

# 2019-2022 PLAN OF ACTION



**AFRICA EUROPE FAITH & JUSTICE NETWORK**



AFRICA EUROPE FAITH AND JUSTICE NETWORK  
RESEAU FOI ET JUSTICE AFRIQUE EUROPE

174, rue Joseph II str.  
B 1000 BRUSSELS - Belgium  
Tel. +32.(0)2.234.68.10 / Fax. +32. (0)2.231 14 13  
email: [aefjn@aefjn.org](mailto:aefjn@aefjn.org)  
<http://www.aefjn.org>

## 2019-2022 PLAN OF ACTION

### Introduction

The 2019-2022 Plan of Action that you have in your hands is a product of a yearlong reflection involving all the stakeholders at each stage of the process. A major shift in the Plan of Action is an orientation towards an African-driven advocacy. The unprecedented input and participation of the African antennae and partners enriched the process even the more but the constant call on the Africans to take their future in their hands, changes in the context and actors; and the need for more robust and productive advocacy are the significant drivers that influenced our current orientation.

The 2014-2018 Plan of Action noted that, *“Europe and the European Union are losing influence on the African continent and AEFJN members are diminishing in Europe and growing in Africa, it is of paramount importance for the future of AEFJN to patiently build up antennae among the religious in Africa and network with them and with competent civil society organisations on the continent on all issues”*. Through this yearlong reflection, we collectively re-affirm that the statement of the 2014-2018 Plan of Action is a truth which we must take seriously as an advocacy network in faithfulness to the signs of the time. We utilised the elements outlined the 2014-2018 Plan of Action, the demographic changes within AEFJN members Congregation and the dwindling financial resources seriously as guides for the 2019-2022 Plan of Action. In addition, we gave due consideration to the imperative of the Church and Civil Society actors in Africa to forge collaborative partnerships. As the African proverb puts it, *“when spiders unite their webs, they tie a lion”*. AEFJN must now be the bridge linking and holding the two principal actors together.

Nevertheless, AEFJN stays committed to key economic issues in the relations between the European Union (EU) and Africa. The core economic advocacy dossiers for the current Plan of Action have been streamlined to two; namely, Corporate Social responsibility and Food Sovereignty. We have chosen Climate Change as a transversal theme. While we treasure the collaboration of the antennae who are modifying their dossiers to be more in alignment with those of the Secretariat, the Network continues to respect the peculiarity of each antenna and

support their traditional advocacy themes. This plurality of dossiers is part of the richness, diversity and dynamism of the network.

Finally, we wish to thank the Executive, the antennae Coordinators, our partners and collaborators who contributed to the realization of the 2019-2022 AEFJN Plan of Action.

God bless you all!

Chika Onyejiuwa CSSp  
Executive Secretary

## MAJOR CHANGES SINCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2014-2018 PLAN OF ACTION

1. **AEFJN as a network:** AEFJN has undergone tremendous changes within the last four years. The member Congregations have received their share of the demographic shifts in Europe which have resulted in heavy repercussions both to the human and financial resources of the network. The resultant dwindling resources of the network is making it almost impossible for the Executive to keep the same number of lay staff in the International Secretariat in Brussels and support their advocacy initiatives.

In the same vein, the antennae are more and more built around one or two individuals not out of choice but a reflection of the demographic shift. The Secretariat discerns this as unhelpful and unhelpful for the antennae. Paradoxically, the member Congregations who are individually affected by the demographic changes are also taking on new individual initiatives. It is an awkward situation in our hands that calls for attention and concrete actions. The entire network will need to reflect deeply about this situation and find a gentle way to navigate through it in the coming years. The member Congregations urgently need to be encouraged towards pulling their human and financial resources together. The Contact persons have a unique role to play on this mission.

In contrast, there is an increasing interest among religious in Africa to engage in advocacy but are very much limited by **capacity and financial resources**. Consequently, AEFJN finds itself in an ambivalent situation which needs attention. The Secretariat, the Contact persons, and the Executive will jointly intensify effort to seek the financial support of funders to help in the capacity building of the members in Africa. Meanwhile the African antennae will be encouraged from the onset to be self-reliant.

