



## AFRICA-EUROPE FAITH AND JUSTICE NETWORK

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**AGA Rome**

**Action Plan for  
2006**

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### **Action Plan for 2006**

The representatives of the 12 antennae who gathered in Brussels at the beginning of October decided to focus the common Action Plan for 2006 on the following issues :

1. TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights): quality of the medicines that are produced to be sold on the African markets (pro-active topic)
2. Analysis of Food Sovereignty in the African countries
3. Sugar and dairy products in the context of Food Sovereignty
4. EPA: the year 2006 will be a crucial one in reviewing the EPA's
5. Follow-up issues: Debt and arms

We decided to exclude the GATS issue from the 2006 Action Plan since the negotiations that are currently going on in Europe don't seem to be reaching any consistent result as far as the African countries are concerned. However our network is free to take part in any concrete action plan dealing with water.

Here is a detailed presentation of the main issues :

#### **1. Medicines : ensuring access and quality**

Since the Doha statement on public health in 2001, AEFJN has always shown concerns towards the access to medicines. We do particularly concentrate our efforts on the stand of the UE within the WTO negotiations and the access of the populations to affordable medicines.

During the last meeting of the antennae the network decided to work not only on ensuring the affordable cost of medicines but also on the quality of generic drugs that are manufactured in Europe. We lament the fact that on this issue a double standard policy is practised : highly controlled generic drugs meant to be sold on the European markets on the one hand and barely existing controls for the drugs that will be exported to the developing countries, among which the African countries, on the other hand.

The first part of our work will concentrate on collecting the data relative to African countries in cooperation with the antennae.

#### **2. Food Sovereignty**

AEFJN has always been concerned with ensuring a decent life to poor people, especially the disadvantaged small farmers of Africa. The cotton and sugar campaigns already helped in raising the awareness of many about the topic of agriculture as a worldwide priority and a crucial issue in the fight against poverty.

One of the greatest achievement of our work has been the founding of a « European Platform on Food Sovereignty », made up of the national platforms of eight member countries. We started to work on the concept and the impacts of Food Sovereignty for Africa and Europe by focusing on one priority product : sugar.

But since Food Sovereignty looks more like an alternative economical scheme and an open framework than a set ideological pattern, many talks and investigations will be needed before the concept of Food Sovereignty can be fully grasped, improved and applied to the current debates on agriculture.

In July 2005, some representatives of AEFJN gathered for a workshop in Brussels and discussed the principles of Food Sovereignty as a potential topic among those handled within AEFJN.

The discussions gave rise to some interesting hints about the definition of the word, the difference between Food Sovereignty and other traditional concepts such as the right to food (food security), the weaknesses and the strengths of the concept, the specific aspects about which we can establish a link with the Social work education led by the Church, human rights and political decisions. We decided to keep on studying the notion and impacts of Food Sovereignty and to go even into further details all through the year 2006. We will also dedicate one entire day to discussing the issue during our next meeting in May.

### **3. Dairy Products**

To give a clearer vision about the fight for Food Sovereignty, we need to take into account a specific agricultural product. If the countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)<sup>1</sup> were to exercise their Food Sovereignty right on one single product they ought to pick milk<sup>2</sup>. However, it is worth mentioning that the exports of the subsidized dairy products from European countries also reach the Tanzanian and Kenyan food markets.

Apart from sugar, milk is the other product that is subject to a « common market organization » within the European Union and that the Commission most probably put on the agenda among the mid-term reforms. It is considered as a pro-active issue.

### **4. The EPA's**

The Economic Partnership Agreements are currently undergoing a lot of pressure because of the campaign that was started in 2004 in both Africa and Europe to raise the awareness among the governing bodies and the populations.

The African Union's Council of Ministers meeting in Cairo in June 2005 adopted a very critical stand towards EPA's. The Cairo Statement is presented as the official African view on the issue.

In June 2005, while referring to the Statement, the ACP ministers (African, Caribbean and Pacific States) urged the European Union to review the negotiations mandate and let the ACP countries establishing their own deadlines and moving ahead at their own pace. The European Union was also encouraged by the ACP countries to foresee an opening of the European markets that would be in line with the plans for development and fight against poverty in each specific country.

For the first time, the ACP countries publicly voiced their concerns about the EPA's negotiations process during the September hearing at the European Parliament in front of the International Trade Commission. The June Statement was part of the negotiations process and had no official nor public status.

**EPA's Reviewing in 2006** : This review is the last opportunity for ACP countries to meet with the European Union and express a common stand – not a regional stand – on the topic. The review might delay the official and diplomatic signature of an agreement. The NGO's will then have the opportunity to work on improving the quality of the talks and to envisage further political confrontations with the European Commission.

### **5. Additionnal topics : Debt and Small Arms Ttrade**

The Brussels office and the concerned antennae work on the material and the documents brought by the NGO's who deal specifically with this topic. We strongly support and approve the campaigns launched by the same NGO's. As for debt and more specifically Eurodad, the Small Arms Trade Control, IANSA and GRIP we will call on our members for a specific action if we feel there is a need.

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<sup>1</sup> Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Togo, Senegal, Sierra Leone

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Oudet, Burkina Faso