

## Mr. Willy De Greef

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Mr. De Greef is a plant breeder by training. He has worked as a plant breeder and research manager in tropical countries for many years. He was in charge of field trials at PGS and more recently involved in regulatory activities for non-governmental organizations (NGO) and industrial associations as a Consultant and then through his own company. Since mid-1998, he is Head of Regulatory and Governmental Affairs at Novartis Seeds AG, dealing with genetically modified plants. His experience also includes biosafety and regulatory policy development in the OECD and at the United Nations.

## Agbiotechnology and Moral Imperatives: Why We Need Them

The question before us in the coming decades is not whether we will be able to feed a growing world population with increasing food intake. We will. The question is where the additional needs will be met and who will fill them. According to FAOSTAT figures, about 90% of the global population increase in the next three decades will happen in the cities of developing countries. That means an additional 1.8 billion people who buy their food instead of producing it. This figure raises questions about the present emphasis in the development assistance programs of many European countries on the politically correct subsistence farming systems. If the Third World countryside is helped to feed itself, then who will feed its cities? If present trends continue, it is likely to be farmers from the developed countries. They are certainly up to the task to achieve this, but is this a desirable solution? Who will feed these cities has a profound impact on the distribution of improved living conditions. Especially in the poorest countries, the little economic development there tends to be concentrated in the cities. That is where the emerging middle class lives and that is where the limited public services (especially education and health care) tend to be concentrated. Like in Europe a century ago, poverty in Third World cities tends to get more attention because it is more visible, but the deepest misery is spread out in the countryside. This presentation will cover the Nuffield Council on Bioethics report, current information on agricultural productivity, and its future affordability, in order to arrive at conclusions about the moral imperative to develop the means to overproduce food.