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**NEWS from AEFJN – No. 59, MAY 2012**

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**CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE CHURCHES**

**Bishops call for more company transparency**

**1. Catholic bishops urge the EU to legislate on extractive companies**

While a group of EU member states, including Germany and the UK, are attempting to water down new EU transparency legislation, Catholic bishops from around the world urge the EU to push forward and require European Union-listed and large unlisted extractive companies to publicly disclose the payments they make to governments worldwide. In a joint statement, they say less stringent laws will fail to turn the curse of resource-rich developing countries into a blessing.

<http://www.cidse.org/content/publications/business-a-human-rights/country-by-country-reporting/catholic-call-to-the-eu-for-more-transparency.html>

**2. EU Transparency Directive may have a positive impact on the lives of poor people**

**Mgr Joseph Banga from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** says the upcoming revision of the EU Transparency and Accounting Directives could have a positive impact on the lives of poor people living in resource-rich developing countries. If EU companies are required to report on a country by country and project by project basis on their financial dealings with host governments, citizens will be able to monitor the management of their natural resources.

<http://www.cidse.org/content/articles/business-a-human-rights/country-by-country-reporting/tough-eu-transparency-laws-could-change-lives-in-resource-rich-congo.html>

Watch the video interview Mgr Joseph Banga from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5V3vPyYaiZs> (in French with English subtitles)

**3. World Religious leaders protest against attitudes of mining companies**

In many places around the world, **religious leaders are protesting against mining companies and projects**. What are their complaints? In Chad, that revenues intended to ease the pain of poverty are nowhere to be seen; in the DRC and in Nigeria that mining feeds devastating conflicts; in Ghana that mining in forest reserves threatens animal and plant species. The underlying story is one of broken promises, of powerful companies whose God is profit and of a wounded planet whose resources are despoiled harming the people who live nearby. On April 24, bishops, preachers, and advocates gathered at the Washington National Cathedral to explore how they might join forces both to draw attention to the harm that bad mining practices wreak on people and land, and to point to practical, positive ways to move forward.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/katherine-marshall/bishops-and-extractive-industries\\_b\\_1461358.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/katherine-marshall/bishops-and-extractive-industries_b_1461358.html)

**From Fracking to Water Rights: How Foreign Interests Are Cleaning Out Africa**

Africa continues to be seen not only as the 'dark' continent, but also a resource-rich one whose wealth is there for the taking. Foreign countries and companies are racing to claim not only the continent's mineral resources, which often fuel conflict and environmental disasters, but also arable land to grow water-

intensive crops for export. That's no small problem, considering the droughts that African countries already face and how vulnerable the region is to climate change.

<http://www.treehugger.com/corporate-responsibility/fracking-water-rights-how-foreign-interests-are-cleaning-out-africa.html>

## **Shell's wildly inaccurate reporting of Niger Delta oil spill exposed**

A major oil spill in the Niger Delta was far worse than Shell previously admitted, according to an independent assessment obtained by Amnesty International and the Centre for Environment, Human Rights and Development (CEHRD), which exposes how the oil giant dramatically under-estimated the quantities involved: the volume of oil spilt at Bodo was more than 60 times the volume Shell has repeatedly claimed leaked

[http://www.amnesty.org.uk/news\\_details.asp?NewsID=20076](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/news_details.asp?NewsID=20076)

## **AFRICA**

### **Sub-Saharan Africa to grow 5.4% on oil output**

Sub-Saharan Africa's economy will probably expand 5.4% this year. Higher commodity prices and increased oil production are muting the impact of the European debt crisis, helping sub-Saharan Africa grow the fastest. African nations are also reducing their dependence on Europe by selling exports to emerging markets. Exports to Euro-zone nations dropped to about 20% from about 40% in the 1990s. The prices of commodities, metals and agricultural goods have increased 2.3% this year.

<http://www.trademarksa.org/news/sub-saharan-africa-grow-54-oil-output-imf-says>

### **Europe's secondhand clothes brings mixed blessings to Africa**

About a third of globally donated clothes make their way to sub-Saharan Africa. The industry has ballooned to \$1bn in Africa since 1990. And yet this is not always a force for good. Quite apart from the ethical issue of donated goods becoming tradeable commodities on which middlepersons can turn a profit, there is the threat to local textile markets to consider. The secondhand clothes risks swamping fragile domestic textiles markets and 12 countries in Africa have now banned their import.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/may/07/europes-secondhand-clothes-africa>

### **West Africa Monetary union ignores its own slavery**

The West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) is formed of eight states (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo) who share a common currency, the Communauté Financière d'Afrique (CFA) franc. The currency, issued by the Banque Centrale des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO), located in Dakar, Senegal is Euro-pegged. The foreign reserves of the CFA African states are deposited in the French Treasury. This makes West African nations financially dependent on the French government.

<http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/81689>

### **Foreign aid, the great leap backwards**

As austerity measures are multiplied in northern countries, especially in Europe, development funding in 2011 has hit rock bottom and affected their pledges. Official development assistance in 2011 reached \$135.5 bn, that is, a decrease of \$3.4 bn compared to the year before. This occurs after a period marked by a progression of 63% between 2000 and 2010.

