

Africa a priority for new FAO chief

Allafrica.com reports that the new director general of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the world's flagship agency for food policy, has indicated that Africa will be his priority at a time of limited resources. In his first press conference, José Graziano da Silva said he wanted to see "one FAO" acting at country-level on the continent.



The FAO was criticised for inefficiency and bureaucracy under Jacques Diouf, its leader for 18 years, but Graziano da Silva said he was committed to reforming the \$1bn organisation.

"Many [...] poor [African] countries have no facility of going to donors," he said. "The FAO will be there to support those countries to achieve the desired results." Graziano da Silva, who played an important role in Brazil's successful "zero hunger" initiative, argued the key to improving food security in Africa was the political will to eradicate hunger, which could in turn be translated into action through financial resources, research and good practice.

"This mix of political will and finance and technical research are the most important combination to defeat hunger," Graziano da Silva told Allafrica.com, adding that he would attend an African Union summit later this month and visit the Horn of Africa, which - plagued for decades by conflict - has been hit by the worst drought in 60 years in some parts, particularly Somalia. "The reform process is advancing, but there is still a lot to do," Graziano da Silva said. "Decentralisation is essential. I attach great importance to regional FAOs and a bottom-up approach I will also look for improving technical work and reducing administrative costs."

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