



## NEWS from AEFJN

N. 39 – March 2010

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### **African Group at UN calls for fulfilment of Development Pledges**

<http://tinyurl.com/ybp2578>

The African Group at the UN has called for the immediate fulfilment of all Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment to Africa. The group also urged the Group of Eight industrialised countries (G-8) to redeem its pledge to double by 2010, official assistance to the continent.

### **Illegal fishing in Guinea's waters "worst in the world"**

<http://www.ipsnews.net/africa/nota.asp?idnews=50771>

Rampant illegal fishing is hitting some of the poorest West African countries the hardest as this practice is globally most rife in the east central Atlantic Ocean area, which covers the territorial waters of some 15 African countries from Morocco and Mauritania in the north to Angola in the south. Most affected by illegal fishing are Guinea and Sierra Leone while the majority of ships and companies involved in the illegal fishing navigate under flags from countries such as *China, Russia, Indonesia, and Panama* but also from the *European Union (EU)* and other industrialised countries, such as *Portugal, Italy, and Japan*. Illegal fishing occurs mostly in the eastern central Atlantic region and has increased over the last 10 years, according to the *European Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)*, an EU body set up to assist African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries with information on development caused by overfishing which has decimated numerous fish species, from tuna to cod fish.

Developing countries are the most at risk from illegal fishing, "with total estimated (illegal) catches in West Africa being 40 percent higher than reported catches", according to the London-based consulting firm MRAG.

The London-based *Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF)* calls this illegal fishing in the Guinean territorial waters "the worst in Africa", which means it is the worst in the world. The DFID report also estimated that Guinea loses in excess of 34,000 tons of fish every year to illegal fishing, including around 10,000 tons of 'bycatch'. Bycatch is the euphemism for the unwanted portion of the catch thrown overboard by fishers. Officially, Guinean fishers legally catch some 54,000 tons per year. This means that the illegal fishing represents two-thirds of the country's legal, recorded catches.

While other blacklists only include vessels and companies from *China, Russia, Panama, Tunisia, Indonesia* and the like but none from Western Europe and other industrialised nations, *Greenpeace's own list* cites ships from *Portugal, Italy, and Japan*. In a number of European fisheries, illegal fishing is thought to account for one-third to one-half of all catches.

In a press released dated Oct 27, 2009, the *European Commission* estimated that around 10 percent of the region's seafood imports (some 1.7 billion U.S. dollars) could be illegally sourced. Some port authorities in European countries have indulged blacklisted vessels and companies. For instance, the *EJF* calls the Spanish port of *Las Palmas de Gran Canaria* "the most notorious port of convenience" as it provides services to pirate fishing fleets operating off the coast of West Africa.

Due to the port's status as a free economic zone, companies located at Las Palmas "have a variety of fiscal and customs advantages, many of which facilitate the illegal handling, transport and sale of illegally caught fish," Duncan Copeland of the *EJF* told IPS. Las Palmas has been a soft entry point to the enormous European seafood market and the major transport hub for illegal fish heading for other large seafood markets, such as those in East Asia.

### **Kenya : Scholl children sent home after cholera scare**

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=88577>

Up to 11,000 students from various schools in Msambweni and Kwale districts on Kenya's coast have been forced to go home before the Easter holidays after an outbreak of cholera in the region. Bridgide Wambua, the Msambweni District Education Officer, told IRIN the department decided to close down the schools to prevent more students from contracting cholera and other waterborne ailments that had also been reported.

### **Ghana : Massive Jatropha farming threatens food security**

<http://www.ghanaiian-chronicle.com/thestory.asp?id=16673&title=Massive%20jatropha%20farming%20threatens%20food%20security>

A study conducted by *Action Aid Ghana* (AAG) and *FoodSPAN* in four regions in Ghana has revealed that the production of biofuel is fast affecting food crop farmers in the regions. The study indicated that due to unavailability of comprehensive policy on biofuel production in the country, its production was having adverse effect on food security, environment, human rights and in general, livelihoods of the affected communities.

According to the report, what was worse was that in most cases the companies involved in the production of the biofuel import labour from outside the communities where production sites were located, and "there were drastic lay-offs as the project progressed from land preparation and planting stages." It observed that the companies were undertaking large scale plantation farms of mainly jatropha production with the smallest farm covering about 75 acres. "Generally, fertile arable lands suitable for crop production were being used for jatropha production except in the Volta region. Biofuel production projects were characterized by extensive use of weedicides, example Sunphosate with possible pollution of water bodies," it stressed. It observed that the large scale production also involved the use of heavy machinery resulting in wanton destruction of forest, vegetative cover, biodiversity, and economic trees.

### **Human African trypanosomiasis : an update**

<http://www.tropika.net/svc/review/Chinnock-20090320-Review-Tryps>

Sleeping sickness (human African trypanosomiasis, HAT) illustrates many of the problems facing researchers and policy makers concerning the infectious diseases of poverty. To begin with, there is no clear agreement as to how many people have HAT, nor a reliable assessment of the extent of the harm it causes. This issue was considered in a recent review article (1) in *PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases*. HAT, which is fatal if left untreated, is caused by infection with *Trypanosoma brucei rhodesiense* or *Trypanosoma brucei gambiense*. It is transmitted by insect vectors of the genus *Glossina* (tsetse flies), which are found only in Africa. *T.b. gambiense* occurs in West and Central Africa, and *T.b. rhodesiense* in East Africa, although there are concerns that an overlap may now have occurred in their ranges.

### **Preparing for two Sudans**

<http://www.enoughproject.org>

All signs indicate that Sudan, Africa's largest state, will very soon split in two - either peacefully or violently. The Obama administration must do its utmost to prevent a return to full-scale war in Sudan, argues a [new report from the Enough Project](#) at the Center for American Progress.

In a self-determination referendum scheduled for January 2011, the people of southern Sudan are widely expected to vote for separation from their northern neighbors. Yet, with the security situation in southern Sudan still highly volatile, next month's national election set to be deeply flawed, and several crucial elements of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, or CPA, still unimplemented, the referendum and its outcome are by no means guaranteed.

As a guarantor of the CPA, the United States must work multilaterally on several fronts to support the peaceful expression of the will of the people of southern Sudan and prevent a return to conflict, argues the report by Maggie Fick, Enough's Juba, Sudan-based policy researcher: "The Sudanese parties must complete many difficult tasks to prepare for the 2011 referendum and its outcome. The international community's role is to reduce the likelihood that the upcoming negotiations occur in an environment so politically charged that consensus between the parties becomes impossible."

### **Burkina Faso : Government stops water, electricity privatisation**

<http://www.afrol.com/articles/35615>

In a landmark decision, the government of Burkina Faso has decided to remove its water and electricity utilities from the list of state companies to be privatised. Defying the IMF, government rather decided it would be enough to restructure the companies' management.

### **Can Ghana void the oil curse ?**

<http://blogs.reuters.com/africanews/2010/03/25/can-ghana-avoid-the-oil-curse/>

With a democratic touch rare in a region better known for dictators, Ghana is asking its citizens what it should do with the windfall from oil production due to start later this year. In a questionnaire entitled « The use and Management of Oil and Gas Revenues-Survey of Public Choices » posted on the Finance Ministry Website recently, Ghana says oil-producer nations face major questions and does not want to reproduce the scenario of oil producer neighbouring countries.