Even though AEFJN has a weak financial and human resource base, its strength lies in being part of the institutional Church and yet not limited by the Church's institutional structures. We easily enter the space of Civil Society without losing our Church identity. This gives us a unique power and position to provide a space for the Church and non-Church actors (Civil Society and Social Movements) to work together; in other words, to bring together the power of the Church and the expertise of the Civil Society on the same platform. This is becoming increasingly necessary especially now that it seems that the imperative is to move **from European to African driven advocacy**.

The Civil Society in Africa is being increasingly criminalised by the corrupt African political class to maintain their corrupt practices to the detriment of the poor. The Church appears to be the only voice left but unfortunately, the Church in Africa seems to be more interested in maintaining her institutional structures than caring for the needs of the poor. The network will build on the gains of being a bridge connecting the Civil Society and the Church. It is a unique role that will anchor key advocacy strategies for AEFJN in the next four years.

**2. Socio-economic & Political Context:** During the last four years, some major changes have taken place in the context of economic relations between Africa and Europe. These were taken into consideration while choosing the themes and strategies for the 2019-2022 plan of action

**i. Good Governance** remains a major challenge to African nations. In principle, many African countries have embraced democracy; however, the democratic processes in practice are often contested and violent; primarily because of poor democratic institutions. The level of impunity and disrespect for the rule of law is very high and often enmeshed in corruption. As a matter of fact, corruption has become a cancer to Africa's development. Most African inhabitants are victims of gaps in the rule of law and corruption in the administrative structures. Many Africans do not trust that their governments "care" for them. The political elites look for money and do not take care of the future of the young population. Corruption in the polity contributes more than any other factor to the poverty in Africa.

**ii. The European Union** has made some effort to reshape the economic relationship between her and Africa but nothing has significantly changed except words and strategies; and there is no sign of change in the short term. The evidence is in the recent *Marshal and compact plan with Africa*<sup>1</sup> (July, 2017), a new development cooperation between the G20 and Africa. Africa remains attractive to Europe and other industrialised nations because of its abundance of natural resources especially those needed for the digital age<sup>2</sup> and the struggles for its dominance continue.

**iii. The presence of the BRICS** countries has drastically changed the landscape of Africa's political economy. The BRICS countries greatly challenge the European economic stronghold in Africa. China, in particular, is present and active in almost all countries in Africa, and in 2015 invested about 35 billion Dollars and so has surpassed the US as Africa's main trading partner. Obviously, China, along with some other countries from the global South have become major competitors with the ex-colonial powers to African market. Expectedly, the impact of BREXIT will further affect the changing equation. Europe is trying to save what it can from the impending loss of its marketplace<sup>3</sup>. Future advocacy strategies must duly consider the presence and activities of the BRICS countries in Africa.

**iv.** The governments of the Western countries are increasingly reducing **financial support for development in Africa**. The new situation is compelling African governments to accept the option of turning to the **private sector** to fill the gap. Consequently, the private sector is exerting a lot of influence on orientations of policies. Industries need raw materials, both minerals and agricultural commodities; and need markets for finished products. At the same time, African countries have a huge need for foreign capital. Adequate infrastructure development alone would require an estimated 100-billion-dollar capital investment every year. The obvious

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.bmz.de/en/publications/type\\_of\\_publication/information\\_flyer/information\\_brochures/Materialie270\\_africa\\_marshallplan.pdf](http://www.bmz.de/en/publications/type_of_publication/information_flyer/information_brochures/Materialie270_africa_marshallplan.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Wolfgang Schonecke, <http://aefjn.org/en/marshall-plan-and-compact-with-africa-a-critical-comment-on-the-new-eu-africa-partnerships-2/>

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

solution is to bring *the offer and the demand* together with the help of public development agencies<sup>4</sup>. The implication is that the Trans-National Corporations (TNCs) will continue to invade Africa with continuous demand on the improvement of the ease of doing business which will continue to worsen land, give unnecessary tax holiday, increase poverty and increase inequality, exacerbate migration, worsen ecological destruction, health, education and social services.

