



## International scientists see limited role for GM crops in food and eco-crisis

**THE NEED** for urgent answers to a looming world food crisis is bringing new high yield technologies like GM into the spotlight.

Among many arguments put forward by GM advocates are claims the technology could be used to help feed the world's poor, to reduce famine, and could benefit the environment through reduced reliance on agrochemicals.

But authors of a 2500-page report compiled by 400 scientists over four years has found little use for GM as it is currently practised in feeding the poor on a large scale.

Scientists behind the benchmark report: International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development [IAASTD] state that genuine assessments of GM technologies are happening at a slower rate than its market application. They found there was 'un-avoidable' uncertainty about the possible benefits and potential for damage from GMOs.

"The short answer to whether transgenic crops can feed the world is 'no'" said Robert Watson, chief scientist at the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, although he added "they could contribute".

The report found the world already produces enough food for everyone, yet more than 800 million people go hungry.

Mr. Watson said governments and industry focused too narrowly on increasing food production, with little regard for natural resources or food security. "We have to make food more affordable and nutritious without degrading the land", he said highlighting the importance of environmental preservation in combating world hunger.

The report has been backed by sixty countries and most UN bodies but has not been endorsed yet by the US, UK, Australia or Canada because of its negative stance on GM technology and growing of biofuel crops.

Report adapted from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/apr/16/food.biofuels>

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