<http://www.theafricareport.com/index.php/news-analysis/foreign-aid-the-great-leap-backwards-501809074.html>

## **MEDICINES AND HEALTH**

### **Universal Health Coverage**

The tremendous escalation between 1990 and 2008 in international support for global health programs produced a massive increase in health services throughout poor countries. These global initiatives that were largely focused on infectious diseases placed a tremendous burden on health systems all over the world. The surge in funding that led to this rapid proliferation also brought about fragmentation and competition. This explosion in both health initiatives and basic medical services occurred particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and Eastern Europe.

<http://nottheaverageactuary.com/the-new-global-health-agenda-universal-health>

(English)

Report on "Universal Health Coverage" at: <http://on.cfr.org/K68bPP> (English)

### **Ensuring Health Innovation for Neglected Patients**

Only about 10% of all health research is devoted to the health problems of 90% of the world's population. Global health research spending amounted to approximately 160 billion \$ in 2005, whereas just 3.2 billion \$ was spent in 2010 on neglected disease Research and Development (R&D). Moreover, public funding for neglected disease R&D from the world's richest nations fell by 6% in 2010. A document from the Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi) indicates the new forms of international collaboration in health Research (R&D) that have successfully delivered new treatments at much lower cost than reported by the pharmaceutical sector.

English: [http://www.dndi.org/images/stories/advocacy/DNDi\\_Policy\\_brief\\_CEWG\\_lowres.pdf](http://www.dndi.org/images/stories/advocacy/DNDi_Policy_brief_CEWG_lowres.pdf)

## **FOOD SOVEREIGNTY- LAND GRABBING**

### **World Bank, stop grabbing our lands!**

The World Bank is playing a leading role in the global land grab. The Bank's policies for land privatisation and concentration have paved the way for corporations to take millions of hectares of land from rural communities across the world in the past few years. Rural people are losing control over land and water because of this global land grab. At the opening of the World Bank meeting, affected farmers from all over the world released a collective statement. They asked for an end to the land grab and the return of the land to farmers.

[http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1247:farmers-demand-the-world-bank-and-wall-street-stop-grabbing-their-lands&catid=23:agrarian-reform&Itemid=36](http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1247:farmers-demand-the-world-bank-and-wall-street-stop-grabbing-their-lands&catid=23:agrarian-reform&Itemid=36)

### **International land deals: who is investing and where - get the data**

An international coalition of NGOs and research groups has published the world's largest database of land deals struck since 2000, offering unprecedented detail on who's investing, where and for what. The

database includes 1,006 deals covering 70.2m hectares – or roughly half the size of Western Europe. Data on further deals will be added on an ongoing basis.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/datablog/2012/apr/27/international-land-deals-who-investing-what>

## TRADE

### **EPAs will take the EAC countries to early grave**

East African governments are negotiating for Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the European Union (EU). The EPAs are free trade agreements that will require Africa to open up its borders to duty and tariff-free goods and services from Europe. Numerous studies suggest that this unequal partnership will have disastrous consequences on African citizens. Farmers will face increased competition from Europe's highly subsidized goods; citizens will lose the benefits of most government social welfare schemes due to loss of government revenue; regional integration of markets will be threatened and states will lose the capacity to have policies to protect, respect and fulfill their citizens' rights.

<http://www.the-star.co.ke/opinions/others/72871-why-epas-will-take-eac-countries-to-an-early-grave>

## WATER

### **World Bank supports harmful water corporations**

Water privatisation has been proven not to help the poor, yet a quarter of all World Bank funding goes directly to corporations and the private sector, bypassing both governments and its own standards and transparency requirements in order to do so, says a new report of Corporate Accountability International. The approach to remedy the lack of clean water has shifted in recent years to rely more on the private sector. The change has been more harmful than helpful. There is a move to call on the World Bank to stop funding the private water sector and redirect its money to public institutions.

<http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=107441> (eng)

Report, "Shutting the Spigot on Private Water: Case for the World Bank to Divest" at: <http://www.stopcorporateabuse.org/sites/default/files/Case-to-Divest.pdf> (eng)

## SMALL ARMS

### **World military expenditure stops growing in 2011**

Due to austerity measures sweeping across USA and Europe since 2010, countries have prioritized deficit reduction, and military expenditure cuts have usually been part of such measures. As a result, world military spending in 2011 in real terms is just 0.3% higher than in 2010. This means the breaking of a 13-year run of military spending increases. Six countries that spend heavily on the military (Germany, Brazil, USA, France, India and United Kingdom) have reduced their military budget in 2011. On the other hand, states like China and Russia have increased military expenditure sharply.

[http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/sipri-factsheet-on-military-expenditure-2011/at\\_download/file](http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/sipri-factsheet-on-military-expenditure-2011/at_download/file)

## CLIMATE CHANGE

## **Climate change and conflict**

Climate change is rarely the sole cause of conflict, but it can intensify and multiply existing conflicts. Preventing conflicts from arising is the most effective and sustainable means of addressing any conflict. By fostering development, some of the root causes of conflicts such as access to natural resources can be addressed, thus preventing the conflict-multiplier effects of climate change.

[http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PB-Development-Cooperation-Climate-Change-and%20Conflict\\_web.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PB-Development-Cooperation-Climate-Change-and%20Conflict_web.pdf)