



*Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network
Réseau Afrique Europe Foi et Justice*

ECHOES from AEFJN

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FROM THE AEFJN DESK

Dust in their eyes

The people of the village of Koudiadiene in Senegal are suffering from the effects of phosphate mining by European investors. The mines surround the village and the machinery churns up a toxic dust that is polluting the atmosphere and damaging the health of the village people. When their land was expropriated the villagers were not consulted, but were forced to hand over their land to companies with little compensation. Then the companies began to clear the land for phosphate extraction. The loss of their land and the pollution of what remained have increased hunger and malnutrition and poverty has made its home in the village. In addition, the Senegalese laws were not respected. For example according to the mining code, mines are located too close to the village. Moreover, companies contribute little to local development because they export almost the entire production and give work to very few local people. [Read more](#)

ALSO IN THE NEWS

The EPAs and implications for the Continental FTA process

In January 2012, the African Union Summit took the decision to establish a fast-track Continental Free Trade Agreement Area (CFTA) by 2017 with the aim of boosting intra-African trade. For this reason, how different countries progress in the EPA negotiations will have important implications for the promotion of intra-African trade within the context of the CFTA. Many are the challenges that African countries have to face in adapting their industry and economy to the EPAs, such as strengthening their capacity for production, improving infrastructure or streamlining trade facilitation. If African countries sign the EPAs, the continent will be flooded with European products and will have to compete with economies that have a high level of development. In their effort to strengthen their productive capacity, the poorest countries in Africa will lose the opportunity to develop their domestic industries in higher value products and will be limited to trading with lower value products. Therefore, what should be an opportunity will in fact be a continuation of the same old situation. [Read more](#)

AFRICA

Significance of Land in African Economic, Politics and Culture

Access to land will be a crucial issue for Africa's economic development in the near future, because it is essential for the welfare and survival of the rural population. Family farmers play an important role as food producers as and as stewards of natural resources. They are increasingly under pressure from the threat of land grabbing, where foreign investors buy or lease large areas of land in the African countryside. This land is often presented to investors

as “idle”, “underused” or “empty”. However, a sustainable commercial agriculture based on cultural wisdom will require improved access for family farmers to inputs, local markets and distribution channels, not just a focus on expanding large plantations. It will also require policymakers to take into account forms of collective ownership as well as cooperative models of land use. [Read more](#)

VOICES FROM THE NETWORK

AEFJN’s Manual

The AEFJN Manual on Economic Justice is completed. The Manual provides a working tool for groups working on AEFJN issues. But it is also useful for JPIC groups in Africa (and elsewhere) to tackle injustices and to transform society. It is an excellent resource for JPIC seminars. The Manual presents the underlying causes of economic injustice in Africa and stimulates groups to work on issues relevant for Africa. There are two volumes, Volume 1: The Pastoral Circle and Volume 2: The Issues. In Volume 1 the Pastoral Circle is presented as a methodology for improving understanding of the world we live in, in particular the economic system and the ecology, and for providing a Christian answer to it. Volume 2 gives a very detailed overview of all the issues AEFJN works on, with annexes providing information for each African country. On our website you can find the digital version of the Manual in both English and French. If you are interested in the book-version of the Manual please contact the AEFJN Secretariat. We thank Begoña Iñarra for all the work she has done to bring this manual into existence. [Read more](#)

AEFJN: Antennae Meeting

The Africa-Europe Faith and Justice Network celebrated its yearly Antennae Meeting from 16-18 May in Brussels. Nine Antennae were represented and Gervase Taratara (AEFJN President) and Denise Bang’na came on behalf of the Executive. Under the guidance of the Secretariat, led by Begoña Iñarra, the meeting was notable for its spirit of participation and dialogue. The focus was the AEFJN vision for transforming unfair economic structures into a new economy based on solidarity and sustainable development and where humankind’s interrelation with creation is honoured. Such an economy will show greater care for the economically excluded and poor of Africa. [Read more](#)

VIDEOS

[The Jogbahn Clan](#)

Video on how the Jogbahn Clan stand as one in their struggle against a palm oil company grabbing their land. (5 min)

[SOS Faim : Land Grabbing : Le cas Senhuile-Senéthanol](#)

Video on the resistance of the local population against the project of Senhuile-Senéthanol, which aims to produce agrofuels for the European market. (9 min) (Only in French)

AEFJN ECHOES CALL FOR VOLUNTEER TRANSLATORS

The AEFJN Echoes needs volunteers to translate. The Echoes are published monthly in both English and French. Through this, we aim to break down language barriers, give more audience to relevant analysis for our contributors and encourage exchanges between linguistic communities in Africa.

To deal with our increasing translation needs, we are looking for volunteers to strengthen our team of volunteer translators who assist us in this task

If you are a member of AEFJN or a friend of us, we are counting on you. Write to the editors at the following address: jl.gutierrez@aeijn.org