

Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN)

AEFJN - A Bridge Linking Africa and Europe

AEFJN is a faith-based International Network present in Africa and in Europe, established in 1988.

AEFJN promotes economic justice between the European Union and sub-Saharan Africa so that the people of Africa may look forward to a better future.

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AEFJN works on food sovereignty (land grabbing), exploitation of natural resources, access to quality medicines, small arms control, trade agreements, and climate change.

AEFJN and Africa's Natural Resources

- ◇ AEFJN firmly believes that the exploitation of natural resources in Africa should be carried out to the benefit of the local population.
 - * The exploitation of these natural resources has to take place with the consent of the local population.
 - * The revenue generated has to be used to the benefit of the local population.
 - * The exploitation should not destroy the environment the local population lives in and depends on.
- ◇ AEFJN calls for legally-binding norms allowing companies to be held accountable for the damage they cause. The current legal framework limits the liability of the parent company for the actions of its subsidiaries abroad, shielding MNCs from liability.
- ◇ As prosecution in local courts is often difficult if not impossible, AEFJN calls for the parent companies to be held accountable in European courts for the action of their subsidiaries in Africa.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ◇ Find and share information.
- ◇ Raise awareness on Natural Resources in your local parish/community.
- ◇ Get involved, form a group on natural resources or join an existing one.

FIND OUT MORE

AEFJN <http://www.aefjn.org/index.php/corporate-justice-367.html>

www.eccr.org.uk

www.corporatejustice.org

www.fataltransactions.org



The Plundering of Africa's Natural Resources

The competition for Africa's natural resources is becoming fiercer. Many natural resources are scarce. Emerging economies such as China, India and Brazil have started competing with the EU for them and Africa is losing out.

This new scramble for Africa's natural resources benefits the investors, but not the local population.

The Impact of the Exploitation of Natural Resources on Africa

Africa is rich in oil and minerals which are vital for the economy of developed countries. However, the exploitation is normally carried out by foreign Multi-

Multinational Corporations (MNCs), sometimes also called Transnational Corporations (TNCs), are enterprises that manage production or deliver services in more than one country. They have their management headquarters in one country, known as parent company, and operate so-called subsidiaries in several other countries. Examples of such companies are ExxonMobile or Shell.

national Corporations (MNCs) which have shown almost no regard for the impact of their action on people in Africa. It has destroyed the environment and livelihood of local populations and caused widespread pollution and even war. The desire to control economically profitable natural resources has been the reason behind several conflicts in Africa, especially in Congo DRC. MNCs did nothing to prevent their subsidiaries from paying rebel groups during the war, thereby actively prolonging the war.



At the same time, the much-promised advantages for development have rarely materialised as the profits have been sent abroad while the local population has had to deal with the negative consequences.

Reckless exploitation of Africa's natural resources undermines Africa's future!

Uranium Exploitation in Niger

Uranium is needed to produce nuclear energy. Mining it can have catastrophic effects on nearby communities and the environment. There are few places where these harmful effects are felt more markedly than Niger. The uranium mines there are mainly operated by the French state-owned company Areva. France imports half of its uranium from Niger and has been mining uranium there

The radioactivity measured is up to 500 times higher than normal.

for the last 40 years. Millions of light bulbs in France are lit by this uranium, while the local population in Niger has no access to electricity. Areva has contaminated the environment around its



mining sites in Niger affecting some 80 000 people. Radioactive waste has been used for the construction of the streets. Concentrations of uranium up to four times above the limit recommended by the World Health Organisation have been found in drinking water.

The Oil Sector

Oil companies unfortunately show a similarly careless attitude. A study conducted by Friends of the Earth Netherlands in 2008 concluded that when operating in the Niger Delta Shell did not employ internationally recognized standards to prevent and control pipeline spills. Most of the 27 million people living in the Niger Delta depend on the water, fish and agricultural products of the Delta for their livelihood but some 70 per cent of the spilled oil has not been recovered. Oil spills significantly affect the health and food security of rural people

In the last 30 years more than 400,000 tons of oil have spilled into the creeks and soils of southern Nigeria.



living near oil facilities. In the period 1997 - 2006, according to its own annual reports, Shell Nigeria experienced about 250 oil spills each year. Many of the spills are caused by aging infrastructure and human error on the part of the oil companies. Shell does not invest enough money to meet international standards and to replace its aging infrastructure in Nigeria despite having made \$18.6 billion in profits in 2010.

The Chad-Cameroon Pipeline

The World Bank promised that the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline would help alleviate poverty and wanted to make it a model project in the extractive industry sector, but the project did not live up to its promise. Oil production started in the Doba basin in Chad in 2003. The ESSO consortium exploiting the oil is made up of ExxonMobil, Petronas and ChevronTexaco. In spite of the stated intentions, revenues from oil were poorly governed and insufficiently invested in development sectors such as health and education. The people living in the oil-producing region in southern Chad are bearing the brunt of the negative impacts of the oil



Chad has remained a poor, undemocratic and conflict-ridden country.

activities. They are losing their livelihoods as their land is being taken by the consortium. Infrastructure is built for oil development, but rarely for the people. They have to endure worsened living conditions - dust, health risks, etc. - and poorly implemented compensation measures.

Our faith leads us to action on Natural Resources

As Christians, we assess the consequences of the exploitation of natural resources in the perspective of the Kingdom of God and His justice. The Social Teaching of the Church makes human beings central to any policy - natural resources should be at the service of the well being of people.

"God has given Africa important natural resources. Given the chronic poverty of its people, who suffer the effects of exploitation and embezzlement of funds both locally and abroad, the opulence of certain groups shocks the human conscience. Organized for the creation of wealth in their homelands, and not infrequently with the complicity of those in power in Africa, these groups too often ensure their own prosperity at the expense of the well-being of the local population. Acting in concert with all other components of civil society, the Church must speak out against the unjust order."



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