

PANACEA? | Biotech answer to joblessness, says PS Songa

EU says Yes to Kenya biotech food exports

Experts ask Uhuru to lift ban on the products as MPs urge conclusive research

BY DENIS ODUNGA
dodunga@ke.nationmedia.com

The European Union has rescinded its earlier statement that Kenyan farmers will find it difficult to find market in the EU if the country adopts genetically modified crops.

The Head of Rural Development and Agriculture at the EU Dominique Davoux yesterday said they have no problem importing GM products from countries that meet the set guidelines.

The official, who spoke on behalf of the EU Head of Delegation to Kenya, Ambassador Briet Lodewijk, said the envoy had been quoted out of context when early this year, he reportedly said the trading bloc would not accept GM products from Kenya.

"The position of EU is that

we have a list of GMO products to be imported into the EU space. If Kenya contributes there, it will have access to the market," he said during a press conference in Nairobi.

Mr Briet said the EU has authorised the importation of 58 genetically modified crops including GM maize, soya, oilseed rape, sugar beet and cotton.

Yesterday's forum was organised by The Kenya University Biotechnology Consortium in collaboration with the Open Forum on Ag-

ricultural Biotechnology in Africa and the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications.

The meeting was attended by researchers, policy makers, MPs the private sector.

Busia Woman Representative Florence Mutua, who last month led MPs in a fact-finding mission in Europe, urged for an unconditional lifting of the ban.

"Why are developed countries that are able to feed their people coercing us to remain backward? In Spain we met farmers growing GM maize."

Ms Mutua said lifting the ban would open the door for the commercialisation of BT cotton, which has been proved to be several times more cost-effective than traditional cotton.

"It is illogical to associate cancer with GM technology yet there are so many Kenyans dying now of cancer yet there is no genetically modified ones in the country. Even cell-phones faced opposition due to myths when they came to Kenya," she said.

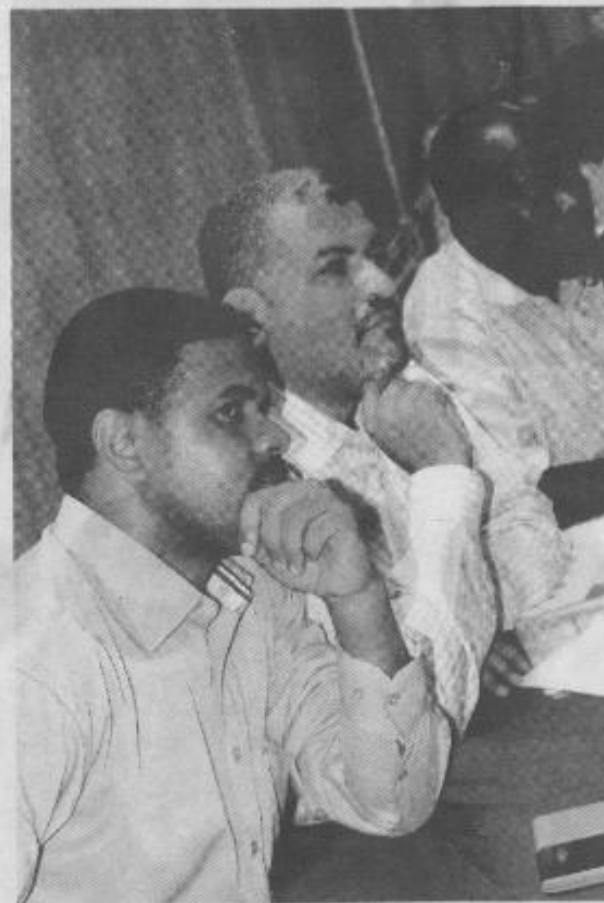
RED FLAG

Not too fast...

■ MPs at the event urged caution in push for GMO adoption, saying the scientists should strike a consensus before the ban is lifted.

■ They included Dan Maanzo, Simba Arati, Kabando wa Kabando and Mary Wambui

FORUM | Slavery in Saudi Arabia



LABAN WALL OGA | NATION

Mvita MP Abdulsamad Nassir (centre) together with Haki Afrika executive director Khaled Hussein at the official opening of a forum of women seeking justice for Kenyans recruited to work in Saudi Arabia in slave-like conditions yesterday. The meeting was held at Royal Castle Hotel in Mombasa.

BRIEFLY

NAIROBI

LSK warns over social media posts

Lawyers risk facing disciplinary action over social media postings, the Law Society of Kenya (LSK) warned yesterday. The warning comes in the wake of a spat between Cabinet Secretary Joseph Ole Lenku's lawyer Donald Kipkorir and outspoken lawyer, Mr Ahmednasir Abdullahi over a land tussle. LSK secretary Apollo Mboya said lawyers were bound by the International Bar Association Principles on Social Media Conduct for the Legal Profession.

NAKURU

Residents demand violent AP's arrest

Residents yesterday stormed an AP post in Subukia Sub-County demanding the arrest of an officer who assaulted a man over a drug deal. The victim, Mr Alex Njoroge, said he was drinking with friends when the officers approached him and sent him to buy bhang. "When I brought it, he assaulted me, saying I should not have handed it to him in front of his colleagues," said Mr Njoroge. A senior AP officer said the matter would be investigated.