

Message from AFJN's Executive Director Dr. Steven Nabieu Rogers



Happy New Year! As we enter the Jubilee Year of 2025, a year of liberation, renewal, and forgiveness, the Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) is filled with hope and excitement. This year also holds special significance for AFJN as it commemorates a decade of our advocacy and commitment to restoring land to its rightful owners in Africa. To accomplish this important work, we are thrilled to welcome three new members to our Board of Directors: Sr. Mary Tiernan, CSC; Fr. Uju

Okeahialam, CSSp; and Fr. Pierre C. Fleury Lunimbu, SVD. Their passion and innovative spirit will undoubtedly enrich our work in the new year. We also take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to our outgoing board members Fr. Bill Christy, CSSp, Sr. Florence Deacon, OSF, and Fr. George Kintiba, SVD, for their dedicated service and leadership to the Board. Since September, AFJN has been actively engaged in various initiatives, including building a culture of advocacy among Catholic youths in Sierra Leone, exploring opportunities for youth-led growth and development in the Sahel Region, promoting peace through music in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and collaborating with local leaders in Northern Ghana to enact a new inclusive bylaw that empowers young girls in Daire. Thank you for your generosity in promoting these initiatives. May God bless you and guide us throughout this Jubilee Year.



Donations



Membership



US Advocacy

Africa Food Security Event



On September 26, AFJN Executive Director Dr. Steven Nabieu Rogers joined key partners to meet with Fr. Charles Chilufya, SJ, Director of Justice Ecology for Africa and Madagascar. Held at the Bread for the World office, the meeting explored potential collaboration with the Jesuits in the Sahel region, focusing on achieving the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, discussions

centered on leveraging Africa's potential to become a global breadbasket, ensuring land, food and nutrition security for all.

USTR Meeting on US-Kenya STIP Negotiations

On September 25, AFJN participated in the eighth public listening session with the Office of the United States Trade Representative's United States (US) - Kenya Strategic Trade and Investment Partnership (STIP) negotiations that covered: agriculture; customs, trade facilitation, and enforcement; environment; good regulatory practices, inclusivity; legal and administrative matters; and workers' rights and protections.

UN Black Futures Summit Presentation

Black Futures Summit Side-Event
Pan African Future, Faith and the Vision of Food Security for All (Hybrid)

A UN Summit of the Future Action Day Event

Saturday, September 21, 2024
2 PM – 4 PM Eastern Time

Hybrid Location:
 Church of the Covenant, 310 E 42nd St.
 New York City (2 blocks from the UN)

TO REGISTER
 Confirmation email will be sent with information.

PANELISTS

 Ms. Inani Gouraie A Future Liberative Governance Leader with Equitable Financial Flow and Food Security	 Ms. Emira Woods A Network Global Framework for Policies and Practices Leading to Food Security	 Dr. Steven Habibu Rogers Future Faith and Ancestral Foundations for Food Security	 Rev. Reginald Bachus, Esquire Future Faith and Pan African Story/Themes of Futurism	 Rev. Dr. Angélique Walker-Smith Moderator
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On September 21, Dr. Rogers was a panelist during the “[Pan African Future, Faith and the Vision of Food Security for All](#)” presentation at the *UN Future’s Summit Black Futures Summit Side Event* where he spoke on the “Future Faith and Ancestral Foundations for Food Security”.

Congressional Black Caucus Prayer Breakfast



Dr. Rogers joined a gathering of faith leaders at the Congressional Black Caucus Prayer Breakfast on September 14. Notably, during the event, Dr. Beverly Goines, from Georgetown University's Department of Theology and Religious Studies, revealed that she incorporates AFJN's case studies into her teaching modules on advocacy, highlighting AFJN's valuable contributions to the field. Dr. Rogers is exploring

opportunities for collaboration with Dr. Goines to expand the reach of AFJN's advocacy model.

Just Governance

Burkina Faso

Peace through Agriculture: Educating Communities and Youth



On October 8 and 10, AFJN held “Contribution a la consolidation de la paix durable par l’emploi des jeunes dans l’agriculture [Contribution to the consolidation of lasting peace through the employment of young people in agriculture]” workshops to identify sustainable solutions for building peace in Burkina Faso by encouraging young people to get involved in agriculture. The event was covered by local media.



