



## **A.P. COALITION IN DEFENCE OF DIVERSITY**

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*p v satheesh*  
*convenor*

April 10, 2007

Dear Shri Venkatesamgaru

Please accept our greetings from the global network of solidarity groups on the occasion of the International GM Opposition Month where millions of farmers, indigenous people, women and environmental activists have taken to streets in the continents of Asia, Africa, Australia , Europe and the Americas have taken to streets to express their anguish and horror at the way the governmental and CGIAR agricultural research institutions have been caving in before the onslaught of the biotech industry.

On behalf of hundreds of thousands of small and marginal farmers working in the dryland environment in Medak District, who have been growing and nourishing a huge biodiversity on their farms and food cultures, we urge you to take steps towards the following:

1. Ban genetic engineering from agriculture from the Medak District. All over the dryland belts of the Deccan genetic engineering as seen in the cultivation of Bt cotton, has proved a disaster for small and marginal farmers resulting in thousands of suicides. Besides it has also started toxifying our soils and killing the livestock.
2. Genetic engineering in agriculture is the surest way of depriving farmers their control over agriculture and handing it over to large agrochemical corporations.
3. As the custodian of the farming communities in Medak, where small and marginal farmers constitute nearly 70% of the population, it becomes your duty to do everything to save their life, honour and dignity. One of the ways of achieving this is to stop institutions such as ICRISAT and the state agricultural research institutions from engaging in genetic engineering.

4. Instead, promote ecological farming which is the surest answer to the horrifying water wars and the climate change that looms threateningly on our horizon.
5. Expand the state support to food farmers, particularly in the rain fed farming systems thereby reducing the stress on natural resources. This can be done by promoting dryland crops such as sorghum, millets and pulses which still form the finest mosaic of biodiversity on the farms of Medak District.
6. Millets that are resource saving, farmer friendly, rich in health and nutrition should be included in all the government programs such as Food for Work, Social Welfare hostels, ICDS and PDS. This will not only provide the richest nutrition to the children, women and other vulnerable sections of the populations but also provide a great fillip to farmers in the District to cultivate these rich crops.

Please read the annexed memorandum addressed to the Director General, ICRISAT to understand our deepest anguish in relation to the ICRISAT adventure in Genetic Engineering. As the head of the district please officially convey to them our concerns. ICRISAT exists in Medak because of the generous donation of land and other facilities by the Government of AP as well as the goodwill of millions of farmers in the global south. Therefore it is their duty to recognize and respect the wishes of people whom they fancily call **the Resource Poor**.

On the International Month of Opposition to GMOs, we request you to pro actively oppose genetic engineering and support small and the marginal farmers and their time tested technology of ecological farming.

With warm regards

[p v satheesh]

Convenor

**AP Coalition in Defence of Diversity**

**Mr B Venkatesham, IAS, District Collector, Medak District, Sangareddy**