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### New FAO Chief Accepts GMOs, Not Seed Monopolies

By William New on 27/06/2011 @ 11:06 pm

The newly elected head of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization today expressed tolerance for genetically modified crops but not for monopolies on seeds.

José Graziano da Silva of Brazil was elected FAO director general this week and will take office on 1 January 2012. He has been a senior field officer for FAO since 2006, according to a [UN press release](#) <sup>[1]</sup>.

During a 27 June press conference, Graziano da Silva said that "biofuels were not 'a silver bullet,' but should not be demonized; the science of genetically modifying crops should not be discarded, but there should be no monopoly on seed sales; land grabs are important in theory, but their impacts so far are "minimal;" and food prices are liable to continue being volatile," the UN said in [another release](#) <sup>[2]</sup>.

In a 25 June speech, he outlined his proposed programme for when he takes office. He included five main goals, according to the UN: "eradicating hunger, promoting a shift to sustainable food production, ensuring greater fairness in global food management, swiftly implementing agreed internal FAO reforms, and expanding South-South cooperation."

The science of genetically modified crops likely refers to the positive impact it can make on agriculture. Monopolies on seed sales likely refers to increased patenting of seeds, which some see as reducing availability in developing countries.

In the election he received 92 of 180 votes cast by FAO member states in the second round of balloting, defeating Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaube, a former foreign minister of Spain, the UN said.

Mr. Graziano da Silva, 61, will be the eighth person – and first from Latin America – to lead the FAO since it was established in 1945. His term will expire on 31 July 2015, but he will be eligible to run for a second, four-year term. He succeeds Jacques Diouf, who has served as FAO Director-General since 1994.

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URLs in this post:

[1] UN press release: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=38852&Cr=FAO&Cr1=>

[2] another release: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?>

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[3] **FAO Seed Treaty Carries Hope, Addressing Country Contributions, Farmers Concerns:**

**<http://www.ip-watch.org/weblog/2011/03/30/fao-seed-treaty-carries-hope-addressing-country-contributions-farmers-concerns/>**

[4] **International Seed Treaty Hears Concerns Of Corporate Concentration, DNA Patenting:**

**<http://www.ip-watch.org/weblog/2011/03/14/international-seed-treaty-hears-concerns-of-corporate-concentration-dna-patenting/>**

[5] **Educational Tools For Seed Treaty Actors:** **[http://www.ip-](http://www.ip-watch.org/weblog/2011/05/12/educational-tools-for-seed-treaty-actors/)**

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