**v. Migration:** There is no doubt that migration will dominate the European policy agenda in the next several years. The more immediate trigger for the European interest in Africa is the number of Africans reaching the European soil through the Mediterranean Sea. There are two aspects of the narrative from the standpoint of Africa. The first is the social consequences of the deteriorating socio-economic conditions in Africa and the second which stems from it is that there is salvation just across the Mediterranean Sea. A big concern for Europe, in particular, is the rapid population increase in Africa. Africa's population is at present about 1.2 billion and could be, according to some estimates, over 4 billion in the year 2100. Added to this, is the likelihood that climate change will affect Africa more than any other region in the world and that dryness will make agricultural production impossible in some areas. All these factors are likely to increase migration of people within Africa and towards Europe at a scale that could threaten the political stability of Europe. The different initiatives in favour of African development have the intention to kick off economic development with the help of private investments and so increase employment possibilities for young people to keep migration within acceptable limits. But unfortunately, the result obtainable is the reverse of the intention.

**vi. Climate Change:** Climate change will continue to be on the front burners of European policy in the coming years. More fundamentally, the phenomenon of climate change above all calls into question some aspects of ethical life. The implementation of political or structural elements or mere forces of the market, especially if these are lacking in correct ethical orientation, are not sufficient to solve the current crises of climate change and poverty. The strong link between climate change and extreme poverty is evident and it underscores the need to find a new model of development, based on new attitudes and new forms of living. As *Laudato Si* warns, "a great cultural and educational challenge stands before us and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal"(202). The Paris agreement sends out a clear political message favouring the transition toward a model of economic development with low or zero carbon consumption while encouraging solidarity with the most vulnerable populations.

**vii.** The increasing **complexity of the TNCs** spanning through Europe, the BRICS and the Americas is making advocacy more challenging. Future advocacy from Europe focusing in Africa must keep an eye on these unfolding complexities. There will be need to develop more transversal and collaborative advocacy strategies in the next plan of action.

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<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

### **3. AIM OF AEFJN**

AEFJN renews her commitment to the change of the neo-liberal system so that a new solidarity system develops where the person, environmental and social standards are at the centre in interrelation with the whole of creation so that all may live fully.

The overriding **aim of this plan of action** is that:

- The resources of Africa benefit the population of the continent and that steps are taken to preserve them for future generations.
- The economic relationships between Africa and Europe are fairer and allow the full development of Africa and its people.

### **4. ORIENTATIONS FOR THE 2019-2022 PLAN OF ACTION**

Bearing in mind the interconnectedness of the themes received during the consultation; and in pursuance of AEFJN core value which recognizes economic issues as fundamental to our advocacy at the European Union and its Institutions as well as the many competing issues that demand our attention, AEFJN has chosen the themes of Food Sovereignty (Food systems, Food cultures, Just Food Governance and Land grabbing) and Corporate Social Responsibility (Natural resources extractions, Financial systems Transparency directives, Business and Human Right) for its advocacy for the next 4 years (2019-2022). The network will keep an eye on migration, climate injustice and some of the consequences of our present system of production, economic system, and tradition.

### **5. COMMON STRATEGIES FOR ALL THE THEMES**

- Develop Christian reflections on each issue based on the Bible and the Catholic Social Teaching.
- Lobby the EU institutions, the national governments and parliaments.
- Link each policy with its impact on Africa and African people.
- Encourage the birth and growth of Antennae (or similar groups) in Africa.
- Strengthen cooperation with AFJN and other African Partners, mainly with Social Centres of Religious congregations, JPIC groups and JP Commissions.
- Strengthen our links with African Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) working on similar issues and having our goals.
- Identify allies and networks in Africa and Europe.
- Raise awareness of religious, Christians, Church Institutions and the public in general on the issues AEFJN deals with, their impact on Africa and to invite to action.
- Develop materials with African participation.
- Collect and communicate stories, success stories and case studies from Africa.

- Continue capacity strengthening in Africa on economic issues.
- Raise the profile of AEFJN both internally and externally.

