

Speech of Dr. Bui Ba Bong, Vice Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development at the opening ceremony of the “GMO Guidelines” Workshop.

*Ho Chi Minh City, 01 April 2004*

Ladies and Gentlemen!

First of all, on behalf of MARD, I would like to warmly welcome the international guests, the participants attending the third Meeting of the project “GMO Guidelines”. I am pleased to know that the workshop attracted the interest of scientists from various research institutes, universities and science centres of Vietnam as well as other developed and developing countries and FAO.

As we all know, agriculture production is suffering from risks and affected by many natural factors such as pests, seeds and seedlings, production techniques, markets and prices. All the social and natural factors are more and more affecting and preventing the development of the agriculture in our countries. In addition, we should pay more attention to the quality of the agri-products, especially when food safety issues have become the core for the production and distribution of agri-products in the domestic as well as the international markets.

In Vietnam, in the last decades, agri-productions in general and food productions in particular have made considerable achievements by application of advanced technologies. From a rice importer, Vietnam turned into the world second largest rice exporter with the volume of 3.5 to 4 million tons per year. Vietnam is also marking its name in the world markets as one of the top exporters of coffee, cashew, pepper. In the development strategy, MARD has been aiming at the qualitatively development with the principle of rationally sound utilization and management of natural resources for sustainable development. The strategy also focuses on the improvement of application of advanced and environmental friendly technologies and techniques to produce safety agro-products for the community’s health. However, to meet the increasing demand of the population of 80 million people in the economic integration context, the agriculture and rural development sector of Vietnam is facing a number of challenges. Together with the development of priority policies for productions development of commodities with competitive advantages, the sector has to strive in the facilitation of the remote areas development as well as pay more attention to the vulnerable rural groups to increase their income and reduce poverty.

In Vietnam, carrying out studies, experiments on GMOs under the strictly control of laboratories have to combine at the same time with the research on GMO’s product identification, safety to human being as well as to the environment. I do hope that at this workshop, national and international scientists will have chance to discuss, exchange experiences in order to develop a science based guidelines for further research, testing, identification of GMO products to serve the long-term and scientifically objective and requirements of production.

With the expectations on the contributions of the gene technology for a more prosperous and safe future for our people, I, on behalf of the organization board, declare the opening of the workshop. I wish you good health and enjoy your stay in Ho Chi Minh City.

Wishing for the success of the workshop.

Once again, thank you very much!