

### Corporate responsibility

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2009/11/2009111192747615233.html>

Thousands of people in Ivory Coast poisoned by toxic waste face being cheated out of \$45m in compensation as the money, which was deposited in a bank account in the West African country, was frozen. At the same time a local figure, claiming to be president of the *National Co-ordination of Toxic Waste Victims of Cote d'Ivoire* and whose name is unknown to the victims' lawyers, has now applied to have the cash moved to the association's account. Martyn Day, the victims' lawyer, has raised fears that corruption could be behind the latest developments in the case, which centres around the dumping of hundreds of tonnes of sulphur-contaminated oil waste by a ship near Abidjan, the capital, in 2006. Thousands of people became ill following the incident and *Trafigura*, a Dutch-based commodity trader who chartered the vessel, agreed to pay compensation to the victims in an out-of-court settlement in September.

'Shadowy figure'

The compensation money was deposited in an Ivorian bank to be handed out, directly, in cash, to each of the 30 victims, but the payments were frozen last month. Day told *Al Jazeera* the individual applying for the money was a "shadowy figure" and said he was "extremely worried" about the move. "The Ivorians we know have been scared to tell us who it is," he said. "They say to us he's not a politician; so it's not somebody within government. It's said to be somebody who's very well connected, very wealthy, and with lots of power and influence within the state. "The application was so that the transfer could be made immediately. Fortunately, the court last week decided not to immediately transfer it. "But these individuals have now appealed against that, and the decision, we think, will be made next Thursday as to whether the transfer should take place."

### Arms

Two Nobel Peace laureates, Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa and human rights activist Adolfo Pérez Esquivel of Argentina, have publicly endorsed the Swiss campaign for a national ban on arms exports. A referendum on the ban will be held on 29 November.

[www.gsoa.ch/english/](http://www.gsoa.ch/english/)

IANSA women in Colombia, Macedonia, Senegal and other countries will organise events to mark the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence (25 November to 10 December). This year they will focus on urging governments to take action on their commitments to ending armed violence - including domestic violence - against women. If you are planning an event during the 16 days campaign, please email the details to [Meijinder.Kaur@iansa.org](mailto:Meijinder.Kaur@iansa.org)

The Ghana Chapter of the West Africa Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA- Ghana) was officially inaugurated on 3 November in Accra. The event was attended by the Ghanaian Minister of the Interior and other government representatives from the region. Ken Kinney, President of WAANSA-Ghana, said the organisation will work with partners to complement government efforts to ensure security for all.

[www.modernghana.com/news/247172/1/ghana-to-ratify-ecowas-convention-on-small-arms-pr.html](http://www.modernghana.com/news/247172/1/ghana-to-ratify-ecowas-convention-on-small-arms-pr.html)

A Policy Brief on Guinea published by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) highlights that the military factor is one of the fundamental issues that must be taken into account when proffering solutions to the country's ongoing crisis. WANEP says Guinean security forces need urgent reform and restructuring since indiscipline and anarchy are supreme within the ranks of the armed forces.

[www.wanep.org/image/pb\\_quinea\\_nov09.pdf](http://www.wanep.org/image/pb_quinea_nov09.pdf)

In 2010 Italy will spend over 23 billion Euros on arms, military missions and the army, according to "Il Caro Armamento" a new book co-authored by IANSA member Francesco Vignarca from the Italian Disarmament Network. The book describes the expenditure and wastage by the Italian armed forces.

[www.altreconomia.it/site/ec\\_articolo\\_dettaglio.php?intId=89](http://www.altreconomia.it/site/ec_articolo_dettaglio.php?intId=89)

### Displacement of people related to climate change-related natural disasters

[www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org)

The African Union convention on internally displaced persons promotes regional and national measures "to prevent, mitigate, prohibit, and eliminate the root causes of internal displacement and provide durable solutions." 11 million people are displaced by conflict and climate change-related natural disasters. Three of the world's top five countries with the largest populations of conflict-induced IDPs are Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Somalia. Hundreds of thousands more are displaced in Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. DN

Seventeen countries signed the African Union convention on internally displaced persons (IDPs) after years of preparation culminated in a week of meetings in the Ugandan capital but a lot more hard work remains before it becomes effective, according to observers. "The most important step now is implementation," Julia Dolly Joiner, AU commissioner for political affairs, said. "We need to move from intentions to actions."

Fifteen countries must ratify the convention before it enters into effect. Organizers of the 19-23 October meetings insisted that the fact that only 17 signed did not represent a lack of political will and commitment on the part of the African states. "We debated together, and we agreed; but, when it comes to signing, the person has to have been given the authority by his government to sign," one AU official told IRIN. "Only 17 had such authorization."

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, who chaired the summit, praised it as "a very important milestone [that] has gone beyond conflicts to address issues of development. "We have at least agreed in words, we now have to put words [into] action," he told a news conference.

Joiner called for international support. "Africa cannot do it alone; that is why we are calling for partnerships," she told IRIN. "We are optimistic that countries will be faithful to their commitments under the convention." The AU will now try to get more signatures, and lobby 15 countries to ratify the convention so it can become a binding document. Observers, however, say much more work needs to be done to generate political will, given that most presidents stayed away from the summit.