## 5.1 Food Sovereignty (Land grabbing + Food cultures+ Food system)

### ***Policy Guide***

Even though there is a growing consciousness in the European Union that European consumption is putting pressure on land outside Europe especially Africa, the pressure on African land by EU TNCs is going on unabated, with its heavy socio-economic consequences on Africa. The Private-Public-Partnership facilitated by Global financial institutions, European development finances under different development cooperation is a major protagonist of land grabbing in Africa. The report of [Land Matrix](#) shows that as at December 2017, about 22million hectares of land had been grabbed in Africa by foreigners at the detriment of African family farmers who feed the population and pastoralists. Only 6% out of the whole lot goes for food production, the rest is for the production of non-food commercial products like fuel stuck for export. Obviously, the different development cooperation for the development of agriculture stands against African food security and food sovereignty. There are conflicting messages regarding the availability of land in Africa. On the one hand the President of AfDB (Africa Development bank), Dr Akinwumi Adesina claims that [Africa sits on 65% of uncultivated arable land left in the world](#)<sup>5</sup>. He gives a wrong impression that the lands in Africa are wasting; leading to increasing demand for land for unhelpful agro-business and the changing of African land laws to the detriment of Africa's indigenous peoples. On the other hand, the real experience on the ground is that there is a shrinking of land availability for African farmers and pastoralists. The results are unending communal clashes over parcels of land between communities, and between herders and farmers. This will eventually affect Europe because when the people are displaced from their lands due to land grabbing and the resultant conflicts, they tend to migrate either within the region or outside. Also, the industrial agriculture being encouraged in Africa is contributing immensely to deforestation, loss of biodiversity, destruction of the ecosystem, climate change, loss of Africa's food systems and food cultures and the systematic erosion of African identity.

### **5.2 Goals**

**Goal 1:** The creation of a new economic system with an alternative development paradigm that places the Human being, the common good and the integrity of the ecosystem at the center of development and not profit.

**Goal 2:** Advance the realization UN Agenda 2030 in particular SDG Goal 2- End hunger, the protection of Africa's food systems and cultures, and SDG Goal 13 – Combat against Climate Change

**Goal 3:** The stabilization of populations, reduction of illegal migration and contribute to social protection and security

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/africa-holds-the-key-for-feeding-9-billion-people-by-2050-adesina-says-during-norman-borlaug-lecture-17442/>

### 5.3 Targets

**Target 1.** Participate and support campaigns that relate to the theme of Food Sovereignty in Africa

**Target 2.** Promote campaign against the systematic move to industrialise African agriculture, land grabbing and the introduction of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO).

**Target 3.** Join the campaigns to improve women access and rights to land

**Target 4.** Support efforts to improve the productivity and social conditions of small scale farmers in Africa

**Target 5.** Join campaigns against bio fuel policies of the European Union, and vast areas where food is produced for animal feed to encourage meat consumption in Europe.

### 5.4 Strategies

#### 5.4.1 In Europe

**Strategy 1:** Raise awareness to expose the negative impacts of industrial agriculture, land grabbing on the population and environment of Africa.

**Strategy 2:** Create campaigns and join others aiming to change the narrative of industrial agriculture, quantitative development and African poverty propagated by the EU and her institutions.

**Strategy 3:** Organize, participate and contribute to debates that promote Family farming and Agroecology as opposed to industrial agriculture. Supporting indigenous food systems will also be a viable platform for opposing industrial agriculture

**Strategy 4:** Be active member of *Coalition Contre la Faim (CCF)* and *Groupe de travail (GT) accaparement des terres* – Platforms of NGOs that work against hunger and land grabbing in Brussels.

**Strategy 5:** Collaborate with Inter-Congregational Religious (ICR) at Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), Rome.

**Strategy 6:** Build on the energy of OUR LAND IS OUR LIFE platform which AEFJN is a co-founder (An informal platform of Church actors and Civil Society).

**Strategy 7:** Collaborate with CIDSE and other faith based organizations to highlight the ethical dimension of economic policies. Transform Laudato SI as a practical tool of social analysis and advocacy.

#### 5.4.2 In Africa

**Strategy 1:** Build bridges linking the Church and non-Church actors to develop local collaborative advocacy strategies in favor of African food sovereignty, the protection of her land, water and her entire ecosystem.

**Strategy 2:** Support African antennae, bring them together according to the regional economic configuration of Africa to develop regional collaborative advocacy strategies.

**Strategy 3:** Encourage and Support the initiative of African antennae to embody the AEFJN unique position of being a bridge between the Church and non- Church actors.

**Strategy 4:** In collaboration with NGOs in Africa and Europe and the Church actors follow up on concrete cases of land grabbing and ecological destruction eg. Kouidiadiène, SIAT, Feronia, SOCFIN etc.

