

Plan of Action 2014 – 2018



Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network

AEFJN Plan of Action 2014-2018

Introduction

The 25th Anniversary of AEFJN was an occasion to reflect with member congregations, Antennae from Europe and Africa, and other invited guests on the major orientations of the organisation for the next five years.

The entire network participated in a preliminary consultation that provided the basis for the reflection of the April Antennae meeting in Brussels. Those responding to this preliminary phase represented 19 congregations (contact persons and members), 8 Antennae groups, 3 African partners, 5 groups of religious from 4 African countries, and the Secretariat—approximately 150 persons from 13 African countries, 9 European countries, plus USA and Lebanon.

The April 2013 meeting in Brussels brought together two members of the executive committee, members of the secretariat, representatives from 11 European antennae and 2 African antennae, as well as partners from Africa, our sister organization Africa Faith and Justice Network from Washington, VIVAT and the Religious at the UN. The increased representation from Africa reinforced our awareness that the rich resources of the continent are exploited by various interested parties: the old industrialised countries, the rising new economic powers, as well multinational companies with budgets and influence often surpassing those of governments. Local populations, and more so the rural poor, rarely profit from these God-given riches. On the contrary, they often lose their land and their livelihoods and find their natural environment polluted or destroyed.

*We who live today have not inherited the land from our ancestors
but have borrowed it from our children. (African Proverb)*

At the April gathering we were also conscious that as Europe and the European Union are losing influence on the African continent and AEFJN members are diminishing in Europe and growing in Africa, it is of paramount importance for the future of AEFJN to patiently build up antennae among the religious in Africa and network with them and with competent civil society organisations on the continent on all issues.

Before finalizing the draft of the Plan of Action 2014-2018, AEFJN Contacts were invited to review the draft.

The result of all the process is the Plan of Action that follows.



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AEFJN Plan of Action 2014-2018

Background

Development of the Plan of Action

This plan of action was developed following a process (questionnaire, meeting in Brussels, comments on the drafts) through which AEFJN congregations and members in Africa and in Europe, as well as partner organizations in Africa contributed. This final version Plan of Action will be presented at the AEFJN General Assembly in November 2013 for approval.

Significant Changes since the Development of the Previous Action Plan 2011-2013

1. Emerging Issues

Some of the focus issues that have surfaced were not seen as urgent when the previous Action Plan was developed four years ago. (E.g. Land grabbing has emerged as a priority.) Therefore, in attempting to focus on only three issues, some of the portfolios previously followed by the Brussels Office will need to be dropped or the time given to them will have to be significantly reduced. (E.g. Small Arms for which there was little African support is dropped but Access to Medicines is followed linked to trade as great interest and engagement has been shown.)

2. Changing Actors

The second change is the “actors”. The BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, China, India and South Africa) have greatly increased their presence and economic reach on the African continent. As in the past, various actors—the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), African governments, multinational corporations and investors—continue to play an important role. Nevertheless, as the number and strength of corporations and investors from all the continents increase and are more active, the role of the AU and African governments becomes more significant. Thus there is need for African members to become more engaged in lobbying their own governments.

3. Increased African Presence

The third change is the significant increase in the number of members from Africa that participated in the elaboration of the Plan of Action and the number of African participants in the April 2013 Antennae planning meeting. There is need to increase effort on the following:

- Promoting the establishment and growth of antennae in Africa

- Strengthening the capacity of members to be more engaged in lobbying their own governments
- Developing materials for Africa with African participation
- Networking with other groups working on similar issues and having similar goals

4. Collaboration with AFJN and Other Religious Organizations

With the presence of the AFJN Executive Director from Washington and a member of VIVAT from New York, it became evident that collaboration with them and other organizations for capacity building on the African continent is essential to make good use of our limited resources.

AIM of AEFJN

The long term aim is the establishment of an alternative economic system based on solidarity and sustainability, which serves humanity in an interrelation with the whole of creation so all may have life to the full.

The overall aim of this plan of action is that

- Resources of Africa benefit the population of the continent and are preserved for future generations;
- Relationships between Africa and Europe are fair and allow the full development of Africa and its people.

