



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

ECHOES from AEFJN

Issue 28 – May 2016

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REFLECTION

Africa's Enduring Hunger and the EU's Recurrent Food Aid Programs

The Western media image of Africa as a poverty stricken continent held hostage by hunger and incapable of feeding its population leaves one wondering whether living in Africa means a wedlock with death. Every now and then, pictures of malnourished children, women and men living in their shacks are flashed on the media as proof. The impression is always that Africa needs food aid from Europe and America or else her population will be wiped out by hunger. A follow-up to this image is that various Food Aid and Food security programs, and the accompanying economic policies, are designed for Africa in an effort to *save Africa from total annihilation by hunger*. Save Africa – beautiful and laudable mantra! But the venture of addressing Africa's food security has been enmeshed in a cloud of integrity questions. Is it really just about solidarity with a suffering continent?

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FROM THE DESK OF AEFJN

Transparency and Accountability at the European Investment Bank

In programs and policies of international development organizations, transparency and accountability, alongside with participation and inclusion have become widely accepted. Under international law, the right to access information of public authorities, such as the EIB, is considered a fundamental obligation. This right is an important tool to better achieving lending goals, to reduce corruption, to identify social, environmental and economic benefits and to avoid damaging communities and sensitive ecosystems. In its transparency policy the EIB commits to routinely publishing institutional information. It further commits to ensuring that the stakeholders are heard, engaged in projects and that "qualitative" transparency requires an ongoing dialogue between the Bank and stakeholders over information provision. On the other hand the Bank also withholds the right to ensure and safeguard sensitive information, which is tenable in some cases and is misused in others. To what length does the Bank uphold its own commitments for transparency and accountability? And can withholding information stand in the way of the EIB's development mandate? [Read more](#)

AFRICA

Literature Review: Yorubas don't do gender

The current African narrative on gender has been largely distilled from European and American literature on the issue. According to Oyewumi, such western concepts are not well suited to analyze the African household. She gives the example of the Oyo-Yorubas; instead of gender, seniority is an

organizing principle for Yoruba society. Bibi Bakare Yusuf asserts that western concepts have influenced African cultures and the other way around and that from a historical perspective this should be taken on board. But rather than generalizing, the analysis would benefit from a greater eye for practicality. For instance, how do contemporary Yoruba households run according to gender and seniority. [Read more](#)

ALSO IN THE NEWS

EU African EPAs in Limbo

The EPAs are both harmful to regional integration efforts as well as to promoting transformation of raw materials in Africa. Concerning processing of raw materials, the EPAs reduce the possibility of applying export taxes on raw materials for African countries. Such export taxes would allow African upstream producers to benefit from low prices as well as creating opportunities for more processing and transformation of raw materials in Africa, which would lead to more and higher-value exports. The fact that the EU negotiates the EPAs in regional blocs hinders African regional integration efforts because these various negotiations will lead to different results and hence maintain fragmented trade between African regions. This would also hamper intra-regional trade policies and plans for a continental trading bloc in Africa. [Read more](#)

Indigenous and Forest Community Leaders Tour the EU to Call for Conflict-Free Palm Oil

Community leaders from Liberia, Colombia, Indonesia and Peru have toured Europe (Netherlands, Germany, UK and Belgium) London and Brussels to bring to the attention of policymakers that a significant amount of conflict palm oil is destined for European markets. 18% of all illegal palm oil ends up in Europe, the main consumers being France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK. They have also brought evidence that European institutions are involved in bankrolling palm oil plantations on illegally deforested land, causing human and environmental damage. The community leaders also called upon European policymakers to put in place binding regulations on palm oil supply chains and other agricultural commodities entering the EU-market. [Read more](#)

VOICES FROM THE NETWORK

Antennae Meeting 2016 in Namur

From May 6 to 8, AEFJN held its yearly Antennae meeting in Namur at the house of Notre Dame de Namur. During the meeting, the 19 participants, representatives of six European Antennas and members, the Secretariat in Brussels and a representation of the Executive in Rome shared their work and hopes for the future. The discussions were focused on two presentations about the SDGs and conclusions on climate change (COP 21), enlightened by the encyclical *Laudato Si*. The Antennas, the Secretariat and the Executive spoke about their activities and priorities for 2016-17. The meeting was held in an atmosphere of cordiality and the issues related to the day to day life of the antennas as well as the plan of action of the network which was discussed in depth. The next Antennae meeting will be between 12-14 May 2017 and the venue will be confirmed soon. [Read more](#)

Religious Superiors' Association of South Sudan

The Religious Superiors Association of South Sudan (RSASS) counting more than 500 religious Sisters, Brothers and Priests, has issued a statement following a workshop on the Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis "*Laudato Sii*," held in Juba from 27th to 30th April 2016. The communiqué was handed to the newly appointed Minister for Environment and Forestry in South Sudan, Hon. Napwon, by the

Executive body of the Association. The RSASS pointed out some worrying signs: pollution of the water, of the land, of the air; deforestation and cutting of trees without replacement, burning the forests, overgrazing and desertification and oil exploitation as the major income for the country but also a grave polluting agent. [Read more](#)

ACTION

Ugandan Civil Society asks for a Ban on GMOs

Several Ugandan civil society organisations have endorsed a petition demanding their government stop promoting GMOs. [Read more](#)

VIDEOS

[Rose of Rwanda – Promoting Peace Project](#)

Follow Rose and see her impact as she travels the Rwandan countryside educating communities about women's rights to land.

[A Common Right: Uganda](#)

The Uganda Land Alliance has empowered communities to assert their land rights and fight against land grabbing by supporting the creation of over 52 Communal Land Associations.

[Land rights explained in 1 minute.](#)

[The Extraordinary Life and Times of Strawberry](#)

Video on food waste (2 min)

[West African women defend traditional palm oil](#)

The video shows how rural women in West Africa are working to protect traditional palm oil production in the face of the destructive expansion of industrial oil palm plantations (14 min).