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NEWS from AEFJN-Information

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Food Sovereignty

Eco-Farming Can Double Food Production in 10 Years, says new UN report

Small-scale farmers can double food production within 10 years in critical regions by using ecological methods, a new UN report shows. Based on an extensive review of the recent scientific literature, the study calls for a fundamental shift towards agro-ecology as a way to boost food production and improve the situation of the poorest.

http://www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/press_releases/20110308_agroecology-report-pr_en.pdf

African women come to the help of their continent's agriculture

African agriculture needs a greater workforce. So this is a place for women who have an increasingly important role to play. The campaign "We are the solution: Celebrating the African family farming" was launched in Dakar in March. Expected to last three years and to expand gradually to other regions of the continent, this campaign is being promoted by twelve women's associations in rural West Africa.

<http://www.afriqueavenir.org/2011/03/14/l%E2%80%99agriculture-africaine-a-besoin-des-femmes/> (in French)

Trade

The East African Community's (EAC) non-tariff barriers faulted

Despite increased intra-regional trade in recent years, non-tariff measures continue to pose serious setbacks to economic integration of the East African Community (EAC) bloc. The barriers, which range from security checks to unnecessary inspections by customs officials, are already undermining the successful implementation of the EAC Customs Union as they impede the free flow of goods.

http://www.tralac.org/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=cause_dir_news_item&cause_id=1694&news_id=100351&cat_id=1026

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) foresees a growth rate of 5.2% in 2011

According to the conclusions of the meeting of the Committee for Monetary Policy of the Bank of Central African States, the macroeconomic outlook for 2011 includes sustained economic growth, with a growth rate of gross domestic product (GDP) forecast at 5.2%. This would be an increase of 1% on 2010. <http://www.afrique7.com/territoires/803-la-cemac-prevoie-un-taux-de-croissance-de-52-en-2011.html> (in French)

Medicines

Drug Resistance Tuberculosis (DR-TB) a Ticking Time Bomb

Countries with high numbers of people living with HIV, especially where access to antiretroviral treatment is patchy, are sitting on a drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB) time bomb, which may in some instances already have exploded. South Africa and other high burden countries are diagnosing the tip of the DR-TB iceberg with the large majority of people who have DR-TB (multi-drug and extensively-drug resistant TB) dying because they are not diagnosed - or receive the medication when it is too late.

<http://www.health-e.org.za/news/article.php?uid=20033124>

SOUTHERN AFRICA: Regional Activist Dialogue on Right to Health

On March 25 and 26, SECTION27 hosted a groundbreaking Southern African Regional Activist Dialogue on Strengthening Campaigns for the Right to Health and why we need a UN Framework Convention on the Right to Health. The meeting brought together activists, experts, health movements, trade unions and organisations from 15 countries to discuss how to strengthen, publicise and unite campaigns for the right to health. This year a million people will die of HIV in Eastern and Southern Africa. Hundreds of thousands more will die of easily preventable diseases. Infant and maternal mortality remains intolerably high across the region. This situation demands an enhanced and urgent response to health, yet health systems are under enormous strain, many governments are lukewarm in their response to health and international donor assistance is flagging or going into reverse.

<http://www.section27.org.za/2011/03/19/section27-to-host-regional-activist-dialogue-on-right-to-health/>

IVORY COAST – Political Gridlock Empties Pharmacy Shelves

Hospital and pharmacy workers say that many medicines and other supplies are scarce weeks after the European Union applied sanctions, blocking vessels arriving at the Ivory Coast's ports. About 90 per cent of medical supplies in the country come from Europe – 80 per cent by sea, according to Christine Adjobi, health minister in the cabinet of incumbent president Laurent Gbagbo.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportID=92268>

Arms

Craftsmen produce small arms

Several countries have long traditions of artisans producing rudimentary firearms. Blacksmiths in West Africa, for example, produce a range of small arms including pistols and shotguns. The artisanal firearm industry is especially widespread and developed in Ghana, with some gunsmiths reportedly able to produce assault rifles. Craft-produced small arms range from rudimentary pistols and shotguns to more advanced assault rifles. Often this material is produced outside of, or under limited, state controls. These weapons are often used in crimes and against government targets.

www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/H-Research_Notes/SAS-Research-Note-3.pdf

Armed violence hits children's education

Armed conflict is robbing 28 million children of an education by exposing them to widespread sexual violence, targeted attacks on schools and other abuses, according to UNESCO's 'Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report 2011'. Kevin Watkins, Director of the publication, said, "Children and education are not just getting caught in the cross-fire, they are increasingly the targets of violent conflict". In Afghanistan alone, at least 613 attacks on schools were recorded in 2009, up from 347 in 2008, according to the report.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/gmr2011-press-release-main.pdf>

Corporate Social Responsibility

South Africa: Glimmer of justice for sick gold miners

Two recent court cases have thrown a spotlight on the predicament of hundreds of thousands of former mineworkers in southern Africa who have received little or no compensation for occupational lung diseases that have left them debilitated and jobless.

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportID=92240>

Glencore accused of rights abuses in Congo

Observers have accused Swiss-based commodities trading giant Glencore of human rights abuses in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Glencore has come under particular fire from Bread for All and its fellow NGO, the Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund. A study published by the two organisations accuses the company of human rights abuses, child labour, pollution and tax evasion.

http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/business/Glencore_accused_of_rights_abuses_in_Congo.html?cid=29708666

Africa

AFRICA: World Bank Funds Mining in Africa

The private finance sector arm of the World Bank Group announced last month that it would invest \$300 million to promote mining in Africa. Dr. Aaron Tesfaye, a professor of International Political Economy and African Politics at William Paterson University, said he is not surprised by the announcement because of the economic and security implications mining and strategic metals have for industrialised nations. While the IFC claims to promote poverty reduction through sustainable development in developing countries, it has been criticised because the mining projects it has funded have a track record of causing human rights abuses and massive environmental damage. 'This is bad news for Africans, at least those who aren't members of the business and political elite,' said Jamie Kneen, Communications Coordinator for MiningWatch Canada.

<http://pulsemedia.org/2011/03/25/continuing-colonialism-world-bank-funds-mining-in-africa/>

110322 The global financial crisis & Africa

Africa's response to the crisis has been to apply more of the same discredited neo-liberal policies that were responsible for triggering and transmitting the crisis in the first place. In effect the African countries stand the high risk of perpetuating their vulnerability to similar crises. Indeed, African and external policy responses to the crisis - and the nature of the discussion - reflect material and social concerns of the class-and-gender configuration of the ruling elite.

http://www.twnafrica.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=460:scholars-seminar-on-the-global-financial-crisis-a-africa-underway-in-accra&catid=102:scholars-seminar&Itemid=143