**Strategy 5:** Transform Laudato SI into a user-friendly manual for Christian communities building in Africa.

### 5.4.3 Others

**Strategy 1:** Collaborate more with AFJN for common advocacy projects in Africa.

## 6.0 Natural Resource extractions & Corporal Social Responsibility (Financial systems +Transparency directives+ Business and Human Right)

### *Policy Guide*

The richness and variety of natural resources in Africa is immeasurable. However, this richness has become a curse for many African countries. On one hand, developed countries of the EU and the BRICS keep a fight for controlling those natural resources like oil, minerals, water, fisheries and agribusiness to maintain their living standards and produce new technologies. On the other hand, African countries have used their natural resources as a way of obtaining quick economic profits. The result is that African countries have been trapped in commodity-dependent economies for several decades. Unfortunately, both the resources and the financial proceeds have left the continent, benefiting only a handful of actors mainly the political elites and the Transnational Corporations (TNCs)

Alternatively, African countries should aim to promote transformation of the natural resources and value-added activities at home to diversify their national economies and create decent jobs. Meanwhile, western industries should adopt responsible sourcing practices that are respectful of human rights, labor rights and the environment. Next, supporting artisanal miners and local traders by the African national governments to improve their revenue-generating capacity might have a positive impact on the local economy, since mining and related activities are important livelihood strategies.

Since African countries are dependent on export of a few commodities/natural resources, it makes them vulnerable to price volatility of the commodities, while the transformation and the added value is created elsewhere. Moreover, resource exploitation by multinational companies is subject to tax avoidance, transfer pricing, and undervaluation of resources. All of these contribute to both the natural resources and the financial profits that are leaving Africa without benefiting local population. Most wars in Africa could be said to be wars over resource control. The extraction and management is laden with corruption, displacement of people, arm conflicts, pollution and destruction of the ecosystem. Natural resource extraction is a major contributor to ecological destruction and climate change. It is rooted in global consumption pattern.

African economy is yet to make a transition from natural resource dependency to production economy. This makes the resource extraction and management strategic to African economy.

AEFJN has invested greatly in the campaign around Conflict Mineral regulations during the last four years. Even though, the final result was half-hearted, the initial vote in the European Parliament was very encouraging. The European Parliament wanted supply chain accorded due diligence throughout the entire supply chain of 3TG's but the power of the Commission and TNCs prevailed. The challenges ahead for this dossier concern the implementation of the agreement reached, which is foreseen by 2021. There is a need to detail what kind of measures the EU foresees to support artisanal miners in Africa. It is important to keep insisting that other minerals such as copper are not included in EU Conflict Minerals Regulation (3TG's). Therefore, more attention needs to be given to these minerals and under the conditions of their mining.

## 6.1 Goals

**Goal 1:** A fairer multilateral agreement between Africa and Europe so that all peoples get a fair profit for the exploitation of their resources, albeit minerals, land, gas, oil, forest, water; agricultural products.

**Goal 2:** The full control of Africa's natural resources remain in their hands and benefit their population.

**Goal 3:** The sustainable extraction of Africa's natural resources, respectful of the ecological best practices and Human Rights standards.

## 6.2 Targets

**Target 1:** Make Europe aware of the negative consequences of their TNC's footprint in the sourcing and consumption of natural resources from Africa.

**Target 2:** Promote only the sourcing of natural resources in Africa that is respectful of Human & Fundamental Rights standards.

**Target 3:** Promote the transformation & addition of values to the chain of African Natural Resources.

**Target 4:** The payment of a fair tax for their exploits of African resources by the European Union economic operators. Make the new advances in Transparency Directives legally binding.

## 6.3 Strategies

### 6.3.1 In Europe

**Strategy 1:** Raise awareness and participate in campaigns exposing the weaknesses in European legislations regarding sourcing practices in Africa.

**Strategy 2:** Following up cases that support the position of AEFJN on the responsibility of European companies operating in Africa. Eg. Koudiadiène

**Strategy 3:** Participate in the platforms lobbying the EU institutions on Transparency Directive to enhance the transparency of tax payments made by multinationals

**Strategy 4:** Follow up the implementation of voluntary guidelines on Conflicts Minerals and advocate for a legally binding legislation not only for 3T and gold but for all minerals, looking for innovative ways of supporting artisanal miners through accompanying measures

**Strategy 5:** Look for funding to carry out the project on copper mining in Zambia and DRC.

### **6.3.2 in Africa**

**Strategy 1:** Strengthen links between AEFJN & CSOs in Africa to support advocacy on sustainability in natural resources extraction, in accordance with national and International legislations

**Strategy 2:** Support African local CSOs in campaigns exposing the weaknesses in national and regional mining codes