

**OPENING REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT AT THE CEPACS MEETING OF June 6-9, 2016 at SECAM  
SECRETARIAT AT ACCRA, GHANA**

Your Excellency the Apostolic Nuncio to Ghana, Archbishop Speich,

Bishop Louis Portella Mbuyu, First Vice-President of SECAM;

Your Excellencies Regional Chairmen of Communications, Representative of the Catholic Media Council CAMECO, President of the Catholic Press Union of Africa, UCAP, the Coordinator of the Catholic News Agency of Africa, CANAA, Fr. Don Bosco Ochieng, our resource person on Website management and ICT issues, the Secretary General and Staff of SECAM here in Accra, dear participants at this meeting of CEPACS, I heartily welcome all of you to this long-awaited meeting. I thank you for your sense of commitment to the cause of the African church for travelling all the way from your various abodes and leaving all other duties aside to come for this meeting. I thank God Almighty for granting you all a safe journey here.

I realize that you have all summoned great courage to come to this meeting. Clearly the fact that CEPACS has long been hibernating for some time, without producing great results, could dampen anyone's spirit. Your presence, especially the presence of our partner organizations from far and near is encouraging. It is a consoling demonstration of your commitment and a sign of hope for the Church in Africa. I welcome you and thank you very much.

When I was called to serve as President of CEPACS in 2014, I was not exactly jumping for joy, knowing the magnitude of the challenges that revitalizing CEPACS would entail. However, since then I have looked forward to this opportunity to assemble with you all so as to draw strength and inspiration from your vast experience and goodwill for the task ahead. I wish to thank the Secretary for Social Communications of SECAM Sir Benedict Assorow, for organizing this meeting and making that possible. Much gratitude goes as well to all those who have in one way or another supported his plans.

Let me also thank all those who have worked so hard to keep the CEPACS project alive right from its inception. I refer to all our predecessors, dead and alive, be they Bishops, priests, religious or lay people. (Please rise for a minute of silent prayer in memory of those who have passed on) I also appreciate the work of all partner agencies who have supported the communications apostolate all over Africa. Worthy of mention is the Catholic Media Council which even recently published a study on CEPACS and has expressed willingness to do more to enhance our work. I heartily thank you all.

By continuing this task in communications, we are certainly not chasing shadows. The Holy Father Pope Francis, in February 2015 when the Standing committee of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar SECAM visited him in the Vatican, pointedly asked that SECAM ensure that the voice of the African Church be heard in the Universal Church. This is a desirable but challenging order which cannot happen without your cooperation and commitment. Let us spend the next three days together sincerely reflecting upon the current situation and needs of the church in our continent especially with reference to the chosen theme. Hopefully, together we can chart a course for pastoral communications apostolate that will support, accompany and broadcast the authentic Good News of Jesus Christ in the African continent. It is on this note that I welcome and thank you all again and I wish you all a fulfilling time at this meeting.