The convention addresses the root causes of displacement in Africa, where at least 11 million people are displaced by conflict and climate change-related natural disasters, among other reasons. According to the *Brookings-Bern Project*, three of the world's top five countries with the largest populations of conflict-induced IDPs are in Africa. These include Sudan, with an estimated 4.9 million IDPs, the Democratic Republic of Congo, with at least one million, and Somalia, where the UN estimates 1.5 million are displaced. Hundreds of thousands more are displaced in Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Overall, citizens in at least 20 African states are experiencing internal displacement.

## **Biodiversity, rights, & livelihood**

[www.grain.org](http://www.grain.org)

[http://www.grain.org/seedling\\_files/seed-09-10-low.pdf](http://www.grain.org/seedling_files/seed-09-10-low.pdf)

Read this analysis and vision re agriculture and climate change. It's from a stark, well-researched magazine, "Seedling". (44 pages) that is available free on line and in paper. It projects the present into the future with great clarity, and provides a very serious challenge to the agricultural industry, and to all of us who get our food from the land. Here is the editorial: [www.grain.org/seedling/?type=78&l=1](http://www.grain.org/seedling/?type=78&l=1) and the contents page. See end of article for info on GRAIN. [www.grain.org](http://www.grain.org). JK

## **Foreign land acquisitions: some opportunities, many threats**

Roy Laishley, United Nations Africa Renewal

<http://farmlandgrab.org/8861>

The purchase of African land by foreign companies and governments to grow food and other crops for export has alarm bells ringing.

*Foreign acquisitions: some opportunities, but many see threats, Unprecedented scale, Demand for food and biofuels, Towards a strategic approach, Land rights, From Land Grab to Win-Win*

## **Success or failure**

"Agreements to lease or cede large areas of land in no circumstance should be allowed to trump the human rights obligations of the states concerned," Mr. De Schutter argues. That goes for both the states receiving the investments and those from which the investments originate. Proposals for such ideal agreements, backed by necessary national legislation and enforcement principles, are being put forward. But, as the IIED study points out, there is already a large gulf between contractual provisions and their enforcement. The gap between the statute books and the real

on the ground may entail serious costs for local communities. A code of conduct for host governments and foreign investors could help ensure that land deals are a “win-win” arrangement for investor and local communities alike, IFPRI suggests. Experts agree that African governments must have the will and the ability to apply laws. “Strengthening the negotiation capacity is vital,” Mr. De Schutter argues. And that capacity cannot be of governments alone, he says. Local communities must also be empowered and national parliaments must be involved. Achieving that, many fear, may be the most difficult gap to bridge.

## **Agricultural policies and the development of family farm production**

GRAIN

[www.grain.org/](http://www.grain.org/)

English follows. Les agriculteurs nourrissent environ 90 % de la population africaine. Malgré les difficultés rencontrées et sans soutien conséquent les exploitations agricoles familiales ont assuré pour une grande part l'autosuffisance alimentaire sur le continent. Farmers feed about 90% of the African population. In spite of many difficulties and without consistent support the agricultural yield of family farms has been largely responsible for self-sufficiency on the continent. DN

## **New law on cross-border trade to end hunger**

[The East African \(Kenya\)](#) - November 16, 2009.

Nairobi (Kenya) — Hunger will be a thing of the past in the region should plans by the East African Community to start formal cross border trade in food yield positive results. Consultations to generate laws to enhance food security have kicked off, with promises of support by the five member states.

"Food insecurity is largely due to a leadership crisis. As a political class, we must reorganise the administration of food distribution in the region," said Dan Kidega, a Uganda MP at the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA).

The EAC Secretariat and EALA members say borders should be opened to allow internal trade in food -- from the surplus areas to the deficit ones. About 20 million people in East Africa are facing hunger. They are dependent on emergency food aid -- which distorts regional economics. However, various hurdles still lie in the way to food security in the region. For instance, during the consultative process, the majority of EALA members said it would be necessary to first harmonise laws and policies on food production and land tenure.

"We shall not change anything unless we have an agrarian reform, like the British did two centuries ago. Our governments should take this issue as a priority," said Fortunatua Masha, an EALA MP from Tanzania. The proposals will guide the formation of the Food Security Protocol that will bind the five member states -- Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya and Tanzania. The MPs said 10 per cent of their partner states' budgets should be invested in rural areas, as opposed to research and extension services -- as agreed during the Maputo Declaration.

In the new food legislation, provisions will be made to compel partner states to shift storage facilities to the regional headquarters. Also, all member states will have to create buffer stocks, the MPs said. The partner states also rule out future dependence on food aid, which has led to price distortion and lower food production.

Food insecurity has been rising in East Africa lately. It has resulted in stunted growth, especially in western Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, southern Tanzania and northern and southern Kenya. In 2007, demand for food remained strong despite rising prices. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics says informal cross-border food exports totalled \$126.3 million, according to a 2007 survey. Demand remained strong in the first half of 2008.

Researchers say most cross-border trade in East Africa is informal, with high transaction costs. As a result, such trade has been low and unstable.