



NO. 4, SENCHI STREET, AIRPORT RESIDENTIAL AREA, ACCRA

## **MESSAGE**

SECAM's Justice and Peace Coordination met in Bujumbura ( BURUNDI ), from the 28<sup>th</sup> of October to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2013 around the theme "Regional Commissions of Justice and Peace : Promoting good governance , the common good and democratic transitions in Africa : Two years after receiving the post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: *Africae Munus*, Where do we stand?"

At the end of this annual conference, we Bishop-Chairmen, Secretaries, Coordinators and Members of Regional Justice and Peace Commissions in Africa and Madagascar, having prayed, listened to and discussed the issues that brought us together, send this message of Peace and Hope to all daughters and sons of the Church - Family of God in Africa and Madagascar, and to all men and women of good will.

We begin by expressing our heartfelt thanks to the Catholic Church of Burundi for agreeing to host our annual meeting. Admiring the beauty of this country, we wish to express our congratulations to the people of Burundi who are working in a peaceful, healthy and prayerful environment.

We gratefully greet the President of the Republic of Burundi and the Government for their attentive hospitality since our arrival in this beautiful and generous country.

Our mission to proclaim and witness to Christ invites us to encourage you in deepening the Word of God, the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, as well as the Post- Synodal Exhortations and continental, regional and national pastoral letters, for the vitality of our shared commitment to Africa and Madagascar.

Like St. Paul, we invite you to let yourselves be reconciled with Christ, by spiritually renewing your minds and hearts in the promotion of the integral development of the person, to be able to say NO to the misery that surrounds us caused by our behaviour as sinners.

Our refusal of poverty in Africa and Madagascar is specifically expressed by:

1 - The total rejection of the exploitation of the poorest and weakest: enslavement of our children, trafficking of our children and even of their vital organs.

2 - The denunciation of the growing insecurity in some countries and regions of the continent, the violence and criminal abuses in the Central African Republic , the recurrence of conflict in the DR Congo, the fanaticism and religious extremism in Nigeria, Mali, Egypt, Somalia, Kenya and Tanzania, etc.

3 - The rejection of the unfair exploitation of our natural resources of which extractive industry is a source of violent conflict and crime. Our wish is that our African states have the courage to draft and pass laws protecting our natural resources.

4 - Exploring new ways for good governance which exclude all forms of corruption, abuse of power and underground dealings.

5 – The new concerns raised by the management of the Nile River. The well-being of people and the countries bordering the Nile fundamentally depends on the River. We recommend a patient and fruitful dialogue in the management of the River.

6 – The commitment to a democratic culture respectful of freedom of opinion. A democracy that takes into account the rights of immigrants, addresses without hypocrisy the issue of refugees according to their basic human dignity.

7 – The respect of the Fundamental Law (Constitution) of the country by providing citizens of a country with the possibility of political alternation.

We recognise the need to deepen and improve transitional justice to which we express our full agreement in the name of peace. As regards crimes against humanity, the legal and criminal law must take its course.



We also extend our sympathy to our brothers and sisters who were victims of the tragedy of Lampedusa (Italy) as well as their families.

Our desire, clearly expressed, is to strengthen our Justice and Peace structures for effective dialogue with African people, civil society, religious groups and governments. We are encouraged to do so by the Exhortation of the Emeritus Pope, Benedict XVI to become “*salt of the earth and light of the world*”.

Finally, we Bishop-Chairmen, Secretaries, Coordinators and Members of the Regional Justice and Peace Commissions in Africa and Madagascar insist each time on forgiveness as a grace of God in which we see Jesus Christ forgiving all our sins. Allowing ourselves to be reconciled with Him through Him and with Him, we engage with our neighbors as on the road to Emmaus, in receiving and recreating the universal brotherhood, for which all, without exception, we aspire.

LORD HEAR OUR PRAYER!

AND LET OUR CRY COME TO YOU.

AMEN.

Given at Bujumbura, on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2013



By the Justice and Peace Coordination

Mgr. Gabriel Justice Yaw Anokye

Archbishop of Kumasi, Ghana

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice- President of SECAM and Chairman of the Justice, Peace and Development Department.

