GJOP Global Justice Overcoming Poverty

Network BULLETIN

- End of GM Salmon, Frankenfish. Yes, it's a victory
- Zambia's copper and cobalt - raw materials for the future

END OF GM SALMON - *FRANKENFISH*. YES, IT'S A VICTORY

On December 12, 2024, members of the Prince Edward Island (PEI), Canada, Coalition for an Island free of genetically modified organisms (GMO), received great news. We had worked for almost 24 years to convince policy-makers that they should not support *Aqua Bounty*, a US-based Company that had established facilities on PEI to genetically modify salmon eggs, and now Aqua Bounty was closing its doors.

The company had a monopoly on GM salmon and had begun expanding the facilities it had built in the United States of Indiana and Ohio. It goes with saying that the announcement that Aqua Bounty was closing its doors so that there would be no more production of GM salmon, was a gleeful and hopeful moment. Aqua Bounty took GM fertilized eggs of the Atlantic salmon and hatched them on PEI. From there they were then shipped to a fish farm in Panama to grow and be sold in US markets. This would be the world's first GM animal. Called the *AquaAdvantage*, the Atlantic salmon eggs were injected with a growth hormone from the Pacific Chinook salmon to make the GM salmon about three times larger. The eggs were then injected with a 'promoter' gene from an ocean pout fish living in the deep, cold ocean that enabled the salmon to grow, arriving at full size in 16 months instead of 30 months.

Our local coalition included the MacKillop Centre of Social Justice, Earth Action and the Council of Canadians. We received great support and research help from a larger coalition that included the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN) and its many member groups and allies in the USA and Europe. The three groups on PEI who formed the core group of the Coalition were generously acknowledged by CBAN for our work.

We held many public meetings, featuring scientific experts on GM foods, lobbied policy-makers from the local level all the way to Health Canada and the US Food and Drug Agency, and we lobbied local and national chefs with reasons why they should not serve GM salmon in their restaurants. In addition, we warned of the dangers to wild salmon if any of the AquaAdvantage salmon got loose in the wild. We challenged governments for giving grants to Aqua Bounty and when some of the first salmon hit the market, unlabeled and destined for institutions, we informed the public. In the end, AquaAdvantage failed to gain sufficient

markets to make a profitable business out of *their Frankenfish*, in spite of government grants. While we rejoice, we realize that no victory is final. But for now, there is no more production of GM salmon.

Source: Mary Boyd

ZAMBIA'S COPPER AND COBALT
RAW MATERIALS FOR THE FUTURE

To avoid a climate catastrophe, we need to switch our oil and gas-based economy to sustainable energy sources such as solar and wind. Copper and cobalt play an important role in the production of electric motors and batteries. Both metals are mined in Zambia's Copperbelt.

Zambia – An Event full History

Zambia became independent from Great Britain in 1964 under the first president Kenneth Kaunda and was split off from the former Rhodesia. The country's development was difficult because it was surrounded by several hostile states: the apartheid regime ruled in South Africa; a civil war raged in Angola; the eccentric Mobutu was president of the Congo. One of the few friends was China, which connected Zambia with the harbour of Dar-es-Salaam in the 1970s with the construction of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway, a lifeline for Zambia that enabled the easy export of Zambian copper. Zambia was given a democratic constitution in 1991.

After an unsuccessful coup in 1997, Levy Mwanawasa became president in 2002 following controversial elections. An economic plan in 2007 made foreign investment attractive again. In 2010, China signed a co-operation agreement with Zambia on the extraction of mineral resources.

Essential for a sustainable economy

The increased emission of carbon dioxide (CO_2) is one of the main causes of global warming, which threatens the future of our planet. CO_2 is produced when oil or natural gas is burnt in engines. To keep global warming below 1.6 degrees, combustion engines must be replaced by electric motors powered by electricity from sustainable sources such as solar, wind or hydropower. Electric motors are powered by coils made of copper wire. Large quantities of this precious metal will therefore be needed in the future.

Cobalt plays an important role in the production of Li-ion batteries, which are used in electric cars. However, newer types of batteries are being developed that do not require cobalt.

China – Biggest Investor

With high economic growth rates, China has a huge demand for raw materials and began investing in the extraction of natural resources in many African countries over a decade ago.

In the so-called Belt and Road Initiative – also known as the New Silk Road – China is investing heavily in the expansion of infrastructure in Africa: ports, roads and railway lines. The aim is to promote the export of African raw materials to China and the import of Chinese manufactured goods.

As China's economy grew, so did its need for raw materials. One of the first countries in which China invested in the extraction of copper and cobalt was Zambia. In 1998, Chinese companies began buying up and operating disused copper mines in Zambia. A smelter was soon added.

It did not stop at raw materials. More and more Chinese companies invested in a wide variety of sectors: construction companies, hotels and restaurants, supermarkets and fitness centres, chicken and fish farms. Local producers cannot compete with the cheap products from China. Since the turn of the millennium, the trade volume has grown from 10 million dollars to 3 billion. There are now estimated to be 100,000 Chinese living among Zambia's 20 million inhabitants.

The huge investments have led to a massive debt load of Zambia. Only a small upper class has really benefited from this development. China's influence is therefore increasingly criticised by many Zambians. The opposition party is campaigning with the slogan: Say no to China.

Western industrialised countries have missed out on investment opportunities in Zambia and in other African countries for a decade. "China controls a large part of the production of critical raw materials," according to the *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, while the West only controls small parts of the value chain.

Future perspectives

Zambia is one of the few stable democracies in Africa, but is still one of the poorer countries in the world (154th out of 193 in the Human Development Index). It has a relatively constant economic growth rate of 4-5% and an inflation rate of 11%. Zambia's exports amount to around 10 billion dollars a year and are the government's main source of income. Copper and cobalt account for 60% of total exports; the rest are mainly agricultural products. New producers on the copper market, such as Peru, Brazil and Chile, are already now competing with Zambia and could in future replace Zambia´s position as a leading provider of these important raw materials.

'Zambia is seen as a kind of future laboratory for Beijing's great ambitions on the continent: In this little-noticed landlocked country, it is possible to observe today what Africa could look like tomorrow.'

Source: ***Netzwerk Afrika Deutschland (NAD)***, ***nad.bonn@netzwerkafrika.de***
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PRAYER FOR WISDOM AMD JUSTICE
In a time of EXTERNAL DEBT

O holy and merciful God,
Help us understand that we have the power
and the duty to act against the injustices that
bind people in poverty and debt.

Grant us the courage to challenge the structures
that perpetuate these conditions, and the strength
to work tirelessly for a world where every person
can achieve their full potential.

Inspire our hearts with your compassion and justice.
Empower us to be bearers of hope and agents of change.
Together, may we help bring forth solutions
rooted in fairness and equity: economic systems
that uplift and create hope for the downtrodden.
and a future where every nation can walk the path
of sustainable [regenerative] development.
Free from the shackles of debt.

May we be instruments of Your peace, secure
in the faith that, through our collective effort
poverty can be overcome.

Amen

Rev. Charles Chilufya, SJ. Zambia

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The Bulletin is currently produced by the Justice and Trade Agreements Network.
Coordinators: Mary Boyd (maryboyd@live.ca), Alison Healey (info@grailaustralia.org.au):
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