



Africa

A Billion Reasons to Believe in Africa

“There are a billion reasons to believe in Africa,” states Coca-Cola’s new commercial that attempts to capture the spirit of “new” Africa. Africa-optimism has in the recent past gained massive hype. However Africa has to ask itself fundamental questions. For example, how are the endearments changing the lot of Africa's ordinary citizen? How is Africa changing for the better? Is the renewed interest in Africa by emerging and developed economies out to improve the continent's socio-economic well-being? While Africa ought to embrace the old and new suitors trooping to the continent, this must be done with caution and on a win-win basis.

<http://www.africanexecutive.com/modules/magazine/articles.php?article=6763>

Archbishop Onaiyekan Address Pan-African Gathering on Conflict and Peace in Nigeria

He stated, “we who live in Nigeria know that the situation, though bad enough, is not as hopeless as it may appear from a distance, especially from the news that go out whenever there is a major incident.” He went on to say that “Peace is not only the absence of war.... Even non-violent tensions can be as destructive and disruptive as violent conflict. ...The art of non-violent protest and resistance is very much what is required in our days. The target is always peace, harmony and unity.” The Archbishop firmly stated “I believe everyone will need to work out what lessons they can gain from the Nigerian situation.

<http://religionsforpeace.org/assets/his-grace-onaiyekans-speech.pdf>

Sound Leadership - Africa's Hope

Why has Africa failed to attain sustainable economic transformation despite its rich natural resources which are enriching developed and emerging economies? Jacob Simmons, a retired American development economics professor, observes that “Africa’s major problem, in her development journey, is transformative leadership deficiency.” He advises that ‘Africans must rise up and effectively deal with this problem, if they are to benefit from their countries’ rich natural resources.’

<http://www.africanexecutive.com/modules/magazine/articles.php?article=6784&magazine=401>

Land Grabbing and Food Sovereignty

Lack of access to land one of the structural causes of poverty

During a side-event at the Rio+20 conference on sustainable development, CIDSE's Gisele Henriques called on governments to act on land grabbing and implement the UN-endorsed Voluntary Guidelines to Land.

<http://www.cidse.org/content/articles/just-food/land-land-grabbing/lack-of-access-to-land-one-of-the-structural-causes-of-poverty-2.html>

Land-grabbing and food sovereignty in West and Central Africa

In several African countries, according to a centuries-old tradition, “Land is not for sale”. Land-grabbing therefore seems like a brutal phenomenon that challenges traditional ancestral practices and that mortgages the future of generations to come. This phenomenon of seizing vast areas of land has been on the increase, especially since the food crisis of 2008. It is part of the mindset of agribusiness whose only target is profit, as has been highlighted by numerous instances in West and Central Africa.

<http://www.grain.org/article/entries/4565-accaparement-des-terres-et-souverainete-alimentaire-en-afrique-de-l-ouest-et-du-centre> (French only)

FOOD: How bad is the crisis?

Lower output forecasts for US maize and soybeans and wheat from Russia in 2012/13 have been jumped on by the international media as evidence that a food crisis is almost certainly on the way. But a range of economists and food experts are also warning against overreaction that could create panic, causing governments to apply export controls that would restrict supplies of grains. This would affect markets and push prices still higher, they say.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report/96121/FOOD-How-bad-is-the-crisis>

African cities must implement green measures to ensure food security – UN report

Policymakers in African cities must implement green measures to make sure that growing urban areas can meet the increasing demand for food, according to a report released today by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The publication, entitled *Growing greener cities in Africa*, stresses the importance of sustainable practices to meet nutrition needs such as urban market gardening, referring to the home, school, community and market gardens that produce fruits and vegetables in and around the continent's cities

<http://www.fao.org/ag/agp/greencities/>

Natural Resources

Implementing the Conflict Minerals Provision: The cost of business as usual

The cost of implementing the conflict mineral provision of the Dodd Frank Act has been hotly debated since the bill was signed into law in July 2010. Some industry bodies have been working to derail the regulations, claiming that it is too burdensome and costly for American companies to trace their supply chains. However, independent research into the costs of implementation has shown that the figures put forward by some industry players are seriously flawed. This analysis examines the costs of due diligence in context.

http://www.globalwitness.org/sites/default/files/library/The_Cost_of_Business_as_Usual.pdf

Areva in Africa or the law of the jungle

Since the closure of the last uranium mine in France in 2001, Africa has been indispensable to the operation of its nuclear power plants. With the support of the state, so far a majority shareholder, Areva is pursuing a profitable activity in an atmosphere of 'omerta' and political interference – showing contempt for those that pay the highest price: the environment and the local populations.

