



Search in Media only

- About FAO
- In Action
- Countries
- Themes
- Media
- Publications
- Statistics
- Partnerships
- Contacts
- News archive
- Events
- Audio & video
- Webcasting
- Infographics

Home > Media > News Article

[Send](#) [Print](#)

# The food systems of the future need to be smarter, more efficient

Graziano da Silva: Competition for resources and energy necessitates a "paradigm shift" – Biofuels should be part of the mix



**16 January 2015, Berlin** – Increasing competition for natural resource and emerging resource bottlenecks mean that global agriculture can no longer operate using a "business as usual" approach – the input-intensive agricultural development model used for the past 40 years is no longer sustainable, and a "paradigm shift" in food production is needed.

This was the key message of a speech delivered today by FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva at the [Global Forum for Food and Agriculture](#) taking place this week in Berlin as part of Green Week observances here.

FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva intervenes from the floor at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture in Berlin.

The topic of the forum this year is *The Growing Demand for Food, Raw Materials and Energy: Opportunities for Agriculture, Challenges for Food Security?*

"Business as usual would mean a huge and simultaneous increase in the need for food, energy and water in the next decades: 60 percent more food, 50 percent more energy and 40 percent more water by 2050," Graziano da Silva said during his remarks.

FAO estimates point to the need to increase food production by 60 percent by 2050 to feed a population that will top the 9 billion mark.

To address the challenge of feeding more people while using less land, water and energy, concerted efforts and investments are needed to support a widespread, globe-spanning transition to sustainable farming systems and land management practices, according to FAO's Director-General.

## Biofuels: Food first, but opportunities remain

Climate change and increasing competition between food and non-food agricultural products such as bioenergy have made the challenges of feeding the future more complex, said Graziano da Silva.

"But it is important not to forget that biofuel emerged with strength as an alternative energy source because of the need to mitigate fossil fuel production and greenhouse gases – and that need has not changed," he added.

The FAO head argued for a more pragmatic approach to the issue.

"We need to move from the food versus fuel debate to a food and fuel debate. There is no question: food comes first," he said, adding: "But biofuels should not be simply seen as a threat or as a magical solution. Like anything else, they can do good or bad."

Evidence shows that when developed responsibly, sustainable biofuel production systems can offer an additional source of income for poor farmers.

The FAO Director-General noted that thanks to experience gained in recent years and new biofuel production technologies, countries today are better positioned to evaluate the opportunities and risks of biofuel production and to use it when it pays off socially, environmentally and economically.

He also stressed that in order to avoid conflicts with food production, mandatory biofuel policies must be flexible and "need to be adjusted according to the reality, the ongoing balance of production, and stocks of the different products used."

Speaking more generally on the contributions a shift to sustainable agriculture can make, he said the world's food systems must achieve much greater efficiencies in their use of natural resources, in particular water, energy and land – including reducing food waste

And they must do much more to protect, conserve and restore natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem functions.

## FAO Working Meeting

[Addressing Food Security Challenges under Increasing Demand for Land, Soil and Energy](#)

## Documents

[Speech by José Graziano da Silva](#)

## Related Links

[Global Forum for Food and Agriculture 2015](#)

## Learn More

[Audio interview with FAO's Vladimir Rakhmanin on the connections between agriculture and energy being discussed at Green Week Berlin](#)

## Contact

FAO Media Office  
(+39) 06 570 53625  
[FAO-Newsroom@fao.org](mailto:FAO-Newsroom@fao.org)

FAO recently put in place five key, strategic objectives to focus and guide its work. They include making agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable, and enabling a shift to efficient agricultural and food systems.

#### FAO Departments and Offices

[Contact us](#)

[Terms and Conditions](#)

[Scam Alert](#)

[Report fraud](#)

[Employment](#)

[Procurement](#)

[Governing Bodies](#)

[Office of the Inspector  
General](#)

[Evaluation](#)

[Legal and Ethics Office](#)

[Agriculture and Consumer  
Protection](#)

[Economic and Social  
Development](#)

[Fisheries and Aquaculture](#)

[Forestry](#)

[Technical Cooperation](#)

[Regional Office for Africa](#)

[Regional Office for Asia  
and the Pacific](#)

[Regional Office for Europe  
and Central Asia](#)

[Regional Office for Latin  
America and the Caribbean](#)

[Regional Office for the  
Near East and North Africa](#)

[Country Offices](#)

#### Follow us on



#### Download our App