Burkina : Le Père Barwendé Sané mise sur l'agriculture pour restaurer la paix

Fr. Barwendé Sané, SJ, AFJN Senior Fellow was quoted in Oumarou Konate’s October 10 article “[Burkina: Father Barwendé Sané relies on agriculture to restore peace](#)” in Minute.bf on the recent workshop on sustainable peace.

Cameroon

AFJN Launches Partnership to Address Birth Registration



AFJN has launched a partnership with the Cameroonian Catholic Ecclesiastical Province of Garoua to address birth registration challenges. The partnership aims to share experiences, identify challenges, and improve the birth registration process in the predominantly Muslim region. In Cameroon, birth certificate issuance is hindered by corruption, ignorance of the law, poverty, and bad governance, affecting tens of thousands of individuals.

Without a birth certificate, children face severe consequences, including limited education, no national identification, and restricted access to government services. AFJN has been promoting timely birth registration and facilitating late registrations in South-West Cameroon, with plans to hold a mobile court for undocumented children.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Peace Caravan: Spreading Peace through Song and Dance



Organized by Artistes Musician for Paix (AMP) in partnership with AFJN, the Peace Caravan spread a powerful message of unity and coexistence throughout Goma, North Kivu, on November 29. The event promoted cultural diversity through music, dance, and community engagement. It served as a follow-up to AFJN's project aimed at promoting peace and preventing violence based on ethnicity, using music to change minds and influence opinions. Nine ethnic groups participated, celebrating their shared heritage, while performers debuted the multi-language song "Let Us Live Together," which deeply resonated with the audience. The Caravan also visited the camp for displaced persons, using music to heal trauma and uplift spirits. The enthusiastic response from the community highlighted the transformative power of grassroots peacebuilding efforts in the DRC.



Watch the music video "[TUI SHI PAMOJA BY AMP](#)" of the collaborative song created through the Unity through Diversity workshop.

Sierra Leone

Building a Culture of Practical Advocacy in Sierra Leone



As part of AFJN's ongoing efforts to combat land grabbing in Sierra Leone, a workshop was held on December 12, 2024, in collaboration with CARITAS Freetown and the Spiritan Development Office Ghana. The event, organized in partnership with the Archdiocese of Freetown's Catholic Youths Organization InterUnit, brought together 64 young Catholics from 29 parishes. During the full-day training at St. John Paul II Quasi Parish in Freetown, participants gained a deeper understanding of advocacy rooted in Catholic social teaching. This initiative aims to identify and empower youth leaders to work with communities affected by land grabbing, raising awareness and mobilizing them to advocate for their rights.

These projects are made possible by funding from the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Peace and the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities and AFJN organizational and individual members.

Women Empowerment Project (WEP)

Ghana - WEP

Combating Child Marriage and Domestic Servitude in Ghana



In September, AFJN Ghana hosted a five-day workshop in Sunyani, bringing together 70 participants from across the country. Representing women religious, priests, parish representatives, and Muslim communities, the group united to tackle early and child marriage, as well as domestic servitude. A highlight of the workshop was an advocacy visit to the local bishop, who is notably building a center for vulnerable girls in his diocese. To ensure sustained momentum, AFJN Women Empowerment Coordinator, Sr. Eucharika Madueke, SNDdeN, also conducted follow-up activities with participants.

In December, AFJN-Ghana amplified its advocacy efforts through radio campaigns, including a broadcast on Radio



Savanah, to raise awareness about the dangers of early marriage. [Listen to our youth leader Josephine](#) share her insights on Facebook.

Nigeria - WEP

Empowering Women in Akwa Ibom: A Community-Led Approach



Following a high-level stakeholder meeting in August, the Supreme Council in Akwa Ibom committed to engaging the "mboho mme Ete Idung" (village heads and their wives) to address pressing community issues, including early marriage and domestic servitude. The council head, HRM Etinyin, proposed establishing caretaker committees to tackle harmful practices at the next council meeting. Additionally, AFJN-Nigeria successfully engaged the Supreme Council of Traditional Rulers Women Wing, securing commitments from Paramount Rulers'

Wives to spread awareness and support the cause. Dr. Mrs. Glory Edet, Former Commissioner of Women Affairs, also pledged support for their advocacy efforts, demonstrating a strong commitment to community-led women's empowerment in Akwa Ibom.

