E-newsletter October 2010

Working for economic justice, human rights and environmental sustainability

Dear ECCR members, partners and friends

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Corporate engagement and advocacy

ECCR challenges Shell Nigeria over gas flaring

ECCR was among several civil society groups to meet with Shell Nigeria's new Chair Mutiu Sunmonu recently in London. During a constructive conversation, ECCR pressed the point that for Niger Delta civil society the environmental impacts of Shell operations are more important than well-intentioned community projects. In follow-up correspondence we have challenged

Shell's 2010 AGM assertion that gas flaring has no known harmful impacts on human health, citing strong counter-evidence and the precautionary principle. Further information is available from Miles Litvinoff (tel. 020 8965 9682).

The Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes have recently deleted Shell's listing (after also removing BP following the Gulf of Mexico oil spill). Read more.

The Centre for Social and Corporate Responsibility (CSCR), one of ECCR's partner organisations working in the Niger Delta, has appointed Fr Edward Obi of St Paul's Missionary Society executive director. Fr Kevin O'Hara of ECCR corporate member St Patrick's Missionary Society now chairs CSCR's board of trustees.

Israeli settlement goods: ECCR workshop prompts more letters to supermarkets
Following well-attended workshop sessions on Israeli settlement goods led by ECCR at this year's National Justice & Peace Network conference, a participant wrote to ASDA, The Co-operative, Morrisons, Musgrave's, Sainsbury, Superquinn, Tesco and Waitrose to ask about their stocking and labelling policy. All eight companies replied, and ECCR is studying the responses with interest. ECCR is still encouraging members and others to engage with retailers and suppliers on this issue. See our website pages on Israeli settlement goods or contact Suzanne Ismail (tel. 020 7663 1055). We plan to update our online information about this issue in the coming months.

Working Group on Mining in the Philippines criticises new mining coalition
The Working Group on Mining in the Philippines, which includes ECCR, has issued a statement criticising a newly formed 'Coalition for Responsible Mining' whose member companies claim to set an example of responsible mining in the Philippines. The working group's statement highlights the poor human rights and environmental records of coalition members TVI, Sagittarius, 168 Ferrum Pacific, Philex Gold and Apex. It cites a range of research including the group's 2009 report Philippines: Mining or Food? and formal complaints to the OECD and the UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. Read full statement.

ECCR/India Resource Center Coca-Cola case study in new Trócaire education resource
ECCR corporate member and donor-partner Trócaire has published a new education resource for schools, The Business of Food: Who Makes the Rules?, featuring the case study 'Water supply affected by Coca-Cola bottling plants in India' based on India Resource Center's article in ECCR's March 2009 *Bulletin*, 'Thousands go without water in India, courtesy Coca-Cola'. Trócaire has sent the resource to every secondary school in the Irish Republic..

New Christian Aid report highlights need for company tax reform
Christian Aid's new report Poverty Over: We're All In This Together highlights tax reform as a major step in addressing poverty and injustice and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The report estimates that 'by concealing the true extent of their taxable profits, often in secrecy jurisdictions (tax havens) offshore, [multinational businesses and others] cost developing countries US$160bn a year in lost revenue'. Christian Aid urges international standards of tax transparency to 'oblige companies to declare the profits made and taxes paid in every country where they operate' and an automatic exchange of tax information between jurisdictions to counter secrecy. See also Christian Aid lobby – Events (below).

Responsible and sustainable investment

Action Guide for Churches launched for National Ethical Investment Week
'Our aim is for ethical investment to become as widespread as fair trade among churches and their members,' said ECCR's Vice Chair Rev. Raymond Singh at the 13 October launch of this year's Action Guide for Churches for National Ethical Investment Week (7-13 November – see Events). Hosted by Just Share, St Mary-le-Bow Church, Cheapside, with more than 40 people present, the panel also included speakers from CCLA, the Church Commissioners and Co-operative Financial Services. Published by UKSIF in association with ECCR and sponsored by CCLA, the guide encourages Christians to apply their principles to their savings and investment decisions. For printed copies please contact Helen Boothroyd (tel. 075 0393 1172).

