

PRESS CONFERENCE

Communique presentation

Rev. Chika Onyejiuwa read the communiqué and dissembled information to members of the media. In the course of this, he laid emphasis on the major point by using voice modulation, eye contact and extended pauses.

Re-intensification of major points

Rev. Aniedi Okure, OP told the pressmen that the issues flowed from “Just Governance” and so the concerns being addressed remain holistic and not driven by myopic interests.

Nnimmo Bassey told the gathering that Nigeria had come to the cross roads on the issue of Biosafety, Monsanto’s GMOs and foods, yet constructive decisions have to be taken to reject the invasion of this nation’s food systems and food security. He advocated a broad coalition of groups to frontally tackle the problem.

Sr. Prof. Teresa Okure said that Nigerians, just as other people, have been created by God. So creation is God’s work and this is fully captured in the book of Genesis. God looked at it, saw that it was beautiful and gave it to mankind to protect and care for and reproduce, naturally. However, because the world is driven by business and profit motive, Monsanto is using GMOs to challenge God’s order of life.

Dr. Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour said that developed nations have banned GMOs and so Nigeria should take advantage of the vacuum by increasing her export to France, UK, Germany and the EU Countries.

After dissembling information to the media, the latter began asking questions and seeking clarifications.

Akin Oyewole of *Love FM* wanted to know if there were scientific proofs to challenge Mosanto’s claims on GMOs. The organizers told him of extant literature on biotechnology and GMOs. Available publications on the topic were immediately distributed to the press to further enhance their understanding of the issue.

Doyin Ojosipe of *Peoples Daily* asked the organizers how the common people would be made to understand the technicalities of the document and buy into it. Responding, Bassey said that the process of translating the document into the three widely spoken Nigerian languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) had been initiated and was underway.

Collins Nabuife of *Nigerian Tribune* asked the organizers if they ever deployed advocacy in preventing the passage of the Biosafety Act before 2015. Two respondents, Bassey and Rhodes-Vivour said that reasonable efforts were made but the outcome was unsatisfactory. However, since the current government is prepared for change, the media is being implored to join the organizers in further educating the public (particularly the law makers) on the inherent dangers of adopting GMOs in Nigeria and Africa because the issue was not just about food and food security but about life sustainability, democracy and just governance.