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Communique issued at the end of the Meeting of the Pan-African Committee for Social Communications (CEPACS) held at SECAM Secretariat, Accra, Ghana from June 6-9, 2016

Theme: *Engaging the Modern Means of Communications for promoting Evangelisation in Africa with particular reference to Justice, Peace, Reconciliation and Development*

We, participants at the meeting of the Pan-African Episcopal Committee of Social Communications (CEPACS) comprising regional Chairmen of Social Communications with the attendance of Secretaries of Communications, Catholic Media Council (CAMECO), SIGNIS-Africa, the Union of Africa Catholic Press (UCAP), the Catholic News Agency for Africa and resource persons, having deliberated on issues concerning social communications of the Church in Africa, issue the following communique:

1. Appreciation

We thank the Holy Father, Pope Francis, for his message on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of World Communications Day, which was reiterated by the Apostolic Nuncio to Ghana, Archbishop Jean-Marie Speich, reminding us of the power of communication “to build bridges, to enable encounter and inclusion, and thus to enrich society.”

We are grateful to the President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), Archbishop Gabriel Mbilingi, who was represented by the first Vice-President of SECAM, Bishop Louis Portella-Mbuyu, for having emphasised the important role that Social Communications play in the evangelization mission of the Church.

We received goodwill messages from the Catholic Media Council (CAMECO), SIGNIS Africa, and the Union of Africa Catholic Press (UCAP).

2. Revival of CEPACS

We support the new Chairman of CEPACS Most Rev. Emmanuel Badejo, Bishop of Oyo, Nigeria, for reviving CEPACS. We therefore pledge our commitment to keep CEPACS dynamic as the umbrella body for the animation, coordination, formation and training of media practitioners at all levels. We wish that this spirit of commitment and dedication is extended to all the regional Bishops' Conferences on our continent.

3. SECAM Departments

Through the presentation of the activities from the various offices of SECAM Secretariat, we acknowledge with appreciation their efforts in evangelisation for the good of the Church on the continent. We urge SECAM to affirm the policy of mandating all the offices of SECAM Secretariat to include media and publicity components in all their projects and programs.

4. Collaboration with Regional and National Social Communications Offices

Following the revival of CEPACS, we appeal for closer collaboration and cooperation between the continental social communications office and the various regional and national communication offices. To this effect, we urge all Bishops' Conferences to revitalize their Social Communications offices so as to meet the needs of the communication apostolate for evangelisation.

The redesigned SECAM website now offers the opportunity for regional and national conferences as well as other interested parties in Africa to collaborate in new ways through the domain *secam.org* **OR** *sceam.org*. We encourage all interested parties to visit the site and apply for membership.

5. The Catholic News Agency for Africa (CANAA)

We recognise the good service being undertaken by the Catholic News Agency for Africa (CANAA), a project of SECAM, through its biweekly online Newsletter. We appeal to the Church leadership in Africa and all people of good will to support this laudable project. Free subscription can be obtained by emailing: canaa.coordinator@gmail.com

6. SECAM Information and Documentation

We commend SECAM for the initiative it has taken to improve its information and documentation Centre. We ask regional and national conferences to adopt a policy of systematic record keeping and information management.

7. Call on all Catholic Media Professionals and Practitioners

We commend Catholic media professionals and practitioners throughout our continent for all they are doing for the betterment of society. We call on them to witness to their faith with courage through their activities for the evangelisation mission of the Church in Africa.

Conclusion

As we conclude this meeting, we appreciate the hospitality of the Secretary General and staff of SECAM who have made us feel so welcome.

We invoke the Holy Spirit who inspired the Blessed Virgin Mary, the star of evangelisation, to inspire our effort and grant us success. Our Lady of Africa, Pray for us!



Most Rev. Emmanuel A. Badejo

President of CEPACS & Bishop of Oyo, Nigeria

