

## **Fate of Pro-Terminator Bill Uncertain**

### *Brazil's Judiciary Commission in Confusion: Charges, Counter-Charges and Confrontations*

Confronted with 35,000 institutional and individual signatures on a petition growing by several hundred every hour, Brazil's Judiciary Commission agreed to take the Pro-Terminator Bill off the agenda this week, but leaving open the possibility that the bill will be passed when Congress reconvenes in early February. However, the Judiciary Commission also determined to sit again next Tuesday and could continue meeting through Wednesday and Thursday before adjourning for Christmas. The Chair of the Commission has reiterated his commitment to block the contentious bill but CSO observers understand that a majority of Commission members is in favor of the suicide seed legislation and could, regardless of a formal agenda, call for a vote at any meeting. Brazilian allies both in the Commission and among the civil society organizations attending the negotiations say that representatives and government officials have been shocked by the scale in ferocity of global opposition to the proposed legislation.

“There is no reason to trust this process or reduce our pressure,” says Maria José Guazzelli of Centro Ecológico, “although the government and Commission have been taken aback by our opposition, they could pass the bill at almost any moment. If the vote doesn't come before Friday, December 20, we will have a breathing space until February, but anything could happen next week and everything could happen again in February.”

Supporters of the suicide seed legislation have privately argued that GMO opponents should welcome their bill since it will prevent farmers from reusing GM seeds. This is both technically and politically wrong. As with GMOs, Terminator technologies are highly imperfect and the sterility trait will inevitably bleed into neighboring fields and crops, meaning that farmers will unwittingly plant seeds that they will never be able to harvest. More ominously, Terminator is fundamentally a ground-shifting market strategy. If major seed companies are allowed to use Terminator technologies, they will immediately transfer all of their plant breeding research onto the suicide seed platform, which affords them anywhere from 2 to 4 times the profitability of non-Terminator seeds. With the incentive of windfall profits, the multinationals will use every resource at their command to persuade government regulators to accept

Terminator varieties and will quietly withdraw less-profitable, non-Terminator varieties from the market leaving both farmers and countries stranded with only the Terminator option. Terminator profoundly transforms the economic and political dynamics of global plant breeding.

\* The petition is available here <http://tinyurl.com/l5y4rj7> (in Portuguese), here <http://tinyurl.com/owrgt8c> (in English) and here <http://goo.gl/KJvVCd>(in Spanish). For non-Portuguese speakers: in order to sign to the petition on change.org, you must enter your first name (Nome), last name (Sobrenome), email address, street address (Endereço), city (Cidade), state (Estado), zip code (CEP); tick the first box if you want to receive mailings from change.org; tick the second box if you want to receive updates on the Terminator issue.

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