Common Strategies for All Issues

- Lobby the EU institutions, the African Union (AU), the UN, and national governments and parliaments.
- Advocate in Europe and Africa on the various issues. Produce relevant materials. See the kind of network needed for common action.
- Raise awareness in religious, Christian, and Church institutions and the public in general on the issues AEFJN deals with and their impact on Africa and invite to action and to advocate decision makers in their own country.
- Develop relevant materials with African participation.
- Strengthen the capacity of our membership in Europe and in Africa on economic justice so that they are able to intervene more effectively with regard to economic issues.
- Link each policy with its impact on Africa, African people, the environment, and climate change.
- Strengthen links with African groups and organizations working on similar issues and having our goals.
- Identify partners; work with networks and other organizations in Africa and Europe.
- Use the media to create awareness.
- Collect and communicate stories, success stories and case studies from Africa.

Choice of Issues for the Plan of Action

The many issues AEFJN has worked on the past 25 years are interconnected. Given the limitation of personnel and financial resources, AEFJN has focused on those issues and aspects of economic justice that seem most relevant for people in Africa at this point of history. Only three issues have been chosen for the Network to focus on in the coming five years: land grabbing, raw materials, and trade—EPAs.

The Brussels Secretariat works on these issues, and European and African Antennae will focus on some of them according to capability and preference. Interrelatedness with other issues is noted for each issue; goals, objectives, and strategies are spelled out in more detail.

THE ISSUES

1. LAND GRABBING

GOAL: Stop Land Grabbing

General Strategies

- Prepare Christian reflections inspired by the Bible and the Social Teaching of the Church (STC) on land grabbing.
- Raise awareness by issuing relevant documents and studies on land grabbing.
- Foster collaboration with partner organizations working on land grabbing (AFJN, VIVAT, African JPIC groups and JP Commissions, etc.) and producing documents in common (or in collaboration).
- Strengthen the capacity of AEFJN membership in Europe and in Africa in relation to land grabbing so that they are able to intervene more effectively with decision makers in their own countries and regions.
- Undertake common advocacy work in Europe and Africa and with partner organizations working on land grabbing.

OBJECTIVE 1: A 5-year moratorium on land grabbing

Strategies:

1. Identify groups, farmer organisations, and countries that are interested in stopping land grabbing and ask their collaboration to organize the moratorium.
2. Identify the institutions that are able to influence governments with the view to asking them to act towards a moratorium.
3. Campaign with other organisations for a 5-year moratorium on land grabbing.
4. Identify and publicize concrete cases of land grabbing involving European companies in Africa.

5. Lobby the EU and member states, FAO, the World Bank, African countries, and other international and regional institutions for legally binding measures to stop land grabbing.
6. Lobby the EU and member states for legally binding legislation and adequate sanctioning mechanisms to exercise their extraterritorial obligations under human rights treaties to hold European companies domiciled in their territory, accountable in European courts for human rights abuses they commit overseas.
7. Work with African groups to advocate that their governments establish a simplified procedure for family farmers to own their land.

OBJECTIVE 2: Progressive elimination of the use of land-based agrofuels in the EU

Strategies:

1. Advocate the EU and the wider public to diminish use of energy.
2. Create greater awareness of the link between agrofuels, hunger, consumption, and the socio-economic impacts of agrofuel production in Africa.
3. Lobby the EU to gradually diminish the proportion of all land-based agrofuel used in transport in view of phasing out their use altogether.
4. Identify actual cases of agrofuel production in Africa by European companies.
5. Take human rights and the extraterritorial obligations of states under the human rights conventions as a basic framework to work on this issue.
6. Advocate for greater social responsibility of European companies operating in Africa, including respect of human, socio-economic and environmental rights.

OBJECTIVE 3: Adoption by EU member states of the FAO guidelines as legally binding instruments in contracts of the European enterprises with African governments

Strategies:

1. Lobby the EU institutions and member states to incorporate the FAO guidelines as legally binding instruments in their legislation.
2. Create public awareness in Europe to request the EU and member states to adopt the mentioned legislation.
3. Encourage and support the African antennae and other groups to lobby their own governments to integrate the FAO guidelines into land laws and agricultural policies as legally binding instruments.

Linking Land Grabbing to Other Issues

When working on and writing about land grabbing, care will be taken to make the link to agrofuels, food sovereignty, access to and use of water, family farming, environment and

climate change, biodiversity, living conditions, health, security & conflict, weapons, employment, trade, and investments.

