

**Key messages extracted from the online discussion led by AfricaAdapt Network on Local seeds, GMOs, Food Security and climate change**

The discussion has enabled to distinguish, among more than 200 contributors local/indigenous seeds users/defenders, who dominated the debate, and those who support GMOs (minority) as a means to cope with climate change issues.

<b>Pro GMOs arguments</b>	<b>Local/Indigenous seeds users/defenders Arguments</b>
Entrepreneurial freedom (choice to decide without barriers)	Rusticity of local seeds that have adapted throughout life
Farmer should be embedded to the new green revolution (African were not part of the first revolution)	Part of cultural heritage (should be maintained)
Environmental positive aspect (less use of pesticides)	Negative impact of GMOs on Health (not sure about the negative impacts of GMOs on health and environment)
Positive Economic Impact on farmer (increase in yield production)	Right of producers and consumers to decide whether or not they could produce and use GMOs (not the case so far)
	Negative Economic Impact of GMOs on farmers (increase in cost of seed, decrease in seeds production which affects negatively fiber weight)
	Intellectual property Issue: GMOs depends on multinational. Not owned by farmer themselves

Overall, participants have raised the fact that “the seed” is part of the solution to overcome climate change impact on food security. Most of the problem is structural which results on the lack of public policy support over the last decades. Although African countries have been making efforts to support the sector, this remains not sufficient.

The use of local/traditional seeds or GMOs should be embedded, and not dissociated, from the overall designed and implemented public policy. Technology itself cannot correct deep seated systemic issue. It should be considered as an enabler not the panacea.

However, Majority of participants have highlighted the potential risk of using GMOs while a minority has indicated some positive impacts. Arguments have been included in the table above.

According to the online discussion participants, climate change adaptation on the agriculture sector requires the establishment of public policy focusing on small-scale farming.

Public policy should be focusing on the overall value chain, both on the production by enhancing access to land, land restoration, access to water, and on the conservation and commercialization of food staple products (Road infrastructures, access to market, support local consumption).

More reading:

- **A decade of EU-funded GMO research (2001 - 2010)**  
The study drew its conclusions from the work of more than 130 research projects, covering a period of more than 25 years of research involving more than 500 independent research groups. Its most important conclusion was “that biotechnology, and in particular GMOs, are not per se more risky than e.g. conventional plant breeding technologies. [Read more](#)
- The IAASTD (International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development) does not offer much support for transgenic crops as the best hope. It took 4 years and 400 scientists participated from 58 governments to finalize this report. The report says that there is: Lack of transparent communication, Risk assessment is lagging behind development, Current information may be anecdotal and contradictory, uncertainty on benefits and harms, Patents may drive up costs and undermine local practices. [Read more](#)
- Interview with Ousmane Tiendrébéogo, the Secretary General of the National Union of the Agro-Pastoral Workers (SYNTAP) by **Combat Monsanto**. *Journal of alternatives*, June, 28<sup>th</sup> 2011.  
Ousmane Tiendrébéogo, Secretary General of the National Union of the Agro-Pastoral Workers (SYNTAP), and Burkina Faso cotton farmers' union activist for GMO-free Burkina Faso, was in France at the invitation of the Artisans of the Monde-Rhone Alps. **Combat Monsanto** took the opportunity to meet him and examine the record of GMOs in Burkina Faso. [Read more](#)

**A more detailed summary and a policy brief from the online discussion will follow soon**