



PRESS BRIEFING

DATE: JULY 17, 2018

VENUE: NBA OFFICES

TIME: 13:00 HOURS

STATEMENT BY NBA BOARD CHAIRMAN DR PAUL ZAMBEZI

THE NATIONAL BIOSAFETY AUTHORITY (NBA) WAS ESTABLISHED UNDER THE BIOSAFETY ACT NO. 10 OF 2007. THROUGH THE ACT, THE NBA REGULATES THE RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, APPLICATION, IMPORTATION, EXPORT, TRANSIT, CONTAINED USE, RELEASE OR PLACING ON THE MARKET OF ANY GMO WHETHER INTENDED FOR USE AS A PHARMACEUTICAL, FOOD, FEED OR PROCESSING, OR A PRODUCT OF A GMO ALSO TO ENSURE THAT ANY ACTIVITY INVOLVING THE USE OF GMOS OR A PRODUCT OF GMO PREVENTS ANY SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OR HARM TO HUMAN, ANIMAL HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE COUNTRY.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE BIOSAFETY ACT, SOME OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE NBA INCLUDE PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS ON IMPORTATION OF GMOS OR PRODUCTS OF GMOS INTO THE COUNTRY; PROMOTING PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION CONCERNING THE ACTIVITIES REGULATED UNDER THE ACT SUCH AS RISK ASSESSMENT, RISK MANAGEMENT AND AUTHORIZATION PROCESSES; KEEPING ANY GMO OR ANY PRODUCT OF A GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISM UNDER REVIEW AND TO BAN ITS HANDLING OR RELEASE IN ZAMBIA WHEN NECESSARY. NBA FURTHERMORE, ESTABLISHES AND MAINTAINS A DATABASE OF GMOS AND THEIR PRODUCTS AS WELL AS MAKING AVAILABLE SUCH INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC.

GMOS AND ZAMBIA

IN 2002 ZAMBIA REJECTED THE DONATED GENETICALLY MODIFIED MAIZE BECAUSE IT HAD NO CAPACITY IN TERMS OF HUMAN RESOURCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THE PRODUCTS CONTAINING OR MADE FROM GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMOS) WERE SAFE FOR THE HUMANS, ANIMALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT. THE 2002 SAGA IS WHAT LED TO THE BIRTH OF THE BIOSAFETY ACT AND THE NBA. CURRENTLY ZAMBIA HAS THE CAPACITY TO ASSESS THE SAFETY AND USE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS IN A JUDICIOUS WAY.

AS SUCH, ZAMBIA DOES ALLOW THE PRODUCTS MADE FROM GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS. THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN ALLOWING THESE PRODUCTS SINCE 2015 AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NBA AND THESE ARE ONLY ALLOWED INTO THE COUNTRY AFTER A RISK ASSESSMENT HAS BEEN CONDUCTED TO ASCERTAIN THE SAFETY OF THE PRODUCTS. SOME OF THE PARAMETERS CONSIDERED DURING THE RISK ASSESSMENT ARE EXTENT OF TOXICITY AS WELL AS ABILITY TO CAUSE ALLERGIES. THE OTHER PARAMETER CONSIDERED IS THE NUTRITIONAL COMPOSITION OF THE PRODUCTS.

AT THE MOMENT ZAMBIA HAS ONLY ALLOWED PROCESSED FOODS MADE FROM GMOS, AND GENETICALLY MODIFIED MICRO-ORGANISMS FOR DIAGNOSTICS AND HEALTH RESEARCH PURPOSES.

PERMITS ISSUANCE

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BIOSAFETY ACT, PERMIT ISSUANCE IS A RIGOROUS PROCESS THAT TAKES ABOUT THREE TO FOUR MONTHS OR 130 DAYS TO BE PRECISE BEFORE A PERMIT CAN BE ISSUED. THE PROCESS STARTS WITH ASSESSING THE COMPLETENESS OF THE APPLICATIONS, FOLLOWED BY PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION. THEREAFTER, A TEAM OF SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC) MEMBERS SITS TO EVALUATE THE SAFETY OF THE INTENDED PRODUCT/S OR RESEARCH TO BE UNDERTAKEN BASED ON SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE ONLY.

DURING THE EVALUATION BY THE SAC, COMPARISON IS ALSO MADE WITH PRODUCTS THAT ARE AUTHORIZED INTERNATIONALLY AND ARE LISTED ON THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING HOUSE (BCH) AND THE FOOD AND

AGRICULTURAL GENETICALLY MODIFIED PLATFORM UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS.

A PERMIT IS REJECTED IF THE PRODUCT/S IS/ARE NOT SAFE FOR THE HUMANS, ANIMALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT. AND A PERMIT CAN BE WITHDRAWN IF THE IMPORTER DEFAULTS OR IS NON COMPLAINT WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE BIOSAFETY ACT 10 OF 2007.

NBA INTERESTS

THE NBA SERVES TO SAFEGUARD THE INTEREST OF THE ZAMBIAN PEOPLE AND ENSURES THAT HUMAN BEINGS, ANIMALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT ARE SAFE AS PER MANDATED IN THE ACT.

ALL PERMITS THAT HAVE BEEN ISSUED SO FAR UNDERWENT THE RIGOROUS RISK ASSESSMENT. SO FAR THE NBA HAS BEEN CONDUCTING AWARENESS AND SENSITIZATION PROGRAMMES TO ENSURE THE PUBLIC MAKES AN INFORMED DECISION WHEN PURCHASING ANY PRODUCT THAT MAY BE GENETICALLY MODIFIED.

PRODUCTS THAT MAY CONTAIN GMOS

SOME OF THE PRODUCTS THAT MAY CONTAIN OR ARE MADE FROM GMOS THAT HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED IN THE COUNTRY INCLUDE FOOD, FEED AND PHARMACETICALS (RESEARCH TRIALS).

CALL/ ADVICE

PEOPLE SHOULD TAKE AN INTEREST IN READING ON THE LABELS FOR THE PRODUCTS THEY PURCHASE SO THEY KNOW WHETHER TO BUY PRODUCTS OF GM THROUGH AN INFORMED DECISION.

NOTE

THE NBA DOES NOT PROMOTE OR PROHIBIT GMOS BUT REGULATES THE USE, APPLICATION, IMPORT, EXPORT, RESEARCH, TRANSIT AND DEVELOPMENT OF GMOS. THIS IS DONE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BIOSAFETY ACT.

THANK YOU