EIRIS announces new engagement service
Global research providers EIRIS, an ECCR donor-partner, have launched a new engagement service for investors. The service aims to enable investors to integrate environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations into policies and practices, benefit from engagement recommendations, work with other investors to maximise impact, ensure that engagement activities remain focused, implement the UN Principles of Responsible Investment and the UK's new Stewardship Code for Investors, and report to demonstrate the effectiveness of engagement. Read more.

Events

Christian Aid lobby of Parliament on global tax transparency, 20 October, London
Rev. Jesse Jackson will give his backing to Christian Aid's lobby of Parliament aimed at moving climate change and global tax transparency up the political agenda. Jackson will address Christian Aid supporters at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, at 11 am, alongside new Director Loretta Minghella and partners from India and Zambia. In the afternoon Christian Aid supporters will lobby MPs at the House of Commons with the aim of securing stronger government action on climate change and aggressive corporate tax avoidance. Read more.

London Mining Network public meeting on BHP Billiton, 20 October, London
The world's largest mining company, BHP Billiton, holds its London AGM on 21 October. The evening before, London Mining Network will present an alternative annual report outlining damage resulting from the company's operations in Australia, Canada, Colombia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, South Africa and elsewhere. Wednesday 20 October, 7 - 9 pm, Room 3A, Committee Corridor, House of Lords, Westminster. Chair: Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer. Further details.

ECCR West Midlands Group meeting, 21 October, Birmingham
ECCR West Midlands would welcome new members interested in finding out more about ECCR's work and helping to plan a public meeting on banking issues for March 2011. The next meeting is on Thursday 21 October at 10.30 am. Please contact Barbara Hayes (01527 875908) for further details.

Red Gold film screening re Anglo American's proposed Pebble Mine, 4 November, London

Bristol Bay, Alaska, home to the world's last great wild sockeye salmon fishery, is under threat from the proposed new gold and copper Pebble Mine in which London-based Anglo American has a 50% stake. No other mining project in North America comes close to the scale, complexity and technological challenges facing Pebble, say opponents, who include local communities, businesses and First Nations. Leading US and UK jewellers have pledged not to buy Pebble gold. *Red Gold* documents this opposition. Film screening and panel discussion, Thursday 4 November, 7 - 9 pm, Frontline Club, 13 Norfolk Place, London W2 1QJ. RSVP Lucy Pearce. More about Bristol Bay.

National Ethical Investment Week, 7-13 November

National Ethical Investment Week (NEIW), organised by UKSIF (UK Sustainable Investment and Finance), and sponsored by ECCR corporate member The Co-operative Financial Services along with Ecclesiastical Investment Management, runs from 7 to 13 November and features events across the UK raising awareness of green and ethical investing.

UKSIF and ECCR have produced an Action Guide for Churches, sponsored by CCLA, including information on ethical investment, ideas about what churches can do to take part in NEIW, and worship material. Readers are encouraged to plan worship on this theme in their churches on Sunday 7 or 14 November. The guide was launched on 13 October in London (see Responsible and sustainable investment above). For printed copies please contact Helen Boothroyd (tel. 075 0393 1172).

How to Invest Ethically: Opportunities for Individuals & Churches, 9 November, London

A panel event for National Ethical Investment Week to share with churches and individuals some of the many ethical and social investment opportunities available today. How do they differ? What are their objectives and policies? Which might be best for you and your church? There will be plenty of time for Q&A with the panel and practical information about how to invest. Confirmed panellists include speakers from Shared Interest, Arcubus and Oikocredit. Chair: Edward Mason, Church of England Ethical Investment Advisory Group. Tuesday 9 November, 1.05 - 2 pm. Further details from Rachel Lindley of Just Share.

Making our Money Work for a Better World, 10 November, Dublin

Organised by Irish EcoQuakers (Religious Society of Friends in Ireland) to coincide with NEIW 2010 and supported by ECCR, an event for church investors and people engaged in the development, environment, justice and peace movements. A step towards building a movement in both parts of Ireland about the need for ecologically sensitive financial services, particularly in everyday banking and savings. Chair: David Kingston, Religious Society of Friends in Ireland. Speakers: Miles Litvinoff (ECCR), Paul Ellis (Ecology Building Society), Alex Connor (Triodos), Patrick Hynes (Oikocredit). 10 November, 3 - 6.30 pm, Cultivate Centre, St Andrew's Street, Dublin 2. Event flyer. For further details and to book please contact ecoq@gn.apc.org or EcoQuakers, South Belfast Friends Meeting, 22 Marlborough Park, Belfast BT9 6HJ.

