



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

ECHOES from AEFJN

Issue 16 – November-December 2014

www.aefjn.org

aefjn@aefjn.org

REFLECTION

Now is the Time

Growth is about necessary changes which occur in our lives. Psychologists call such changes transitions but the name does not really matter. What is important is that we recognize them and welcome them both in the lives of individuals and organizations. My sense is that such a growth is quite imminent in AEFJN or better still, has started taking place. It is a growth from being a Europe-based organization *helping* Africa out of the purgatory of poverty to Africa and Europe working together to *serve* the needs of each other in justice and in truth. What Africa needs from Europe is a relationship of mutual respect for our collective humanity, empathy and restorative justice; not help. In my opinion, this basic attitudinal and practical change is critical for the vitality and continued effective service of the NETWORK. [Read more](#)

FROM THE AEFJN DESK

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Consequences for Africa

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is a trade agreement that is presently being negotiated – in secret – between the European Union (EU) and the United States (US). The TTIP promotes deregulation of the global economy and prioritizes the interests of the Transnational Corporations (TNC), keeping aside the needs of the population and the necessary measures to assure sustainable development. The TTIP is a complex agreement and the consequences for Africa are not so evident at first sight. The developing economies in African countries and elsewhere would have to adapt to new rules that only benefit the TNC and are to the detriment of the population. The creation of the biggest world Free Trade Area would disrupt the economies in Africa that, unable to compete with more efficient ways of production, would lose their share of the EU and US markets. The people of Africa will have to accept an economic model that is appropriate for developed countries, but not for subsistence economies. [Read more](#)

Alternative Health Mandate for Africa

There is a platform of NGOs calling for an Alternative Trade Mandate (ATM) in trade relations between Europe and Africa. Though they do not chorus on all the specifics, but there is a general agreement that the present trade laws and policies between Europe and Africa are unjust. They are advocating for policies and laws leading to fairer trade, not only in goods but also in services. The present Ebola outbreak in the West coast of Africa has revealed the extent to which the Africa's weak health system has been impoverished by unjust trade laws and policies. It also reveals how sick the global and EU institutions are. The effort being made now to contain Ebola in Africa is only first aid. It

therefore becomes imperative to attend to the scourge definitively by addressing Africa's health systems. [Read more](#)

ALSO IN THE NEWS

Planet Palm Oil

The GRAIN association has published a new report on global production of palm oil which has increased dramatically in recent years. Palm oil, being cheap and plentiful, is used by companies in many food products. To meet the demand for processed food and biofuels, major palm oil producers have turned to Africa as in Asia, particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia, it is becoming more difficult to establish monoculture plantations. Palm oil production in developing countries is associated with deforestation, exploitation of plantation workers and seizure of land held by local communities. [Read more](#)

ADVOCACY

Conference: “Bridging the Gap between Policy and Practice: International soft Law and large Scale Land Acquisitions in Africa”

On the 11th of December, AEFJN organised a conference, *“Bridging the gap between policy and practice: international soft law and large scale land acquisitions in Africa”* at the European Union Parliament. Mrs Marie Arena, a Member of European Parliament hosted the event. During her introductory remarks, she warmly welcomed the participants to the conference. Mr Amadou Kanouté of Cicodev presented a case study of a large scale land acquisition for mining purposes in Senegal. Afterwards, Mrs Bridget Mugambe of the Alliance for Food Sovereignty Africa, discussed the impact and the undue pressure of international policies like the G8’s New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition imposes on the access to land for local communities. Furthermore, Mr. Stéphane Parmentier of Oxfam highlighted the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Land Tenure and the challenges of their implementation. The conference was followed by a fruitful discussion. In the next edition of the Echoes we shall present you the conference documents. [Read more](#)

Meetings with Members of the European Parliament

As a member of the platform ‘Brussels Trade Bunch’, AEFJN has participated in a round of meetings with the coordinators of political parties on the International Trade Committee at the European Parliament. The aim of these meetings is to present the concerns of the civil society regarding European Trade policy and its consequences for the South. The MEPs were questioned about a number of issues: their priorities for International Trade for the coming 5 years, how they view the Agenda of the European Commission, their assessment of the new Trade commissioner, Cecilia Malmström, the ongoing FTA negotiations, the Fair Trade dossier, the Conflict Minerals dossier and the EPA ratification process. AEFJN insisted on the need to push for a fairer EU trade strategy that contributes to sustainable development and the well-being of citizens (high levels of environmental protection, decent jobs in Europe and in Africa) and not only growth for a few. [Read more](#)

VOICES FROM THE NETWORK

Annual General Assembly

The AGM of AEFJN was held in Rome on 7th November. Participants included the congregational Contact Persons of AEFJN, the Executive and the Secretariat. During the first part of the meeting Fernanda Cristinelli (Vice-President) presented the annual report of activities of the Executive. The

Secretariat presented its own annual report including the state of play of the dossiers it follows in Brussels during last year as well as the challenges for the 2015. Gerard Moorman from the Dutch Antenna gave an overview of the activities of the Dutch Antenna. The meeting concluded with the presentation by Gervase Taratara (President AEFJN) of a proposal for the establishment of an AEFJN-Secretariat in Africa. The participants expressed appreciation for the inputs and the efforts of the Executive and Secretariat to keep alive the commitment to Africa and its people. [Read more](#)

VIDEOS

[Land Grabbing & Food Security](#) (7 min)

Short movie about Land Grabbing & Food Security in Benin (only in French)

[The Vanishing Lake](#) (3 min)

Short Documentary about the pressure on Lake Turkana, Kenya.

[Ruth Hall - The Political Economy of Agricultural Policy Processes in Africa](#) (33 min)

In-depth presentation by Professor Ruth Hall on African Agriculture.