

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MARCH 8, 2006

### Statement of Second Women Farmers' Conference on Food Sovereignty

Islamabad, 8 March 2006: On the occasion of International Women's Day 2006, we, women farmers, farmers' organizations, Lok Sanjh Foundation, South Asia Network on Food, Ecology, and Culture (SANFEC), Bedari Fikr Forum, and human rights activists, gathered here at Dhok Gaji, a small village about 30 kilometers in the south of Islamabad to participate in the second women farmers' conference on food sovereignty.

“National security is closely linked to food security and respect for local cultures”, said Mr. Mahmood Ali, Federal Minister for Cabinet division. The Terminator seeds can no way be categorized as development technology. It will destroy biodiversity of the region. This region is very rich in biodiversity. Obviously, Terminator seeds will affect food production of the country.

Women farmers shared their concept of food sovereignty and reiterated their demand for fair distribution of resources and a secure and sustainable access to land, water and seeds.

“Women farmers reject any legislation or agreement that undermine their right to save, use and reuse seeds” said Rajab Sultan, former Farmer Councilor of the Union Council. She particularly opposed the idea of development and dissemination of Terminator seeds in the country. Women farmers were of the view that Terminator seeds will ruin the livelihoods of five million small farmers of the country.

Women farmers are responsible to save seeds and make them available for the next crop.



Terminators seeds will ruin our biodiversity and weaken our (women) role in food production. We will resist any move to introduce Terminator seeds in the country, said another women farmer from Sheikhpura. Women have saved seeds in the past and will continue to do so in future. No such technology or legislation will come in our way to conserve biodiversity.



While addressing the women farmers' conference, Dr. Shahid Zia, Executive Director of Lok Sanjh explained the threat that Terminator seeds can pose to food production system of Pakistan. In a country where more than 80 percent of the farming communities use the farm saved seeds for growing food, Terminator seeds will virtually make seeds unavailable to these communities. Moreover it will cost more than 20 million dollars to purchase seeds only for the wheat crop, he said. Food insecurity will be the natural outcome of this type of insane development.