



A R O U N D Africa

April-June 2014

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And more!

Transitions at Africa Europe Faith & Justice Network - Brussels

AFJN is grateful to the outgoing AEFJN Executive Secretary, Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa **Sister Begoña Iñarra** for her many years of dedicated service. We welcome and look forward to working with her successor **Father Chika Onyejiwa** of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.

Coming Attractions: The US-Africa Leaders' Summit

By Melaura Homan-Smith, AFJN Program Coordinator



Members of the Africa Advocacy Network (ADNA) with Louis Mazel (center), of the State Department and Special Assistant to the U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit Planning team

On the forefront of U.S.-Africa relations this summer comes the first ever United States-Africa Leaders' Summit, to be held on August 4-6 in Washington DC. About 49 African leaders are expected to attend. On June 3, Mr. Louis Mazel, of the State Department and Special Assistant to the U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit Planning team, spoke to AFJN and other DC Africa-focused groups at the Africa Advocacy Network (ADNA) meeting. Mr. Mazel briefed the group on the Summit's theme and outline of events. The Summit will begin with many small state dinners hosted by US Cabinet officials August 4, 2014; an all-day CEO Forum for businesses and trade ministers and a White House dinner on the south lawn on August 5; and three sessions at the State Department on inclusive development, peace and security, and governing in the next generation on August 6. The theme will be "Investing in the Next Generation." There will be no official communiqué or statement made in advance of the Summit. The Obama Administration wants a freer discussion to allow commitments between the U.S. and African governments to surface.

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While several non-government institutions have planned events around the Summit to highlight civil society opinions, there is currently no inclusion of NGOs during the official events. Noticeably absent from the official engagement is room for civil society input and engagement with the heads of state. This is a great omission, especially given the opportunity to engage African leaders about their dictatorial tendencies, human rights violations, and suppression of civil society organizations (CSOs). Last month over 100 CSOs sent a letter to the Obama Administration asking to be included in the Summit: "By providing official space during the Summit for participation by African civil society activists, you will send a strong and clear message that the U.S. considers these independent voices to be an equally vital part of the conversation."

For diplomatic reasons the Administration will keep quiet on certain hot topics, but it would demonstrate quality American leadership to model legitimate civil interaction with CSOs during the Summit. It's abundantly clear that this type of dialogue is essential to a democratic society and can lead to media coverage and policy change; especially in light of the many African countries where such exchanges about human rights, democratic governance, and fair trade are suppressed. In the meantime, ADNA members will produce briefing papers on security and democracy to highlight the people-focused agenda and keep momentum moving forward around issues of justice, transparency, and accountability.



Washington Fellowship: Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI)

By Barthelemy Bazemo, AFJN Policy Analyst

This summer, beginning mid June, 500 young Africans arrived in the United States for the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), initiated by President Obama in 2010. The program aims to help young African leaders spur growth and prosperity, strengthen democratic governance, and enhance peace and security across Africa. Engaging African leaders on issues of good governance has become a key focus of U.S. engagement in sub-Saharan Africa these recent years. Hopes are high that this initiative will make a substantial contribution to build up future generations of leaders and strengthening democratic institutions.

The future leaders will receive training at 20 different universities around the United States, and meet with President Obama for a summit at the end of the program. This six-week program will focus on three major areas: business and entrepreneurship; civic leadership; and public management. The modules of the training will empower and develop their skills to meet the challenges of the continent.

The Africa Faith and Justice (AFJN) supports this great initiative of the United States Government. We believe that investing in a new generation of young African leaders is much needed to spearhead the long overdue change and innovation in their respective countries and across the continent.

Special Session on South Sudan

By Aniedi Okure, AFJN Executive Director

June 25, 2014, the Vice Chancellor (president) of the Catholic University of South Sudan, Fr. Mathew Pagan was at Africa Faith & Justice Network (AFJN) to address a special session of the Catholic Task Force for Africa (CTFA) on the situation in South Sudan. He was accompanied by his advisor Luc Picard, formerly of Catholic Relief Service (CRS).

Fr. Pagan spoke extensively on the current situation in South Sudan and the underlying problems that lead to the current conflict. This article focuses mostly on the underlying challenges in this nascent country. Fr. Pagan noted that when the British left Sudan in 1956, the conflict was already about one year old. Many Sudanese and South Sudanese have grown up and lived entirely under a war environment.



Luc Picard (Far right) and Fr. Matthew Pagan (third from right) with some members of CTFA.

The protracted conflict produced numerous armed factions over the decades. While many factions were theoretically fighting for the same cause, loyalties were divided and centered generally on a given commander and officers of the faction. Troops bonded together in alliance to the commander.

