

Scientists call to lift Kenyan GMO ban, claim it affects HIV-Aids patients who need nutrition

A group of scientists from public universities and research centres has faulted the government for banning genetically modified foods. The scientists defended GMOs and called on the government to lift a ban imposed in 2012. They said the move will enhance food security.

They said if maintained, the ban will affect some HIV-Aids patients who depend on fortified blended and specially formulated food rations, most of which contain GM material. Speaking yesterday at Serena Hotel in Nairobi, the researchers faulted the investigations that were conducted by the task force, which reviews the safety of GM foods, terming them flawed and inaccurate.

"We have very serious reservations with the task force's expertise and the result it has presented to the Cabinet. We are therefore calling on the government to ignore its recommendations and lift the ban," the team leader, James Ochanda, said.

Ochanda accused the task force of ignoring the National Biosafety Act and other researchers from leading agencies such as Food and Agriculture Organisation, saying it only relied on a report by a French scientist whose details have since been withdrawn.

"We reject the report on the basis of bias, lack of involvement by the chief regulator of GM activities and we do not think it is sufficient to review a few articles with conclusions that GMOs are not safe for human consumption," he said. "It is disheartening that Kenya is the only country remaining behind in the adoption of GMO technology and it is basing its decision on flawed information."

Read the full, original report: Researchers want ban on GMO lifted