

AFRICA ACTION SHEET



SPRING 2014

Trade & Agribusiness are destroying Family Farming

The **World Bank (WB)**, the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** present liberalization as the recipe for developing countries to escape poverty. According to them, foreign direct investment and trade liberalization would bring great benefits to developing countries: jobs, access to international markets and economic growth driven by exports to name but a few. However, such liberalization policies are threatening family farmers in developing countries as well as their food sovereignty.

Preferential treatment for agribusinesses

Currently, the EU accords preferential treatment to exporters from certain developing countries by allowing them to pay lower duties to enter the EU-market via the **Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP)**. However, the agribusiness companies also benefit from these preferences and can compete with local exporters.

Incentives to landgrabbing

Both the EU's **trade preferences** and its **subsidized biofuel** are extra incentives to agribusinesses to acquire land in developing countries. On top of that, they can often count on other incentives, such as tax sweeteners from host governments and supportive services from investment promotion agencies.

Neglect of family farming—lack of support

Although some traders, producers and farmers from developing countries benefit from better export conditions for their products to Europe under the GSP, many of them need support in order to access the European markets.

Disadvantages facing family farmers

Large agribusiness companies investing in land in Africa are better equipped, and have more market information than African traders and farmers who often face obstacles such as poor transport infrastructure. In this way the competition for farmland between large, supported agribusiness companies and neglected family farmers is growing.

This competition carries the danger that family farming will be destroyed completely, further increasing the **dependence of African countries on food imports**.

As a result Africa will continue to supply, via foreign companies or domestic exporters, commodities and agricultural raw materials (such as inputs for the food and biofuel industry) to EU markets to which value is added, through processing, in the EU.

This maintains Africa in the economic position where it has been since colonial times: a supplier of raw materials for the western consumer society.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

More Aid for African Agriculture: policy implications for small-scale farmers - UK Food Group report

After decades of decline, aid to African agriculture is back on the international policy agenda in the context of climate change, the current food and energy price crises and the consequent demands for hundreds of billions of dollars in new investment in agriculture.

To subscribe to the UK Food Group Discussion List send an email to:



African Smallholders in Focus – a voice in EU trade policy

A dialogue-oriented public advocacy project by the UK Food Group, Both ENDS, FIAN and Germanwatch.

Visit the African Smallholders in Focus website ukfg.org.uk/smallholders



Fairtrade Fortnight: 24 Feb—9 March

Fairtrade Fortnight 2014 aims to transform the banana industry to ensure banana farmers and workers get a fair deal.

For this and other action go to:

www.fairtrade.org.uk



ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT— EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

Elections to the European Parliament will be held in all member states of the European Union (EU) between 22 and 25 May 2014,. In the **UK** these elections are scheduled to take place on **Thursday 22 May 2014**, coinciding with the 2014 local elections in England. In total, 73 members of the European Parliament will be elected from the United Kingdom. The country is divided into regions, the number of representatives for each region is related to population. The 74 Westminster constituencies which cover Greater London elects eight representatives. The South East region elects ten and the South West elects six.

Voting for an MEP

Proportional representation—regionally closed lists

This means that political parties put forward names of candidates in rank order, the number of candidates being no more than the number of seats allowed for each region.

The ballot paper lists the parties' names (and their candidates under the party name), and any independent candidates. Put a cross next to the party or independent candidate that you wish to vote for.

Go to: www.europarl.org.uk and click on the rectangle (shown above) for more information:

Can I vote? Reasons to vote? Candidates for 2014. The voting system. Previous election results.

Other useful websites:

Members of the European Parliament for the United Kingdom 2009–2014
European Parliament election, 2014

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FAMILY FARMING



The 2014 **International Year of Family Farming (IYFF)** aims to raise the profile of family farming and smallholder farming by focusing world attention on its significant role in eradicating hunger and poverty, providing food security and nutrition, improving livelihoods, managing natural resources, protecting the environment, and achieving sustainable development, in particular in rural areas.

The goal of the 2014 IYFF is to reposition family farming at the centre of agricultural, environmental and social policies in the national agendas by identifying gaps and opportunities to promote a shift towards a more equal and balanced development.

The Africa Action Sheet is produced by the:

AFRICA EUROPE FAITH & JUSTICE NETWORK-UK
15 Corfton Rd Ealing
London W5 2HP

aefjnuk@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: 0778 707 8833

**The call of
Pope
Francis**



“to eliminate the structural causes of poverty”

Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This means that **we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and come to their aid.**

The Church has realised that the need to heed this plea is not... a question of a mission reserved only to a few. The Church guided by the Gospel of mercy and by love for mankind, hears the cry for justice In this context we can understand Jesus' command to his disciples: *“You yourselves give them something to eat.”* (Mark 6:37) **It means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor** as well as small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter. The word **‘solidarity’** ...presumes **the creation of a new mindset which thinks in terms of community and the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few.**

Evangelii gaudium. paras 187/188