



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

ECHOES from AEFJN

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REFLECTION

From Charity to JPIC Advocacy

The church is rich in works of mercy: the hospitals, clinics, health centres, adoption and foster care, food collection, emergency services, social works and counselling services among others. But as important as these services are, they seem to cover and endorse the unjust structures of the society. This reflection suggests that moving beyond charity and sacred ministry to embracing advocacy will be a more viable way to make the gospel message come alive in our world. The capacity to confront unjust structures requires not only an inner journey and transformation of the human consciousness but also a more pragmatic understanding of the most basic Christian doctrines which we often take for granted. A conscious love produces compassion and solidarity in the world while fearfulness produces violence and domination of every kind. Pope Francis has also called Christians to display concern for the building of a better world through influence on societal life. [Read more](#)

FROM THE AEFJN DESK

Sell out of African food & farming system

African agriculture and its farmers are evermore under pressure to maintain local food systems that produce culturally adapted food. For decades African agriculture has been in dire need of investment. In the latter half of the 20th century, investment came to the continent, but it was not targeted at African farmers. The current flow of agricultural investment is focused just on export-based industrial agriculture, while smallholders and family agriculture remain deprived of investment. African family farmers are subject to the vagaries of international markets as well as international policies, while supporting family farmers is crucial to improve food security, combat rural poverty and climate change, create income opportunities for the rural youth, conserve biodiversity and strengthen the functioning of local markets. [Read more](#)

Transparency versus political will in Africa and Europe

The behaviour of extractive European companies (mining and oil) working in Africa is often criticized for the many abuses committed while exploiting the natural resources. These abuses range from secret negotiations between the companies and the African governments to violations of fundamental rights of workers and the affected populations. They also include the lack of control of minerals exported, limited taxes paid to host countries and the lack of accountability of the companies for environmental damage caused by the extractive industry. This article aims to show how transparency is important for the correct exploitation of mineral resources in Africa but not enough for a positive impact for the African population in general. Transparency is the responsibility

of all stakeholders in the process of extractive industries: the mineral-exporting countries, the home countries of extractive companies in the EU and the extractive companies themselves. [Read more](#)

ADVOCACY

World Food Day Conference: « Food & Power »

On World Food Day, AEFJN took part in a meeting organised by Foodbridge and the Federation of Anglophone Africans in Belgium entitled “Food & Power: The Hunger Games in Sub-Saharan African Politics”. Gino Brunswijck from the Secretariat spoke about the consequences for family farming of the increasing involvement of big transnational businesses in the food system. He offered insights into the land grab phenomenon, its impact on African peoples and into the international policies that are promoting a purely industrial agriculture. At the end of the meeting, Gino put forward alternatives to this productivity approach that big business and international organisations have adopted. First on the list would be the involvement of the peasant farmers in the development of public policies and by support for them by way of infrastructure, funding and market access. [Read more](#)

Our Land - Our Business - International Campaign

As part of an international campaign, NGOs took action on 10th October against the indicators being developed by the World Bank to classify countries, in particular the “Benchmarking Business for Agriculture”. This system accords top scores to the best performing countries in terms of ease of doing business, including in agriculture. This sort of classification makes countries compete to be more and more favourable to foreign investment. However, measures taken to please agro-business investors are often in conflict with local concerns, especially those of family farmers. For this reason, AEFJN and its partners organised an action in Brussels to attract attention to the World Bank’s policy. Similar activities took place in Washington, New Delhi and Dakar. See the campaign’s website [here](#).

VIDEOS

[Biofuels - The Butterfly Effect](#) (2.30 min)

[L'accaparement de terres au Mali](#) (Land grabbing in Mali)

Video about the effects of land grabbing on rural communities. (2 min; only in French)

[L'accaparement de terres au Gabon](#) (Land grabbing in Gabon)

Julien N'Kolo Reteno, chief delegate of Attac, explains the phenomenon of land grabbing in Gabon. (4min; only in French)