2. RAW MATERIALS

GOAL: Raw materials benefit the local population, communities, and country

General Strategies

- Prepare reflections inspired by the Bible and the Social Teaching of the Church (STC) on the issue of exploitation of raw materials.
- Raise awareness by issuing relevant documents and studies on the exploitation of raw materials.
- Foster collaboration with partner organizations working on the issue of exploitation of raw materials (AFJN, JPIC Commission, USG/UISG JPIC Commission, African JPIC groups and JP Commissions) and produce documents in common or in collaboration.
- Strengthen the capacity of AEFJN membership in Africa and in Europe in relation to the exploitation of raw materials so they are able to intervene more effectively with the decision makers in their own countries and regions.
- Undertake common advocacy in Europe and Africa and with partner organizations working on the exploitation of Raw materials.

OBJECTIVE 1: Legally binding EU measures to make companies responsible for their actions in Africa.

Strategies:

1. Lobby the EU and member states for legally binding legislation and adequate sanctioning mechanisms to exercise their extraterritorial obligations under human rights treaties to hold European companies domiciled in their territory, accountable in European courts for human rights abuses they commit overseas.
2. Work for a legally binding, strong Code of Conduct for European companies working overseas.
3. Advocate for greater responsibility of European companies operating in Africa for respect of human, socio-economic and environmental rights.
4. Gather and publish concrete cases of European companies working in Africa that do not respect the socio-economic and environmental rights.
5. Carry out studies on the impact of exploitation of raw materials by European companies both on the population and the economy of the country.

OBJECTIVE 2: A new international governance to control and manage common goods¹.

Strategies:

1. Lobby for legislation on transparency and accountability of European companies working outside the EU.
2. Lobby the EU to foster national and international democratic institutions in Africa that promote transparency and accountability to ensure public control over the actions of governments regarding common goods. E.g. guaranteeing that contracts between governments and companies are compliant with human, socio-economic and environmental rights, as well as ensuring the implementation of these agreements.
3. Gather information on concrete cases of management of public goods at the local, national and international level. Publicise this information.
4. Work with African organizations to propose alternatives to the governance of raw materials.
5. Advocate for participation of the local communities in the management and governance of their raw materials.

Linking Raw Materials to Other Issues

When working on and writing about the extraction of raw materials, care will be taken to make the link to: land grabbing, access to and use of water, living and working conditions, environment and climate change, health, security & conflict, weapons, employment, trade, and investments.

3. TRADE – EPAS²

GOAL: To establish an alternative system of trade that is just for Africa and all countries

General Strategies

- Prepare reflections inspired by the Bible and the Social Teaching of the Church on trade.
- Raise awareness by issuing relevant documents and studies on trade.
- Foster collaboration with partner organizations working on land grabbing, such as African JPIC groups and JP Commissions, and produce documents in common or in collaboration.

¹ Common goods are resources fundamental to human life and goods and services that benefit the society as a whole. These include both natural commons like water, food, the atmosphere and energy, as well as manmade goods and services, like technology, health, the internet and culture. Their management, use and ownership are governed by a legal and democratic political entity in order to preserve the sustainability of its benefits for present and future members of that entity.

² Economic Partnership Agreements between the EU and the African regions.

- Strengthen the capacity of our membership in Africa and Europe in relation to trade so that they are able to engage more effectively with decision makers in their own countries and regions.
- Undertake common advocacy work in Europe and Africa and with our partner organizations working on trade.

OBJECTIVE 1: Prevention of the liberalization demanded by EPAs

Strategies:

1. Lobby the EU in order to slow down the signature of EPAs.
2. Collect information on the potential consequences of market liberalization.
3. Advocate at national level in Africa and Europe to prevent the signing of EPAs.
4. Lobby to prevent signing of EPAs on services, procurement, investment, and trade-related areas.

OBJECTIVE 2: Adoption of the Alternative Trade Mandate³ as part of the EU trade policy

Strategies:

1. Disseminate the Alternative Trade Mandate.
2. Advocate for the adoption of the concept of the Trade Mandate.
3. Lobby the EU and its member states to adopt the proposals of the Trade Mandate.

OBJECTIVE 3: If EPAs are signed, monitor the implementation's impact on the African countries

Strategies:

1. Carry out studies on the impact of EPAs in African countries.
2. Lobby the EU to establish safeguards to prevent negative consequences in African countries.

