food security and development. Moreover, these companies have paid little attention to research and studies on the production of seeds that are adaptable to Africa's environmental conditions and biodiversity requirements, which portends impending disasters and famine of the magnitude witnessed at the turn of the century, having had devastating consequences on both the environment and populations in Africa.

The Jamahiriya urges Member States to adopt this decision as one of the agricultural policies of the Continent and do the following:

- a) Define the legislative frameworks for seed production activities which would create an enabling environment for public and private investment in this industry;
- b) Formulate policies for the preservation of genetic origins of plants, including the domestic varieties and existing desert and wild plants of the Continent with a view to developing them and extracting from them new varieties of high yield;
- c) Coordinate the activities of the competent scientific institutions in a way that would contribute to the development of national programmes for the introduction and multiplication of domestic varieties as well as the formulation of management, storage and marketing plans.

This situation requires that the Continent shoulders its following responsibilities:

- To keep pace with developments in the global seed industry and to appropriate modern knowledge and techniques, bearing in mind that the modern industry for seed production should be based on sound research and development as well as ownership of genetic origins of plants in Africa. To do so requires greater efforts and research, particularly in light of the quantum leap achieved in the following fields:
- biotechnology, genetic engineering, genetic sciences, biochemistry and other sciences that are used for the promotion and development of the seed industry;

- addressing the challenges imposed by the state of agricultural development and food production on the Continent amidst the growing imbalance between population growth and available resources in the light of international and regional changes where the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals of reducing the number of those who suffer from hunger and poverty to a half by 2015 cannot materialise unless the challenges of providing affordable improved seeds of high yield to all African farmers, is met.

- harnessing and pooling Africa's material and human potentials for the establishment of a sophisticated seed industry that can break the monopoly and ensure the achievement of sustainable agricultural development and food security for the peoples of Africa. National Governments cannot on their own meet these challenges and provide all the necessary support for this strategic industry so as to be able to compete with the multinational monopolies. Indeed, Africa with its huge resources and at the level of its similar regional groupings and natural and environmental conditions, is collectively capable of putting in place a state-of-the art seed industry.

2005

The danger of imported seeds in the African continent (Item proposed by the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

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