

Resource Extraction

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The credibility of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, an initiative to prevent conflict diamonds from entering the multi-billion dollar diamond market, is being questioned by NGO activists ahead of a three day international meeting in Namibia on 23 June. The KPCS calls on governments, the diamond industry, and concerned NGOs to work to eliminate trade in conflict or blood diamonds. DN

Latest events in the Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence

Media: www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/Africa.htm#Cha

* Burundi

Dagropass and Colonie des Pionniers du Développement appeared on Public Radio Africa on 18 June to argue that the proliferation of small arms is hindering development. Abel Ntahombaye said the weapons threatened economic development and peace: "Even the elections in 2010 will be jeopardised by this issue." Jacques Ntibarikure added: "The government of Burundi must make every effort for a strict and effective control of small arms and light weapons by signing the Arms Trade Treaty."

* Central African Republic

NGO Femmes de Paix autour du Monde worked in partnership with UNDP to organise a conference and rally highlighting the dangers of gun use. This was supported by a press release and poster campaign.

* Chad

Céline Larmadji, interim coordinator of the Committee of Appeal for Peace and Reconciliation, told a press conference on 20 June that around two million small arms were circulating in Chad. She said the almost permanent sense of crisis in the country had promoted the circulation of small arms at all levels of the population; in the markets, in the streets and at schools.

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* Somalia

Somali Women Education Campaigners (SWEC) discussed the problems of small arms in live hour-long radio and TV programmes with SIMBA radio and Universal TV on 16 and 17 June. Speakers included NGO members, academics and artists. All of those who phoned in called for measures to stop the flow of small arms into Somalia. The programmes were also broadcast by Peace Voice Radio. On 18 June, university professors and school teachers discussed the impact of gun violence on educational opportunities during a workshop held by SWEC. On 19 and 20 June SWEC held three hour sessions in internally displaced people (IDP) camps to raise awareness of gun violence. The IDPs reported on their experiences of gun violence, and acknowledged that most guns are used by young people and are widely available at popular shopping areas and markets. They were interviewed by Peace Voice Radio, Simba Radio and Universal TV about their experiences.

FIAN demands profound changes to address the dramatic increase of hunger

World Food Summit to focus on the Human Right to Food

Rome/Heidelberg, 22.06.09 - FIAN, the international Human Rights organization for the Right to Food, calls for profound changes in international food-related policies and governance. FIAN welcomes the decision made by the FAO Council to hold the third World Food Summit in November 2009. This announcement was made last Friday in Rome by the FAO Director General; it was stated that the goals of the Summit are to solidify a strong and effective commitment from World leaders to eradicate hunger by 2025 and to address the root causes of the present situation through the full implementation of the Human Right to Food.

Latest FAO figures published on June 19, 2009 indicate that 1.02 billion people, more than ever in human history, are undernourished worldwide. This figure is about 100 million more than last year and represents around one-sixth of all humanity.

FIAN Secretary General Flavio Valente stated: "We are living in a crucial moment. We need a profound change in international food-related policies and governance architecture. We definitively support a World Food Summit which prioritises attacking the structural causes of hunger and mainstreaming the Right to Food on all levels."

"We share the call of the FAO Council for a more coherent and effective system of governance with regards to world food security. We clearly need more accountability of governments and intergovernmental agencies. Real participation of civil society is essential, especially from peasants and farmers movements, indigenous peoples, fisher folks, rural women and agricultural workers. If the chronic food crisis is to be tackled, their voices must be heard." states Valente.

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FAO figures on hunger: www.fao.org

FAO Council on Food Summit: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/016/k5140e.pdf>

See also <http://www.fian.org/news/press-releases/fian-demands-profound-changes-to-address-the-dramatic-increase-of-hunger>

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FOOD CRISIS in AFRICA

Source: <http://www.irinnews.org/>

Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) - An increasing number of Africans living in urban areas is finding it harder to put enough food on the table, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has warned.

Released on 28 May, the report, which was jointly prepared by the ECA and the African Union, is an assessment of the continent's economic performance in 2008. It also examines prospects for 2009.

"In many countries, urban populations are finding that there is food on the shelves, but they cannot afford to buy it," it noted. Citing the case of Liberia and Guinea, it said governments there were struggling to import enough to feed their people.

"Pastoralists in Djibouti are discovering that sales of vital livestock fetch very little grain on the market, while in Mozambique and Uganda, rural farmers can hardly afford to buy the seeds and fertilizers they need to grow their family's food, let alone reap the benefit of high food prices," the report said.

"Africa is one of the most affected regions by the high food prices," the ECA noted. "Food prices peaked in June 2008 and declined by more than 50 percent on average during the second half of the year. At the end of 2008, they stood at the level of 2005 but were still considerably higher than the 2000 level."

According to the report, the decline in world market prices had slowly worked its way into domestic prices in many developing countries. "Still we have food shortages in many African countries because of drought and conflict situations. To avert the consequences, emergency aid was needed in many countries, including those in East Africa."

"The recent food crisis and looming starvation are threats to political and social stability, especially in east and west Africa and in conflict countries," the report warned.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), food prices had remained high in many developing countries and access to food by the poor remained threatened by loss of employment, income and other effects of the global economic crisis.