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NEWS from AEFJN

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Trading away the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS

Closed-door negotiations between India and the European Union (EU) for a free trade agreement (FTA) entered a crucial phase on 28 April. At stake is access to affordable medicines for millions in India and others beyond India's borders. The country is the source of 80 percent of the AIDS medicines used in all Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) projects, and is effectively the pharmacy of the developing world. But the signing of a free trade agreement could threaten this. Read the article and see the video. <http://www.msfaccess.org/main/access-patents/free-trade-agreements/india/trading-away-the-lives-of-people-living-with-hiv-aids/>

Small Arms and Light Weapons: Africa

The proliferation and misuse of small arms is a worldwide, progressively complex and multifaceted phenomenon that affects people of all religions.

By virtue of their easy availability, low cost and manageability, small arms and light weapons (SALW) have become the weapons of choice in most conflicts in Africa and have helped raised levels of armed violence even in areas at peace. These weapons are the leading contributors to the escalation of a culture of violence and to the militarization of civil society. More than 1,000 lives are lost each day to small arms violence.

Many of the victims are civilians. Small arms have a disproportionate, far-reaching and long-lasting impact that extends well past their immediate use in conflict.

Religions for Peace has done a Resource Guide that you can find at:

<http://religionsforpeace.org/assets/small-arms-resource-guide-pdf.pdf>

Action Alert: Ask G8/G20 to act on commitment to smallholder farmers to address food security and HIV

Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance

amunzara@e-alliance.ch. <http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/news/action-alerts/>

The leaders of the world's most industrialized countries, known as the G8, will gather in Huntsville, Ontario, Canada, from 25-26 June, followed by further discussions at the G20 Summit, also in Canada, on 26-27 June. The EAA is asking G8/G20 leaders to deliver on their 2009 pledge to provide USD 20 billion to support sustainable agricultural production, with a focus on smallholder farmers. Because food security and HIV are closely interlinked, concrete action to support smallholder farmers is vital. The deadline for signatures is 4 June 2010. Organizational signatures (organization name and the country in which you are based) are preferred. To indicate your support, send an e-mail to: amunzara@e-alliance.ch. JS **Action:** Action Alert: Ask G8/G20 to act on commitment to smallholder farmers to address food security and HIV

Sad news from IANSA South Africa

We are sad to report the death of Sheena Duncan on 4 May. Sheena was a founder and Patron of Gun Free South Africa as well as being a stalwart of Black Sash and honorary life president of South Africa Council of Churches. "Sheena was a dedicated, quiet, soft spoken person, but when she spoke, nobody could challenge her, not even the gun lobby", said Joseph Dube, IANSA Africa Coordinator. She will be missed by GFSA, the IANSA Secretariat, and many others.

From IANSA.org

FOOD FOR PEOPLE OR FOOD FOR PROFIT?

The Crisis of Agriculture in Africa

Public meeting (<http://fahamubooks.org/info/?fa=text92>)

The current global food crisis is a silent tsunami, with billions of people going hungry. Hunger is indeed coming in waves, but not everyone will suffer. The recurrent food crises are making a handful of corporations very rich – even as they put the rest of the planet at risk.

Eric Holt-Giménez (<http://fahamubooks.org/info/?fa=text92>) , author of Food Rebellions! Crisis and the Hunger for Justice, reveals the root causes of the crisis in Africa and around the world – as well as the promising solutions to hunger and poverty.

Tanzania: Unlocking growth potential - what continent needs

Lucas Liganga ,The Citizen, Tanzania www.thecitizen.co.tz

Greater foreign direct investment in Africa is needed to maximize African potential. Capacity challenges in areas like agriculture and education hinder many Africans, especially women and young people. However, the question remains: how to make Africa a conducive environment for investors? JP

Are African countries paying too much attention to agriculture?

Luc Christiaensen and Lionel Demery ,WIDER Angle Newsletter <http://www.wider.unu.edu>

Economists at ICG, sponsored by Britain's DFID, claim "as long as food is tradable it cannot be the engine of growth." The authors challenge these findings and examine evidence that support for small-holder farmers and small rural towns boosts rural economies and provides a positive alternative to rural migration to large urban slums. They claim the proposals of IGC would be "Killing the goose, before it has laid its (golden) egg ... once again!" and call instead for getting inputs, credit, and better agronomic techniques into the hands of smallholders, and for complementary investments such as small town development. JS

Concerns over the traffic of small arms and light weapons.

lansa.org

* 26 million people worldwide were internally displaced as a result of armed conflict at the end of 2008

* All of the top six countries of origin of refugees in 2008 are locations of armed conflict.

* 36 armed conflicts in 26 countries result in at least 250,000 deaths each year

* In addition, there are an estimated 300,000 armed killings outside of conflict each year

* Around 60% of human rights violations documented by Amnesty International are perpetrated or facilitated with small arms and light weapons

* the easy availability and irresponsible transfer of arms is a major contributing factor