Engaging Youth to Combat Child Exploitation in Akwa Ibom



In September, AFJN engaged with 143 students at Modern Comprehensive Secondary School. The school committed to joining AFJN's youth advocacy group, further solidifying efforts to combat these issues.

Building on this momentum, AFJN-Nigeria held a Youth Advocacy Training workshop for 40 dynamic youth in October, followed by several advocacy training events, including a school sensitization and a radio program on the state Child Rights Act.

In November, AFJN-Nigeria's State Youth Coordinator joined an advocacy visit to Life and Light Comprehensive Secondary School, engaging over 683 students and establishing a youth club to serve as a platform for ongoing awareness and advocacy efforts.



Advocacy Training for Women Religious in Benue State



AFJN hosted a five-day advocacy training for Women Religious Communities in four Catholic Dioceses in Benue State in October. Led by Sr. Eucharua and Fr. Aniedi Okure, OP, the training equipped over 70 sisters with essential advocacy skills. As a culmination of their training, the sisters embarked on advocacy visits to key state officials, including the Commissioner for Women Affairs, the High Chief of Benue State, and the Speaker of the State House of Assembly.

Combating Child Exploitation in Nigeria: A Community-Led Approach



instances of exploitation.

AFJN-Nigeria conducted a series of workshops and sensitization campaigns across various local government areas in Nigeria, targeting Catholic women, youth, and community leaders. From August to November, these events drew over 5,600 participants, focusing on the dangers of child marriage, domestic servitude, and child labor. Survivors shared their experiences, and community leaders pledged to take action, appointing welfare officers and vowing to report



In September, The AFJN-Nigeria Youth Advocacy Team conducted community sensitization and church outreach programs in Igbudu and Inyimagu, Ikwo LGA, engaging 421 participants. Trained youth advocates led the events, focusing on ending child marriage and domestic servitude. Key stakeholders and community members agreed to prohibit domestic servitude for children under 18 without proper permission, and educational materials were distributed to inform and empower the community.

In November, youth advocates, supported by AFJN,



conducted a successful church outreach program at Ascension Church, Ndieborishiagu, in Ebonyi State, engaging 210 attendees. The event raised awareness about the harmful impacts of child marriage and domestic servitude, receiving strong support from church leaders and members. Leaders pledged to spread awareness and advocate for child rights and welfare, demonstrating significant community interest in supporting child protection initiatives.

This project is made possible by grants from the Conrad Hilton Foundation, Dominican Sisters of Peace Shalom Fund, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Base Communities, Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Missionaries of Africa, and AFJN organizational and individual members.

News and Events

Institutional Briefing

On November 21, AFJN held the 2024 Fall Institutional Briefing for Organizational members where several stories from the field were highlighted and members were encouraged to ask questions pertaining to the work of AFJN in the US and Africa. Dr. Rogers also spoke on the future director of AFJN during the meeting.

AFJN Thanks Fr. Bill Christy, CSSp



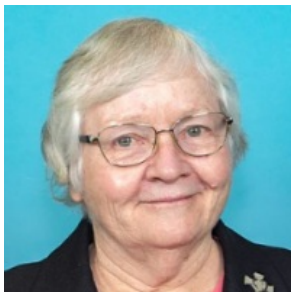
In November, AFJN Board Secretary Fr. Bill Christy, CSSp decided to step down from his role on AFJN's Board of Directors, as his Congregation is giving him a new role. AFJN is so grateful for the years that Fr. Bill has been supporting the work, most recently as Board Secretary, and previously as Board Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Member. Thank you Fr. Bill and we pray that God bless you in your new ministry!

Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi (Dubuque, IA) - AFJN's Newest Organizational Member



In September, AFJN welcomed our newest organizational member from Dubuque the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi Iowa. Please join AFJN in welcoming them. AFJN met the sisters while exhibiting at the Leadership Conference of Women Religious Annual gathering.

