

## UN contradictions: Opposition to biopharming, which could treat Ebola infections

High-level officials of the United Nations are not known for their perspicacity, competence, or scientific acumen, but the head of the World Health Organization (WHO), Margaret Chan, is a particular embarrassment. With so much attention focused on the Ebola-virus outbreak in Africa, her exaggerations and petty scolding have made her a high-profile liability. Ebola deserves attention and resources, to be sure. But Chan has demonstrated that she has difficulty setting priorities logically and cost-effectively.

Chan's agency and its U.N. siblings have been spectacularly wrong — and their actions inimical to public health — in other ways, such as the obstruction of critical new technologies for agriculture.

During the past decade, various U.N. agencies, including Dr. Chan's WHO, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), have created major regulatory obstacles to innovations in plant breeding.

Ironically, the U.N.'s obstructionism has taken a huge toll on a sector of genetic engineering known as "biopharming" — using genetic-engineering techniques to induce crops such as corn, tomatoes, and tobacco to produce high concentrations of high-value pharmaceuticals. Why is this ironic? Because one of the most promising drugs to treat Ebola infections, [ZMapp](#), is obtained from genetically engineered tobacco plants that have been infected with genetically engineered plant viruses.

Yet again, the U.N. is part of the problem, instead of the solution.

**Read full, original article:** [Why the U.N. Is More Dangerous than Ebola](#)