



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

## **ECHOES from AEFJN**

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[www.aefjn.org](http://www.aefjn.org)

[aefjn@aefjn.org](mailto:aefjn@aefjn.org)

### **REFLECTION**

#### **'No' to an Economy of Exclusion**

During Lent, the Church invites us to reflect on our lives and motivation as Christians. During this time we are invited to open our hearts to the needs of the poor and reflect on why the current economic system is not adequate to get rid of poverty. The economic model is based on assumptions that economic growth and free market will lead to greater justice and inclusiveness; however, in reality inequality increases and the poor remain excluded. The Pope warned about a globalization of indifference that is taking root and that ignores the outcry of the poor and almost legitimises a selfish economy of exclusion and inequality (Evangelii Gaudium, 53-54). A lack of solidarity characterizes the global economic system, concentrating resources and riches in the hands of a few corporations that seemingly have taken over governments and parliaments. In the meantime the poor continue to lose resources and livelihoods via unjust economic structures that lead to illegal exploitation of natural resources and land grabbing. [Read more](#)

### **FROM THE AEFJN DESK**

#### **The Bali Package and Africa**

The 9th WTO Ministerial Conference was held in Bali last December and the result of this meeting was a number of legally-binding measures called the “Bali Package” that will impact on African economies and populations. The “Bali package” took into account the ambitions of developed countries while the aspirations of developing countries were postponed for future meetings. It showed the lack of political will to advance on matters that are good for the people and how developed countries are more interested in imposing their economic interests than committing themselves to reducing poverty. Foreign and large companies will have strong influence over customs controls of African countries which means a threat to their national sovereignty; not only will the control of their borders have to be renounced, but also the revenues that are needed for the implementation of social policies such education and health. [Read more](#)

### **ALSO IN THE NEWS**

#### **G8's Alliance on Food Security and the commitments made by African countries**

In 2012, the G8 launched the “New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition” for Africa; the objectives are to increase agricultural productivity and take 50 million out of poverty. The agribusiness companies are seen as key players to achieve these goals and many large companies are involved, while the main food producers in many African countries, family farmers, are not being consulted. Via the G8's Alliance, the private sector was able to draw concessions from African governments “enabling” their investment in Africa's agriculture. Ten African countries agreed to change seed, land and tax laws (over 200 policy commitments were made) and even to make land available for commercial investment by large agribusiness firms. The G8's Alliance risks increasing land grabbing and hunger across the continent because there are no safeguards to protect the land and seed rights of the local population and, in

particular, of family farmers. Local farmers risk losing their land and will be obliged to buy expensive seeds from foreign firms. This will lead to the disappearance of local seeds and hence of local food varieties, increasing the risk of hunger. [Read more](#)

## AFRICA

### Six Key Areas for Africa's Development

The forecasted 'African miracle' will NOT happen automatically. Africa's success will depend on the decisions taken by its political and economic leadership in six key essential areas. 1. Intelligent use of its natural resources and stopping blowing this colossal wealth which it needs to transform the continent and to benefit its people. 2. Investing in infrastructure to facilitate production and business, to improve the life of the citizens and to facilitate the exchange of ideas. 3. Integration at all levels to allow free movement of people, ideas and goods. 4. Governments must work FOR *all* of the population. All public services and infrastructures need to be used fully. 5. The embracing of adapted technology in telecommunications and adoption of high-speed networks (fibre optic) in every school, business and building. 6. Prioritisation of EDUCATION as the key to progress and development. The current education system has to change radically, to focus on promoting the creativity of the regular students. Today with access to internet, you can have access to the best education. [Read more](#)

## ADVOCACY

### Meeting between AEFJN and the Belgian Ambassador to the Great Lakes

On the 19th March, AEFJN together with the Belgian Natural Resource Network and Mgr Maroy, Archbishop of Bukavu, met Ambassador Franck De Coninckune, the Belgian Foreign Office's special envoy to the Great Lakes. This meeting came soon after the publication on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2014 by the EU Commission of a draft regulation on what are commonly called 'conflict minerals'. AEFJN expressed concern that this proposal might not provide compulsory measures for the responsible sourcing of minerals from conflict or high risk areas such as the Democratic Republic of Congo. Mgr. Maroy, a first-hand witness of the situation faced by the people affected by the 'conflict minerals', considers that such a measure could protect people from suffering serious human rights violations. AEFJN was represented by Jose Luis Aranda Gutierrez. [Read more](#)

## VIDEOS

### [Why we need Aid & Tax Justice](#)

A video from Action Aid explaining the harm tax evasion is doing to developing countries.