

FINAL DECLARATION

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you ... (Jn14:27)



1. We, Archbishops and Bishops, Priests, religious and laity, representatives of ACEAC and AMECEA together with the National Catholic Episcopal Conferences of Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, DRC, Rwanda and Tanzania, gathered from October 21st to October 22nd 2012, at the St John Procure, Diocese of Bubanza in Burundi for a workshop on the theme « Revitalizing the strategy of the Catholic Episcopal Conferences of the Great Lakes region and Horn of Africa for Reconciliation, Justice and Peace ».
2. His Excellency Bishop Gervais BANSHIMIYUBUSA, Chair of Burundi Catholic Episcopal Conference, to whom we express once again our gratitude, launched the workshop.
3. The plenary sessions and exchanges during group exercises, both facilitated by Mr. Jean Baptiste Talla from Catholic Relief Services (CRS), led to the identification of insecurity as a major challenge for the region which calls for urgent and concerted action by the Church. Such a challenge is rooted in two main causes: poor governance and interference by foreign powers together with the manipulation of consciences for economic and geostrategic interests.
4. In order to reinforce the Church's response to this challenge and its negative consequences in the region, as God's Family, we agreed to do the following :
 - Design and conduct advocacy at regional level (ACEAC+AMECEA) around issues of security and good governance;
 - Develop and enforce a proactive approach to ensure the contribution of the Church in the formulation, implementation and follow up of regional policies;
 - Revamp the teaching of social doctrine of the catholic church in the region;
 - Facilitate ownership of the strategic plan by Episcopal Conferences of ACEAC and AMECEA;
 - Strengthen relations between Episcopal conferences and regional and sub-regional organizations;
 - Harmonize the contribution of the Church in the teaching of Civic Education within the region.
5. To render effective the above resolutions, under the authority of Archbishops and Bishops who were present in the workshop, we decided to create a "Working Group of ACEAC and AMECEA for Reconciliation, Justice and Peace». It will be chaired by His Excellency, Joachim Ntahondereye, Bishop of Muyinga assisted by the two presidents of ACEAC and AMECEA Justice and Peace Commissions. In addition, the group will also comprise two secretaries of regional conferences, two persons responsible for justice and peace in the regional office, a permanent secretary and of two lay people chosen by regional conferences. CECAB will host the permanent secretariat.

6. The Participants expressed their gratitude to all those who supported the design and implementation of this strategy of the Church for Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in the Great Lakes Region. They rely on the active solidarity of all partner organizations that have kindly accepted to be part of the efforts to translate this plan into an effective project of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in the region.
7. This workshop has reinforced our conviction that authentic peace is the fruit of reconciliation and justice and that as such it is a twofold gift from God and a mission that God entrusted to the Church. May our action be permanently led by these words from Mt 6.33 "Instead, be concerned above everything else with the kingdom of God and with what he requires you, and he will provide you with all these other things".
8. May anyone of us become "salt for the earth » and « light for the Word » as required by the Apostolic Exhortation Africae Munus of Pope Benedict XVI. We ask all our brothers and sisters of the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa regions to join hands in concerted action towards promotion of the common good and building a lasting peace, which are prerequisites for the integral development of our populations.
9. Through the intercession of Mary, our Lady of Peace, we pray God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and Father of us all, that He blesses us, and all the partners of our churches, and to make us faithful artisans and laborious ministers of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace.

On behalf of all the participants to the workshop,

Signed,

All the Archbishops and bishops present at the closing session.

Archbishop Zamboni Okello, Chairman Justice and Peace (U.E.C)
~~Archbishop of Kisumu-Kenya.~~

+ Mgrite Ngoyagoye, archevêque de Bujumbura

+ Mgr Servilien NZAKAMWITA évêque de Bujumbura au Rwanda (+ Cameroun)

+ Paul Ruzoka, Archbishop of Tabora

+ Joachim NTATONDEREYE, Evêque de Muyinga, Président du Groupe de Travail