AFJN Welcomes New Board Members



[Sr. Mary Tiernan, CSC \(South Bend, IN\)](#) is the new board member representing the Sisters of the Holy Cross (in place of our former Board Chair and Member, Sr. Florence Deacon, OSF). Sr. Tiernan "brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to the values and mission of the Africa Faith and Justice Network" according to Sr. Sharlet Ann Wagner, CSC (Congregational President). Continuing that Sr. Tiernan "will continue the excellent work that Sister Florence has contributed over the years. [Read about her Golden Jubilee.](#)

[Fr. Uju Okeahialam, CSSp \(Baltimore, MD\)](#) is the new board member representing the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans) in place of our former Board Secretary, Co-Chair, and Member Fr. William Christy, CSSp). Fr. Okeahialam, the newly elected US



Province Provincial Council "will be an excellent link between the Spiritans and AFJN and will also carry on the presence of the Spiritans in AFJN that has been there since AFJN was founded" according to Fr. Christy. He also noted that "Fr. Uju "will soon be appointed as Pastor of St Francis Xavier Parish, [in Baltimore] the oldest African American parish in the United States" and hopefully will be attending the next in-person Board meeting.



Fr. Pierre C. Fleury Lunimbu, SVD (Browns Mills, NJ) is the new board member representing the Society of the Divine Word. Originally from the DRC, he is currently the Pastor of St. Ann's Church. Fr. Fleury made his final vows on August 2, 2014, Eldoret Diocese was ordained a Deacon on October 11, 2014, Nairobi Archdiocese at the Divine Word Parish and was ordained a Priest on May 10, 2015, Kinshasa Archdiocese at the Mary Auxiliary Parish, DRC.

Networking

AFJN is raising awareness and working with coalitions like: Jubilee USA Network, Financial Accountability & Corporate Transparency Coalition, Public Private Alliance for Responsible Minerals Trade, Advocacy Network for Africa, Catholic Taskforce on Africa, Faith Leaders for Climate Justice, Coalition for Free and Fair Filing, Executive Directors Network, United States Catholic Mission Association, Global Crisis Relief Coalition and others.

Interns Wanted

AFJN is looking for Fall and Spring interns. More information can be found on [AFJN's Internship page](#). Learn more about [AFJN's Internship Program and apply online here](#).

AFJN News



Sr. Eucharia quoted in *National Catholic Reporter*

On December 23, Sr. Eucharia Madueke, SNDdeN was one of several religious quoted in Chris Herlinger's "[In a strife-filled world, sisters find hope in Advent](#)" article featured in *National Catholic Reporter*.



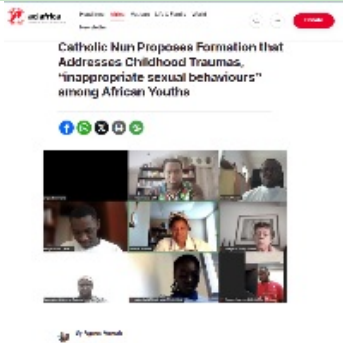
Sr. Eucharia quoted in *Global Sisters Report*

On November 4, Sr. Eucharia Madueke, SNDdeN was one of several religious quoted in Chris Herlinger, Doreen Ajiambo, and Rhina Guidos' article "[For sisters outside the US, the 'stakes are high' in 2024 election](#)" article featured *Global Sisters Report*.

AFJN mentioned in *Global Sisters Report*

On October 10, AFJN was featured in Doreen Ajiambo and Chris Herlinger's "[ASEC uplifts 'entire communities' in Africa](#)"

ASEC uplifts 'entire communities' in Africa in 25 years of educating sisters



AFJN Board Chair, Sr. Nkechi Iwuoha was featured in *ACIAfrica*

On August 27, AFJN Board Chair, Sr. Iwuoha was quoted in Agnes Aineah's article "[Catholic Nun Proposes Formation that Addresses Childhood Traumas, 'inappropriate sexual behaviours' among African Youths](#)" in *ACIAfrica*.

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PRAY



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