

## **STATEMENT ON SAFE FOOD BY A COALITION OF RELIGIONS**

**As a coalition of believers from ten faith traditions within the Faith and Ecology Network (FEN), we are grateful for and support the work of scientists, health professionals and campaigners who have alerted us to problems associated with access to nutritious food and the increasing presence of genetically modified foods in the market.**

### **We believe that:**

- Access to nutritious, culturally acceptable and safe food is a sacred gift and a universal human right
- Reliable food supplies are best assured by protecting ecological systems and traditional growing methods
- Food sovereignty helps national stability and security, and
- Human solidarity means ensuring that all people have access to food, locally and globally.

### **We support:**

- Research to increase the quality and yields of conventional farming
- Informative and accurate labelling of all food stuffs
- Overseas development aid which fosters local agricultural systems
- International agreements and local laws promoting food self sufficiency
- Programs to give people access to quality food and education about it.

### **We are concerned about:**

- The increasing control of the food industry by agricultural-chemical companies and supermarkets locally and globally
- The move towards the commercialisation of genetically modified crops and animals (GMOs), and subsequent negative impacts on species diversity and the little researched long term effects on human health

### **We call for:**

- Independent research by government agencies to better regulate food labeling and the commercialisation of food production
- Easier access to, and education about, healthy food
- More publicly funded, peer reviewed, research into the relationship between human health and ecologically sustainable agriculture in Australia and overseas
- An Australian position at Trade Related Intellectual Properties (TRIPs) meetings that helps protect peoples' traditional knowledge and rights to their natural heritage.

We invite the members of all religions to support this call for safe food as a moral and spiritual issue believing that food is a gift to be shared. To raise awareness about safe food and work to make it available fosters human solidarity and promotes the value of life, physical and spiritual.

*Statement Issued 18 June 2006 at a Forum on Safe Food, Strathfield, Sydney.*

*Participants came from Aboriginal, Anglican, Baha'i, Buddhist, Catholic, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, Uniting Church and Anglican religious traditions.*