

## Brazil Government Blames Congress for Use of Transgenics

Contributed by Michèle Canes  
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Responding to criticisms made by social movements and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) about authorizing the use of transgenic seeds, the general coordinator of the 2nd National Environmental Conference, Pedro Ivo Batista, said that members of the Brazilian Congress, not the Ministry of Environment (MMA), should be held accountable.

Batista is an environmentalist and also a special adviser to Brazil's Environment Minister, Marina Silva.

"The MMA took a stand and submitted a Biosecurity bill. The legislators altered the law, against what we wanted. The branches are independent.

"This is not a problem of lack of government will, it's a problem of the correlation of forces in the Congress, which is not favorable to this important environmental cause. It is up to society to hold the legislators accountable," he said.

A temporary order issued by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and approved by the Congress permits genetically modified, also known as transgenic, soybeans to be planted in Brazil.

The position of the delegates to the 1st Conference, held in 2003, was in favor of prohibiting the cultivation, commercialization, warehousing, and transportation of any product containing a transgenic variation.

Ivo informed that 70% of the decisions of the 1st Conference are being met but that much depends upon the relationship among the powers.

"We have to be attentive, because we have three autonomous branches. What is not fair is to claim that we don't want to implement the country's environmental questions and there has not been any progress. That is not fair."

Adriana Ramos, an environmentalist with the Socio-Environmental Institute (ISA), said that the 2nd National Environmental Conference will now provide a space for other battles concerning the matter to be waged, such as the requirement that transgenic products be adequately labeled.

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