



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

ECHOES from AEFJN

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FROM THE AEFJN DESK

Cutting Export Subsidies: an Unfulfilled Promise?

Recently, the EU proposed putting a stop to export refunds on all the EU agricultural goods imported by African countries but this offer was conditional to signing the interim Economic Partnership Agreement (iEPA). However, this is not a new concession because the EU had already committed itself to cut export subsidies. With this kind of **concession**, the EU intends to push African countries to accept the iEPAs. Moreover, we could ask to what extent this measure is enough to curb distortions in the market affecting African countries since producers in the EU receive other economic supports like direct payments to improve their competitiveness. This economic support boosts the EU exports of surpluses at prices below the cost of production, condemning farmers in African countries to poverty because they cannot compete on price. So, if African countries sign the iEPA, then only African countries will be making effective concessions because they will lose the chance of applying tariffs to the products coming from the EU. [Read more](#)

ALSO IN THE NEWS

The UN Human Rights Council: Resolution for an International Legally Binding Instrument on Transnational Corporations

On 26 June the Human Rights Council of the United Nations adopted a resolution establishing a working group that will develop an “international legally binding instrument on Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with respect to human rights”. The resolution was introduced by Ecuador and South Africa and was finally approved by 20 votes in favour, 14 against and 13 abstentions. It was principally the western countries that voted against this resolution. The protagonists of this resolution consider that there is a mismatch in legal protection between companies and victims of harmful corporate activities. Transnational corporations can resort to a number of binding laws to protect their interests while victims of corporate impunity can merely appeal to voluntary norms to protect their interests. [Read more](#)

Avoiding Climate Chaos

Following the last UN Conference of the Parties (COP) on climate change in Warsaw, Poland, ten civil society organisations issued a statement citing their concern about the direction of negotiations on climate change. During the negotiations in Warsaw, industrialized countries had not remedied the main socio-economic causes of the crisis, such as the trade, energy, transport and agriculture policies. Policies favouring polluting industries are given greater weight than issues of general public interest such as climate and a healthy environment. The current economic system is based on the

logic of infinite growth and economic operators seek to maximize their profits, while over-exploiting the natural resources of the planet. Therefore, these organisations are convinced that to fight the effects of climate change effectively requires a change to the economic system. [Read more](#)

AFRICA

Chinese clouds over Africa

In the opinion of many Africans, Africa is slowly becoming a Chinese continent. While the former colonial powers focused on one or two countries, the Chinese influence extends throughout the continent. Early in May, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang went to the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, agreed many contracts and promised \$12 billion in loans at preferred rates. Sino-African trade, which was \$210 billion in 2013, is expected to rise to 400 billion by 2020. The Chinese press also states that the volume of direct investment was 25 billion in 2013 and that there are 2,500 Chinese companies in Africa, providing 100,000 jobs. Part of this investment is dedicated to infrastructure such as agreements for a regional railway line between the port of Mombasa and Nairobi, which will probably be extended to Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan. [Read more](#)

ADVOCACY

Conference: “Rush to Soil and Subsoil: Sharing Analysis”

During the workshop of the Belgian Land Research Network entitled “Rush to Soil and Subsoil: Sharing Analysis”, Gino Brunswijk, policy officer at AEFJN, spoke about AEFJN and its advocacy strategies for land grabbing and raw materials. Gino presented the policies facilitating land grabbing such as agrofuels, the G8’s New Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition and the “Doing Business Ranking” of the World Bank. He also presented the case of phosphate mining in Koudiadiene, Senegal, to indicate how African people are affected by land grabbing and/or large-scale mining concessions. Afterwards, there was a round of exchange between the civil society organisations present and the academic researchers. [Read more](#)

VOICES FROM THE NETWORK

Fr. Chika’s Visit to the Secretariat

In June, the AEFJN Secretariat in Brussels welcomed the future Executive Secretary Fr. Chika J. Onyejiuwa, a Nigerian from the Congregation of the Holy Spirit for a three week visit. He met the former executive, the staff and vice-president Ms. Fernanda Cristinelli and became familiar with AEFJN’s action plan for 2014-2018 and the different issues that the Secretariat follows in Brussels. He also learnt about the structure of the Network and the activities of the Antennae. Fr. Chika is expected to join the Secretariat in mid-September. During this transitory period he will follow the activity of the Secretariat and be informed by the staff. [Read more](#)

VIDEOS

[The Money Stone](#)

Short documentary on Gold mining in Ghana (5 min)

[Mining in Guinea](#)

Report on the mining industry in Guinea (2 min) (Only in French)

[Conflict Minerals](#)

Documentary on conflict minerals (4 min)

[Dangerous Flowers](#)

Documentary on the impact of the Kenyan cut flower industry (5 min)

AEFJN ECHOES CALL FOR VOLUNTEER TRANSLATORS

The AEFJN Echoes needs volunteers for translation. The Echoes is published monthly in both English and French. Through this, we aim to break down language barriers, broaden the readership of our contributors' analyses and encourage exchanges between linguistic communities in Africa.

To deal with our increasing translation needs, we are looking to expand our team of volunteer translators.

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