ECCR London and South-East Group: What Is Positive Impact Investing? 10 November

You are invited to join the second meeting of ECCR London and South-East to hear about positive impact investing from ECCR Board member Victoria Woodbridge of EIRIS and Sally

Reith of Shared Interest (ECCR corporate member), followed by interactive discussion. Wednesday 10 November, 7.00 - 8.30 pm, Mount Street Jesuit Centre, 114 Mount Street, London. Refreshments included. Please contact Sally Reith (tel. 07795 825442) for more details and to book.

Investing for the Common Good: A Question of Faith? 13 November, Newcastle
A public meeting for National Ethical Investment Week organised by ECCR with corporate members Shared Interest and Oikocredit. Saturday 13 November, 1.30 - 4.30 pm, at The Castlegate, Melbourne Street, Newcastle. Please contact Ruth Taylor (tel. 07825 917443) for more details and to book.

Solar Voltaics and the Churches, 13 November, Bristol
Organised by ECCR corporate member Churches Council for Industry and Social Responsibility (ISR) and ECCR South-West Group, this Saturday morning meeting, planned as part of NEIW 2010, will encourage and guide churches in installing photovoltaic cells on church roofs, including looking at financing options. For more details of venue, timing and speakers and to register your interest, contact Simon Bale (tel. 0117 955 7430). Jonathan Seagrave writes on 'Feed-in tariffs, solar photovoltaic electricity and the churches' at www.eccr.org.uk/MembersNewsandViews.

ECCR Open Debate: Positive Impact Investment - Too Good to Be True? 18 November, London
BP's Gulf of Mexico oil spill and the financial crisis have highlighted the risks and costs of current patterns of business and investment, while action to address climate change and world poverty remains acutely underfunded. Can investment help meet these challenges through innovative approaches to capital allocation? This year's ECCR Open Debate, chaired by Lord Harries of Pentregath (former Bishop of Oxford), will address this question with a panel comprising James Bevan (CCLA Investment Management), Ryan Brightwell (Co-operative Financial Services), Clare Brook (WHEB Asset Management) and Adam Ognall (UKSIF). Thursday 18 November 2010, 4.30 - 6.15 pm, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR. Admission free. Flyer. RSVP: Miles Litvinoff (tel. 020 8965 9682).

Ethics and the Stock Market, 20 November, Oxford
A talk by ECCR Chair Lee Coates followed by discussion, hosted by Oxford Christian Socialists, Saturday 20 November, 10.30 am, St Columba's United Reformed Church, Alfred Street, Oxford. All welcome. Details from Bridget Walker (tel. 01865 766604).

ECCR announcements

Welcome to new members
ECCR warmly welcomes new corporate members the Archdiocese of Birmingham Justice & Peace Commission and South-East Scotland Area Meeting (Religious Society of Friends), and rejoining member the GÆIA Partnership, as well as individual members who have joined in recent weeks.

Annual Report and Members' Annual Meeting, 18 November, London
ECCR has sent each member a copy of our new Annual Report 2009/10 along with an invitation to our 2010 Members' Annual Meeting (MAM). The MAM takes place on Thursday 18 November from 3.00 to 4.00 pm at Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR. The meeting will include discussion of ECCR's current work and future plans and be followed by ECCR's 2010 annual Open Debate (see Events). The Annual Report is also available online.

David de Verny stands down from Board
Individual member Rev. David de Verny has stepped down from ECCR's Board. We are grateful to David for his contribution and wish him every possible fulfilment in his parish work. Invitations to this year's Members' Annual Meeting include a note on ECCR's recent constitutional changes and an invitation to nominate for the Board vacancy. Further details from Miles Litvinoff (tel. 020 8965 9682).

With all good wishes.

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