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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Society of Iranian Women Advocating Sustainable Development of Environment, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[02 February 2017]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Increasing public awareness about food security and immunity

Introduction: Introduction and Background

The Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the biggest importers of the world's agricultural products, which potentially can be an importer of genetically modified organisms (GMO). Iran is one of the pioneers in the biotech industry (Biotechnology) in the world, and in different fields of it such as scientific studies about risks and safety of this technology made concerns and considerations in relation to its safety and also based on principles and bioethics, activities and achievements of this technology should not have contradictory with public health and the environment. According to the considerations and concerns, Iran joined to Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in 2004 and the protocol was approved by Parliament which must be implemented in country as a law. In line with Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, Iran Biosafety Act was passed by Parliament in 2010.

Training plan

Therefor Society of Iranian Women Advocating Sustainable Development of Environment, the Department of Environment with the UNEP ,Environmental and local NGOs has managed workshops in Tehran which is capital city and 4 major provinces of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

These workshops' objective is increasing and promoting awareness of experts and employees of the Department of the Environment of province and public Environmental activists, about the biosafety and being more familiar with biosafety laws.

The Workshops were held in two stages: the first, for environmental NGOs, journalists and province's reporters, including 11 journalists and 41 NGO and the second one were for Employees of DOE and subsidiary offices and representatives of other executive agencies of province. Totally 86 people were participated in the work shop.

Should be mentioned Iranian Biosafety Project has been implemented from 2015. On behalf of the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) and supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), according to Iran's membership in Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and with the aim of capacity building and empowering Iran in capability and basic infrastructure in carrying out risk assessments and risk management.

To strengthen and improve laws and regulations on Biosafety, infrastructure development to increase public awareness and management of Biosafety informing systems.

OUTPOUT:

Finally, due to the importance of biotechnology in today's world, the project will promote and strengthen Iran's national biosafety framework which leads to economic growth and sustainable development in the application of safe biotechnology.

This technology is not only beneficial for human beings and the environmental protection, but also can be risky to the same degree. Should be briefly mentioned scientific studies and researches in the field of risk assessment of genetically modified products, shows the importance of biosafety and bioethics on the type of these products. The GMO risk to public health and a factor for profitability of it is still needs investigation.

We believe implementing enforcement biosafety project is an opportunity to accelerate the implementation of the country's biosafety law. We also believe that major effort of UN Department of Environment is helping to empower states and countries in face of genetically manipulated products challenges.

Therefor on the base of participants from head office and subordinate offices, Department of the Environment, Environmental NGOs' are mostly interest to Biosafety and participation. We have to continue on training and investigation on GMO products. We hope country's different experts and decision makers become more familiar with this field, by holding more such professional workshops in biosafety.

The solutions to Iran's environmental crisis require a multidisciplinary set of initiatives. This calls for environmental experts to work with social scientists, engineers, preservation experts and economists at the national and international levels.
