U.N. frets over use of biofuels
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GENEVA, Switzerland, Oct. 31 (UPI) -- Food security may be a priority for the Group of 20 meeting in France but that won't mean much without action on biofuels, a U.N. official said.

Members of the G20 group of industrialized nations agreed to put food security at the top of their agenda when they meet later this week in Cannes, France.

Olivier De Schutter, the U.N. special envoy on the right to food, warned that while it was important to tackle food security, any action would fall flat unless corresponding issues related to biofuels and market speculation are addressed.

"Continuing famine in the Horn of Africa, low harvest warnings in Western Africa and flood-related crop losses in South-East Asia make it more urgent than ever that we tackle food price volatility and growing hunger," he said in a statement.

A recent U.N. report warned that demand from countries with growing economies, coupled with extreme weather events like the Horn of Africa drought, is complicating food security. The increased use of biofuels, meanwhile, is placing additional strains on agriculture systems normally used for food.

"The G20 must put an end to public biofuel mandates and fiscal subsidies, which are a major factor in rising food prices and an important driver of the rush towards farmland in developing countries," warned De Schutter.