

The FAO website page, “Why a Conference Is Being Held Now,” runs a graphic asserting that agriculture contributes 14% of the world’s harmful greenhouse gas emissions. When Al Gore gave that line to rice growers in India earlier this year, he had to flee from their vehement protests.

The FAO held eight pre-conference events, called “expert meetings,” over February through April. Topics included, “bio-energy policy, markets and trade, and food security,” “climate change adaptation and mitigation,” and similar crap. The documents produced from these sessions, now available for pre-June discussion, are rife with anti-technology, stock lies that agriculture is exceeding the resource base of the world. The Malthusian implication is that population must be reduced.

The FAO was initiated in 1943, by representatives of 44 governments meeting in Virginia—with the encouragement of President Franklin Roosevelt—to found a permanent organization for food and agriculture. (A predecessor organization, the International Agriculture Institute, was founded in Rome in 1908 by American System figure David Lubin, after whom the FAO library is named.) The first FAO session was

then held in 1945 in Quebec City, as part of the United Nations; in 1951, the agency was moved to Rome. In the beginning, the workings of the FAO, involving data-keeping, and providing a forum for discussion, were nominally dedicated to ending hunger, but in recent decades the FAO has moved lock-step into line with the cartel-controlled globalization that has undercut national agriculture programs.

The FAO June meeting is intended for heads of state, ministers, and private and NGO entities. Italian President Giorgio Napolitano and Pope Benedict XVI are scheduled to address the opening session, along with FAO Director General Jacques Diouf, and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Announced as attending, so far, will be French President Nicolas Sarkozy and Brazilian President Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva, who has been leading the charge for a world biofuels market. He toured Africa in April to promote biofuels plans.

President Lula personifies the clash raging over how to respond to the desperate need for more food in the world. The switchover to Al Gore’s biofoolery in just the last five years, has shifted a huge part of the world’s corn (maize) capacity in the U.S.A., and sugar cane capacity in Brazil, into fuel, and

Rice Research Body: New Green Revolution Needed

The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) of “Green Revolution” fame, based in the Philippines, in early May, said that a “new agronomic revolution” was possible and urgently necessary to meet the global food and food-price crisis.

The IRRI’s released report, “The Rice Crisis: What Needs To Be Done?” confronts the failure of the world’s developed nations to continue funding the breakthrough research of the “Green Revolution,” instituted after the 1980s. Already from 1991-2000, public investment in agricultural research and development from the United States, Europe, and Japan fell, in absolute terms. That has gotten worse since 2000, with the Bush Administration now at the extreme of contemplating—amidst a food crisis threatening famine in many countries—a 75% cut in U.S. funding of the Green Revolution institutes.

As a result, says IRRI head Robert Ziegler, the astonishing rice yield growth of 2.14% annual average from 1970-1990, has been replaced by virtual yield stagnation since 2000. (Dr. Ziegler was interviewed on the research funding crisis and its impact, in *EIR*, March 2, 2007.)

The IRRI puts what has to be done scientifically, in nine steps:

- “Bring about an agronomic revolution in Asian rice production” by filling an “unexploited yield gap” of 1-2 metric tons more per hectare, which Asian rice farmers could produce. Key are agricultural extension service-type programs to improve land preparation, water and nutrient management, and pest and disease control.
- “Accelerate the introduction and adoption of higher yielding rice varieties,” as the first Green Revolution did.
- Reverse the decline in worldwide funding for scientific agricultural research, and develop new rice varieties with increased tolerance to drought, flooding, salinity, insects, and diseases.
- “Accelerate research on the world’s thousands of rice varieties,” 90% of which have not been studied scientifically.
- Cut post-harvest losses by new technologies of storing, drying, and processing.
- Train a new generation of rice scientists and researchers, particularly in Asian countries.
- Increase public investment in the infrastructure of agriculture—irrigation systems, and road and rail grids.
- Improve marketing systems for both inputs and outputs of agriculture.
- Strengthen “food safety nets” for the urban and rural poor, especially nutritional programs focussing on early childhood.

—Paul Gallagher (See full report at www.irri.org).