Following the referendum and independence, the new country incorporated the various armed groups into one army, producing a large number of army generals. Besides, the generals maintained an inflated number of troops and controlled payroll for the military, including “ghost troops”. As a result, the military consumes about 40% of the nation’s annual budget and have refused attempts to be audited.

Despite their influence in the society, and toll on the national budget, the military has not implemented any sustained effort to actually integrate the military beyond merging the factions into one army – the Sudanese National Army. In practice then, the old factions continue to remain loyal to their respective former commanders/generals. As such, the central authority of the national army is weak, while the opinion of former commanders continues to sway their followers within the national army.

On the civil service front, there is currently no sustained effort to carry out a process of reconciliation in all the ministries as called for by Article 36 of the Sudanese Constitution. Instead, we find civil service and ministries that tend to be filled with members of the same ethnic group as the leaders.

Fr. Mathew Pagan observed that as terrible as the situation is, it is better that the current conflict erupted sooner rather than later so South Sudanese could see the hidden challenges to national unity and the administration of the state, and address them before they get a life of their own and are entrenched within the fabric of South Sudanese society.

Focus Campaign Highlight:

Land Grabs

AFJN has long been campaigning that land grabs in Africa (the mass purchases of land, legally or illegally, by outside entities like corporations or governments) must be closely monitored as it threatens the very future of the continent. In summer 2013 AFJN policy analyst Bahati Jacques visited Cameroon to investigate land grab claims against American agribusiness company Herakles Farms. This summer Bahati and AFJN program coordinator Melaura Homan-Smith will further investigate Herakles' land grab issues around a palm oil plantation in Ghana.

Our Land, Our Business

By Nicole N'Gambwa, AFJN Intern

The World Bank, founded in 1944 with the goal to help reduce poverty and improve development in poor and developing countries has time and time again carried out policies contrary to its mission, hurting the people it is supposed to serve. The "Our Land Our Business" campaign is one of many platforms exposing and calling for action against one of the latest World Bank policies called "Doing Business".

The World Bank's "Doing Business" program ranks countries by distributing points to countries who "act in favor of the ease of doing business." According to Our Land Our Business, "the ease of doing business" includes paving the way for land grabs and exploitation of resources by corporations. Local governments are removing certain administrative procedures, environmental and social regulations, and lowering trade barriers to accommodate the World Bank's

policy. These policies turn land in developing countries into an easily accessible commodity.

Land grabbing happens all over the world, and small farmers are the hardest hit. According to Al-Jazeera, family farmers make up 80% of land holders in Africa and Asia, and provide almost 80% of the developing world's food. If multinational corporations take land from small scale farmers, how will the local population be fed? These corporations are not interested in local food security or the well-being of the land owners. Country leaders also play a role by adhering to the World Bank's incentives and selling the land of their people—without realizing the significant long-term effects their actions will have.

Africa is the continent most affected by land grabs. Tanzania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mali, and



A Cameroonian man processes palm nuts in Southwest Cameroon. Photo: AFJN

Mozambique are some of the countries affected, just to name a few. In Liberia, corporations from Great Britain, Malaysia, and Indonesia have managed to acquire over 1.5 million acres of land which previously belonged to the local communities to produce palm oil. In Sierra Leone, due to reforms and policies influenced by the World Bank, 20% of its arable land has been taken from rural populations and leased to foreign sugar cane and palm oil producers by the Sierra Leonean government.



Kano Farmers in Nigeria Photo: Ann Fleuret, USAID

As if this is not detrimental enough, the World Bank recently implemented a new program called “Benchmarking the Business of Agriculture” (BBA). The goal of BBA is to “promote the emergence of a stronger commercial agriculture sector.” Its ranking system will reward deregulation of the agricultural sector and is predicted to further facilitate land grabbing in the developing world. In some cases, 1 hectare of land is leased for as low as \$1 for 99 years.

Land is being taken and exploited and it must come to a stop! It is very clear that the World Bank is facilitating land grabbing, with the help of irresponsible leadership in the developing world. The consequences of land grabbing can be severe and cause instability. Food insecurity, civil unrest, and lack of political and economic stability are all outcomes that may arise as land and resources continue to be stolen from the people. We support the campaign launched by Our Land Our Business, as we also continue our fight against land grabbing. AFJN’s message to the World Bank is that what is beneficial for foreign businesses and investors is not beneficial for the local populations they are robbing.



Grab Their Attention: Women and Land

By Joseph Lyons, AFJN Intern

Women are among the most vulnerable population to land grabbing. Unfortunately, women lack the same land tenure rights as men in much of the developing world. Worldwide, only about 2% of all landowners are women according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, as social norms continue to prevent them from significant land ownership. When there is joint ownership between men and women in many countries, final decisions are left up to the husbands, while women receive fewer than 10% of farming loans. Despite their difficulties in the fight for property influence, women are vital in the fight to keep

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Africa fed. In non-industrialized countries, 60-80% of food is produced by women.

