

Betreff: Press release in english

Dear Jens,

I have carefully gone through the press release. we know Naandi Foundation. it is a good organisation but it is not a grass roots organisation with experience in community mobilisation. it depends upon local NGOs for implementation of its projects. there is no problem if companies wants to work with this organisation in improving the school infrastructure etc in the villages.

The basic thing is bayer and other companies agreed on a action plan which included most of our demands. at this stage we can not make any comment. we have to wait and see how serious they are about implementing the agreed action. in 2003 also an action plan was agreed but it was not implemented stating that some companies are not serious. due to heavy pressure from campaign groups in Europe bayer is under tremendous pressure to address the issue.

I am enclosing the minutes of the meeting of 22nd. It was written by companies but it is OK. most of the points discussed were covered.

coming down to your specific questions- in 22nd meeting when Bayer, Emergent genetics and syngenta companies expressed that they were unable to convince other ASI companies for joint action we said it is OK. Let these three companies work together under ASI banner. The action plan for 2005 season can be confined to those villages where these three companies have control over seed production. It is realistic plan to focus on specific area so that we can have some results. If we confine to specific area control and monitoring is easy. companies can control seed organisers because it is the companies which give the foundation seed to organisers. companies can ask seed organisers to give production only in specified villages.

regarding sanctions and bonus we are still working out details with companies. In 22nd meeting bayer said it does not mind to penalise the farmers (by rejecting the seed) but it preffers to work on incentives side.

also other companies have some objections about rejecting the seed from farmers if they employ children thinking that it will have legal implications. we said our intention is not to punish the farmers, but companies have to clearly specify what they do if farmers violate child labour norm.

we asked the companies to clearly specify the sanctions and incentives and communicate with farmers well in advance before making agreements.

The norms of work for adult labour (wages, working conditions etc) did not come discussion in 22nd meeting.  
in the agreed action plan the joint field inspections is mandatory.

on the whole my impression is that the action plan is some what realistic. the success will depend upon the seriousness and commitment by companies in implementing this action plan without dilution.

best regards  
davuluri