OBJECTIVE 4: Increased access to quality generic medicines

Strategies:

1. Lobby the EU to exclude African countries from the strengthening of Intellectual Property Rights in the bilateral and multilateral trade agreements.

³An alliance of 50 organizations has developed an alternative European Trade policy called the '*Alternative Trade Mandate*' (ATM) that aims at increasing economic, social and environmental well-being globally and creating justice between countries, social classes and ethnicities. The ATM aims at changing European trade policy so that it works for people and the planet instead of serving the interests of major export-oriented corporations. <http://www.alternativetrademandate.org>

2. Lobby the EU and member states to support access to generic medicines in their development policy.
3. Lobby the EU and member states for regulation on quality control for medicines exported to Africa from the member states.
4. Advocate at national and regional level in Africa and Europe for greater access to generics of quality in Africa.

Linking Trade to Other Issues

When working on and writing about trade, care will be taken to link it to: investments and its consequences to land grabbing and extraction of raw materials; intellectual property rights and access to medicines; privatisation, liberalization, and the consequences on public services and food sovereignty; family farming; unemployment; environment and climate change; economy of the country and living conditions.

AEFJN COLLABORATION

GOAL: The Network and the capacity of its members are strengthened in order to be more effective in the transformation of policies and society.

OBJECTIVE 1: Strengthening AEFJN

Strategies:

1. Share tasks and responsibilities between the Secretariat and the Antennae.
2. Encourage member congregations to be involved in strategies and actions.
3. Reinforce the capacity of AEFJN members on advocacy and on AEFJN issues.
4. Support and encourage greater involvement of men and women religious in Africa in advocacy activities and in lobbying policymakers.
5. Foster a greater involvement of major superiors, JPIC promoters, and formators involved in the inter-congregational formation initiative.
6. Promote the use of the *AEFJN Manual on Economic Justice* among member congregations, antennae, and partner organizations.
7. Strengthen cooperation with AFJN (Washington), VIVAT and other UN religious organizations, and African partners, particularly social centres of religious congregations, JPIC groups, and JP Commissions, including to produce and distribute common materials and to realize common actions.
8. Raise the profile of AEFJN both internally and externally.
9. Work towards a common vision and the long term aim of “establishing an alternative economic system based on solidarity and sustainability, which serves humanity in an interrelation with the whole of creation so all may have life to the full.” Actions include one session on the theme at every antenna meeting and a reflection paper prepared each year on the topic of developing this new kind of solidarity model.

OBJECTIVE 2: Broadening AEFJN Outreach

Strategies:

1. Encourage the birth and growth of Antennae (or similar groups) in Africa.
2. Invite AEFJN members in Africa to create awareness on economic issues at religious training institutions in Africa.
3. Present AEFJN and its work at meetings of major superiors in Africa and Europe and invite them to name people to form an antenna or participate in already existing ones.
4. Promote the *AEFJN Manual on Economic Justice* and present it to different groups or meetings of religious and involve African members and African antennae in the dissemination of the manual.
5. Collaborate with other organisations, i.e. JPIC Africa Working Group and JPIC Commission and Promoters in JPIC formation seminars in Africa and Europe.
6. Invite African members to create awareness in their countries and regions on the different issues, e.g. in parishes, schools, universities.
7. Involve the African Diaspora in the work of the European Antennae.
8. Support African members in the antennae to empower their people at home.

OBJECTIVE 3: Strengthen the capacity of AEFJN members on issues of economic justice

Strategies:

1. Produce attractive and readily accessible material on the various issues.
2. Propose faith reflection on the issues to deepen commitment.
3. Support the collection of information from Africa to inform advocacy in European countries.
4. Propose actions.
5. Support the groups that work on AEFJN issues.

EVALUATION

The strategies and actions of the Plan of Action will be evaluated every year to determine progress (or lack of) in a way that is helpful for ongoing, effective implementation of the strategic plan and for learning from the experience. The policy officer responsible for the issue will consult the working groups or the antennae coordinators, when there are no working groups, on the best time and process.

A more extensive evaluation will be planned by the Executive Committee and the Brussels Secretariat and carried out during the fourth year of the Plan of Action to assess the future of AEFJN, considering need, membership, and finances.