Several countries in Africa illustrate that despite the low percentage of women land owners, over half the country's food source is supplied by women. According to GRAIN, in Ghana and Madagascar, women compose about 15% of farm holders, but provide 52% of the family's labor force and 48% of paid workers. Though they do not own the land in these countries, they are doing most of the work. In Republic of the Congo, women provide 65% of agricultural labor, and are responsible for 70% of food production. These numbers could be improved if governments allowed for women to have the same access to resources as men. The UN estimates that yields could be increased by 20-30%, and overall agricultural output could increase between 2.5 and 4%. This would reduce the amount of undernourished worldwide by 100-150 million people, according to studies assessed by ActionAid.

Women's influence on Africa's food stability cannot be understated. Due to their lack of

land tenure security, however, they are more susceptible to land grabs than men. Their voices are also quieter due to social and cultural stigma, as made evident by the percentage of women in government positions in many countries. Also, as highlighted by ActionAid, women often have the task of acquiring resources apart from direct agricultural production, including gathering fuel, fodder, medicine, water, and food, relying more on common land for these reasons. Much of the land that foreign investor target is this so-called "common land," so these jobs women undertake to care for families will be undermined.

Any aspect of reform aimed at preventing land grabs and ensuring food security in Africa must take into account the important role of women. They must be empowered, rather than marginalized. America has taken great strides to improve women's rights, and its policies toward Africa should reflect this effort. In countries like Kenya, the empowerment of women would greatly improve the country's food supply. Their tenure rights must be protected, and these small farmers invested in, not displaced.

“Women’s influence on Africa’s food stability cannot be understated.”

AFJN Board Welcomes New Leadership



Aniedi presents Sister Jo'Ann with a parting gift at the May Board Meeting

Sister Therese Wetta, ASC (Board Chair) and Father Leonard Olobo, CSC (Board Vice Chair) were selected at the AFJN May Board of Directors Meeting. Also re-elected were Treasurer Michele Puma, SHCJ and Secretary Stephen Price.

At the May meeting, AFJN honored the outgoing Board Chair Sister Jo'Ann De Quattro, snjm, for her excellent service and leadership on the board.

AFJN also welcomes a new Board member, Sister Sally Slyngstad, snjm.

Empowerment Project Update – Accra Trip

By Aniedi Okure, AFJN Executive Director

On May 19, 2014 I set out on an eleven day trip to Accra to prepare the groundwork for AFJN’s empowerment project workshop scheduled for the fall. While in Accra, my host Fr. Eric Wiafe, director of the Center for Justice and Peace at the Catholic Institute of Business and Technology (CIBIT), who

Governance at the Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) office, the continental secretariat in Accra, and addressed our Lady Seat of Wisdom Catholic Community on AFJN and the empowerment project.

Regarding the number of participants in the training workshop, the original plan of was to conduct a training workshop with participants drawn from one deanery in the archdiocese. The consensus from our recent meetings and consultations in Accra is that we do an Archdiocesan wide training instead of one deanery. Although the implication of this new suggestion is that the number of projected eighty-five participants is double what was originally expected, we agree with this suggestion and are working to find means to accommodate the eighty-five expected participants.

The advantage of this new strategy is that it will be more effective to have all units of the archdiocese on board with the project at the same time. It will also make it easier, should the need arise, for the



Aniedi Okure, OP with the Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Children’s Group (bottom) and Pastoral Council (top)-Accra

also serves as the Justice & Peace Coordinator for the Archdiocese of Accra, arranged several meetings with community and opinion leaders. He connected me with Msgr. Jonathan Thomas Ankrah—President of CIBIT, with Fr. Patrick Murphy Amos, director of Governance, Justice and Peace office at National Catholic Secretariat of Ghana.

Fr. Eric Wiafe also created a forum for me to address the Ghana Association of Catholic Social Scientists. Members of the association were very receptive to the empowerment project and look forward to contributing and participating in the training workshop. I also met and discussed with the coordinators of the office of Justice, Peace & Good

archbishop or his delegate to issue a common, archdiocesan wide announcement on a given concern, or rally people around a common issue.

Following the consultations, the challenge was to find a conference center to accommodate participants since the archdiocese does not have such a conference facility. After several contacts, we secured the Presbyterian Women Conference Center for empowerment training workshop from October 8-11, 2014

We are grateful to Raskob foundation and the Institute for Policy Research at Catholic University who make it possible for us to conduct the empowerment training workshop.

Africa Faith & Justice Network, inspired by the Gospel and informed by Catholic Social Teaching, educates and advocates for just relations with Africa.

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