



## PRESS RELEASES

**Gene Campaign has filed Public Interest Litigation in the Supreme Court of India asking for:**

- The *Rules for Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Micro organisms, Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells, 1989*, to be brought in consonance with Art. 14, 19, 21, 38, 47, 48, 48A read with 51-A(g) of the Constitution. If the respondents fail to do so, then to declare the Rules of 1989 as unconstitutional;
- Direct the Respondents to set-up a High Power Committee to formulate a National Policy on Genetically Engineered Organisms (GEOs) through a multi-stakeholder consultation process;
- Direct the Respondents to observe a moratorium on various permissions / approvals / trials concerning GEOs, in particular of commercial nature, particularly of crops for which India is a Centre of Origin / Diversity, till the Rules are amended and a sound Regulatory and Monitoring System is put in place.

Dr. Suman Sahai said they had to resort to this action since all attempts by Gene Campaign to engage in a dialogue with the policy makers failed to produce any response nor was there any move to listen to stakeholder concerns. Gene Campaign has been asking for greater transparency and participation in the decision-making on GM crops. Gene Campaign's principal concern has been the lack of technical competence, transparency and accountability in the policymaking, especially regulatory bodies, which could have damaging consequences in a new technology area like GM crops.

Gene Campaign has been pointing out that almost all countries involved with GM crops have been going through a review of their GM policies and systems of regulation and oversight in the light of new evidence and that India must do the same. This appeal has fallen on deaf ears.

The last straw, Dr. Sahai said was when the recommendations that emerged from a Multistakeholder national symposium (organised by Gene Campaign) were rebutted point by point by the Department of Biotechnology, saying essentially that the system in place was perfect and no changes or improvements were needed.

Gene Campaign then decided to approach the Supreme Court to seek relief in the interest of public health, environmental safety and livelihood security for the farmers, and to develop a competent and transparent system for GM crops in the country.