<http://www.pambazuka.org/fr/category/features/83320> (French)

Central Africa: Kigali sets his sights on controlling Rutshuru oil

The rush for Rutshuru oil explains everything. The war in eastern DRC smells of oil. The Kigali regime, fond of Congolese wealth, is no longer content merely with coltan and other rare earths. The lure of petrodollars for further sustained predation is the basis of the occupation of Rutshuru. Having conquered the "most helpful" in this region, Kigali has finally installed the M23 in order to officially (but criminally) start pumping crude oil. As Uganda did in Lake Albert, and Angola on the continental shelf, Kigali is taking advantage, in his turn, of the weakness of Kinshasa, to enjoy DRC oil.

<http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/201208240416.html> (French)

Medicines

Developing countries take measures to overcome patents in the face of unaffordable drug prices

Middle-income countries are increasingly taking measures to overcome the patents that price drugs out of reach, according to a new report from the international medical humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF).

http://www.southcentre.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1821%3Asb66&catid=144%3Asouth-bulletin-individual-articles&Itemid=287&lang=en

Thinking beyond the limitations of patents for developing countries

The 'Fix the Patent Laws' campaign is aimed at promoting the public interest through reform of South Africa's intellectual property laws. It is focused on better utilising flexibilities in the existing international intellectual property landscape – and not on rethinking the patent model itself.

<http://www.fixthepatentlaws.org/?p=387>

Pharmaceutical research and development: what do we get for all that money?

Data indicate that the widely touted "innovation crisis" in pharmaceuticals is a myth. The real innovation crisis, say Donald Light and Joel Lexchin, stems from current incentives that reward companies for developing large numbers of new drugs with few clinical advantages over existing ones.

<http://www.bmj.com/content/345/bmj.e4348.full?ijkey=Y1g4ZVUImlbtXOI&keytype=ref>

Trade

With EPAs, say goodbye to Industrialisation and Economic Prosperity

Rightly considered, the wide-ranging implications of signing the Economic Partnership Agreement between West Africa and the European Union as it currently stands, may mean that Nigeria and West Africa will have to say goodbye to the lofty idea of industrialisation, self reliance and genuine economic prosperity.

<http://www.thissierraleone.com/warning-to-west-africa-if-you-sign-the-epa-kiss-goodbye-to-the-lofty-idea-of-industrialisation-self-reliance-and-genuine-economic-prosperity/>

EPAs : Madagascar requests a 5-year moratorium because of the crisis

Madagascar belongs to the group of countries of Eastern and Southern Africa. With no agreement on a comprehensive EPA, an Interim Economic Partnership Agreement (IEPA) has been signed. This interim agreement has three components: market access, fisheries and development issues. Implementation of the IEPA will begin in January 2013. However, Madagascar believes that, given the crisis, time is needed for the government and operators to prepare for this deadline with its removal of tariffs on certain products. A moratorium of five (5) years is considered reasonable to allow the country to prepare for the adverse consequences of this tariff reduction.

<http://www.bilaterals.org/spip.php?article22020> (French)

Small Arms

An arms trade treaty ... for tomorrow

Although in preparation since 2006, this treaty could not be finalised on 27 July 2012 after four weeks of negotiations chiefly because of the opposition of the United States and then a few other countries. A report from Renée Mouazzan of the AEFJN France Antenna.

<http://www.aefjn.org/index.php/info-403/articles/un-traite-sur-le-commerce-des-armes-pour-demain.html>
(French)

What happened at the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) Diplomatic Conference?

The Diplomatic Conference that took place throughout the month of July at the UN in New York marked the culmination of many years of work by governments and civil society – and in particular the members of the Control Arms Coalition– towards a robust and legally-binding global Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). In the end, however, we walked away without an agreement.

http://www.saferworld.org.uk/news-and-views/comment/49?utm_source=smartmail&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Saferworld+e-news+August+2012

Climate Change

Human Rights and the Environment, towards a Right to Environment

Over the last decades it has become painfully clear that human activities can and do cause serious environmental problems - and that these problems, in turn, often result in grave harm to human beings.

Most recently our news has been tending to focus on the environmental challenges humanity faces due to climate change. But there are many more environmental challenges. To name but a few: marine life and the over-exploitation of eco systems that is greater than nature's ability to maintain it.

<http://www.righttoenvironment.org/>

Alternatives

Crisis and alternatives

Crisis for whom? Why, after all this, is it business more or less as usual? Because those who benefit think they can get away with it. Where there is greater ground level resistance – for example in Greece, significant political forces have put forward specific alternatives of a fundamentally anti-austerity kind – debt renegotiation, partial cancellation, progressive taxation and redistribution, employment generating policies, reversal of privatisation, moving towards public control of finance.

<http://www.tni.org/paper/crisis-and-alternatives>