



Bishop Fridolin Ambongo Ofm. cap., Bishop of Bokungu-Ikela, President of ACEAC J&P
Archbishop Henri Isingoma, Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Congo.

London, 27 November 2013

Re: Launch of “Peace in the Great Lakes” Initiative

Dear Brother Bishops of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda,

It is a great pleasure for the two of us to write to you on the occasion of the launch of your “Peace in the Great Lakes” initiative. We have been following your preparations for today’s launch and have been impressed and inspired by your shared commitment across the region and between Churches.

We would like to join our prayers to yours that your celebrations today be a positive first step in this special year-long process of promoting peace and reconciliation for all. May the Spirit continue to guide you and help you to discern how best to advance and maintain the process. Of course this is not the first time that either individually or collectively you have voiced your concerns or proposed solutions, but possibly the effort that you are marking today is more holistic and comes at a time when other factors also offer hope of more positive outcomes.

With your permission, we would also like to offer a word to your priests, religious and faithful and through them to the citizens of your three countries:

Sisters and brothers, your Region of Africa has sadly known many years of suffering and disruption. While we would like to encourage you to support the initiative being promoted today by the bishops of your three countries, we are also aware of how much they rely on you to inform them of the day to day situations that you face. Even more, we know that they count on you because peace and reconciliation will only be achieved if you citizens have the courage and commitment to set aside at least some of your grievances in order to meet with

each other and find solutions. We would like you to know just how much your courage and dignity is admired by those of us who have followed your trials and tribulations over the past twenty or more years.

Brother Bishops, while we join you in prayer for a true and lasting peace in the Great Lakes Region, we would also be happy to offer practical support to further these ends and would be happy to host the visit of a delegation to the UK to present your thoughts to authorities here, or to offer any other support that we can.

+ Vincent Nichols

Archbishop Vincent Nichols
President of Catholic Bishops Conference
of England & Wales

+ Justin Welby

The Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury