

# AFRICA ACTION SHEET



Summer 2018

## Britain set to push for Big Tech's demands in trade deals.

*"Big Tech is an extractive industry. Just like oil and gas, it needs to be regulated"*



The power of 'Big Tech' corporations like Google, Amazon, and Facebook pose a serious threat to the fight against global poverty and inequality. Campaigners at *Global Justice Now* warn that this power is set to grow through so-called

'e-commerce' chapters in new trade deals, which threaten to hinder developing countries from building thriving tech sectors of their own. They further criticise the British government which has announced they will be a key proponent of the push in post-Brexit trade deals.

### Exploiting global south markets with minimal investment

Tech industry multinationals are lobbying hard for trade deals that ban measures like mandatory technology transfer and local presence requirements that mean that poorer countries get a slice of the tech industry cake. Companies like Uber and Airbnb get huge commissions from the incomes of low paid taxi drivers and accommodation owners in countries like Uganda and Nepal. What's more, they often structure themselves to pay very little tax in the country. These companies want to continue doing this and protect themselves from any future regulation. Read more:

<http://www.globaljustice.org.uk/news/2018/may/20/facebook-model-will-undermine-fight-against..>

## Christian Aid hails Lords' agreement to clean up UK tax havens

A major reform to force UK tax havens to reveal who really owns the myriad companies they host is certain to become law, following the agreement in the House of Lords.

After years of wrestling against basic transparency, the Overseas Territories will now have to catch up with the rest of the UK. This is good news for people in poor countries, who suffer because of corruption and other crime, and bad news for everyone with dirty money to hide. The UK Government should respect the spirit as well as the letter of the new law, and ensure it ends the Overseas Territories' shameful role as safe havens for the proceeds of crime

**Christian Aid** and the many others that campaigned for this reform will be watching, mindful that the current UK Government and Overseas Territories fought hard for the status quo. A cross-party victory in the House of Commons on 1st May has forced the government to amend its **Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Bill**. <https://mediacentre.christianaid.org.uk/> 22 May 2018

## BRACED for impact of Climate Change in Ethiopia and Burkina Faso

### BBC Media Action partnership

This Christian Aid-led programme has helped build confidence of communities in the information being aired over the radio and made it more accessible and relevant to them.

BRACED aims to build the resilience of vulnerable communities in Ethiopia and Burkina Faso to climate extremes and disasters in high risk locations. These include droughts, floods and extreme temperatures.

Local FM radio stations in partnership with the BBC send out information from Ethiopia's National Meteorological Agency in local languages. Groups of pastoralists, mostly women, gather to listen and take action. Read more:

[www.caid.org.uk/datastories](http://www.caid.org.uk/datastories)



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## Cocoa and the global goals: *accelerating women's empowerment*

Investing in gender equality makes business sense. Women play a critical role in contributing to livelihoods and vibrant communities, which often form the foundation for sustainable business practices.

This is particularly true in rural West Africa, where women are responsible for 80% of the labour associated with food production and are more likely to reinvest household income in expenses related to education, health and food security. The income from selling food crops is vital for improved livelihoods and can help address critical issues like child labour. Families with higher incomes are less dependent on work performed by children and are able to invest more in education.

It has also been argued that closing the gender gap among cocoa producers can generate **significantly higher yields and improve the quality of cocoa beans** because women are involved in almost all stages of cocoa production. This is particularly important in the male-dominated cocoa supply chain in West Africa, where 70% of the world's supply of cocoa is produced. While women provide an estimated 50% of the labour force, they represent only about 5% of farmer cooperative members. It is not surprising that the African Development Bank has identified cocoa as one of three top exports that provide concrete opportunities for improving women's economic empowerment across the continent.

### Food crop diversification

Under the **World Cocoa Foundation (WCF)**'s [Cocoa and Livelihoods Program](#) (CLP), an estimated 200,000 smallholder farmers in West Africa have benefited from training and services to improve food crop diversification and generate alternative income by women.

### Microfinance

Several companies are providing microfinance opportunities to women in cocoa producing communities through Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). These allow women to come together to generate small loans to start or strengthen their income generating activities.

<https://views-voices.oxfam.org.uk/gender/wee/2018/05>



## Can bees battle climate losses?



A growing number of farmers in East Africa – and around the world – are taking up beekeeping as a way of broadening their income in the face of wilder weather, including heat, droughts and floods that can decimate crops. But beekeeping, Kenyan experts now say, is not proving as climate hardy as farmers had hoped.

Kenya's bees are usually active from April to December, as plants flower. But last year, buzzing bees were a rare sight, as one beekeeper explained. "By March, we expect the rains to start falling but when it delays, then it rains for a month or two and stops, trees get shocked and don't get to produce many flowers," he said. And since there is nothing to feed on, bees start eating the honey available instead of making it."

Drought isn't the only problem confronting Kenya's beekeepers. **Forest losses, new pests and diseases and indiscriminate use of farm pesticides** also have hit bee colonies, making beekeeping a decidedly less profitable venture for farmers.

Still, experts say that beekeeping has a place as Kenyan communities confront climate change if unsustainable practices affecting bees are changed. That means planting a diversity of plants and indigenous trees in beekeeping areas, preventing deforestation and adopting farming practices that avoid the use of pesticides during the flowering period.

Read more: <http://www.braced.org/>

**AEFJN-UK ANTENNA MEETING 9-10 October 2018**

**Wistaston Hall, Crewe**

**Speaker: Fr Chika Onyejiuwa CSSp**

***Please reserve your place before 9 September***

## Why Kenya hopes "blockchain" can end land grabbing

Kenya sees itself as a technology giant in Africa and has embraced the nickname "**Silicon Savannah**." Now it has set up a special team to look into how to take advantage of the latest technologies such as **Artificial Intelligence** and **blockchain**.

A **blockchain** is a shared database with a provable, auditable and verifiable record of all changes. **Artificial Intelligence** (AI) is the use of computer systems to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence. Among other uses, **blockchain** could help organise land records stored by the government, which are a constant source of frustration for people who want to buy, sell or verify information about land. Possessing a title deed in Kenya does not necessarily guarantee ownership because fraudsters in cahoots with land officials have been known to change land records. If land records were housed in an immutable **blockchain**, proponents say, it would reassure people that their records are intact and that the title deeds they own match government records.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-43640885> 5 May 2018