



Africa

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May your Christmas and New Year be filled with peace and joy.

*Blessings,
AFJN Staff*

AFJN at SECAM Meeting in Dar-Es-Salaam

By Aniedi Okure, OP, Executive Director

On November 21, 2012 AFJN, I was opportune to make a presentation on *Catholic Social Teaching and Empowerment of Local Communities for Good Governance* to about seventy church leaders and consultants gathered in

Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania from November 20-25, 2012 for a workshop on Faith, Culture and Development. Participants included Cardinals, Bishops, Priests and Religious, Lay People, and resource persons. They represented the Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), the Pontifical Council for Culture, MISERIOR, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) of Tanzania and representatives of several Catholic Universities in Africa and Rome. The conference was opened by Cardinal Pengo, Archbishop of Dar-Es-Salaam and President of SECAM and was co-chaired by Cardinal Sarr Archbishop of Dakar and 1st Vice President of SECAM, and Archbishop Adoukonu, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture at the Vatican.

Some participants at the SECAM Conference, 2012



Some participants at the SECAM Conference, 2012

AFJN – SECAM Collaboration

AFJN’s presence at SECAM Forum is part of our effort to establish strong collaboration with African Church leaders, to listen to their voices so we can better represent Africa in our advocacy mission. We hope to partner with African Church leaders to embrace elements within African cultures that provide a niche for Catholic Social Teachings. Such elements include (1) Human solidarity that finds exaggerated individualism repugnant to communal life, (2) The common good – that decries excessive accumulation of wealth while neigh-

bors die of hunger, (3) Communal ownership of the resources of the earth, and (4) Respect and care for the earth that is captured in African proverb: *“We who are alive now do not inherit the land from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.”* These elements are the cornerstones for building a strong civil society.

Strong civil societies facilitate social and political participation and are particularly important for the development of enduring and working democracies.

During the workshop participants discussed ways to facilitate

good governance and African policies for development that are anchored in the Gospel. At the heart of Catholic teachings for society and governance is the idea of the common good which requires that each citizen transcends self interest and promote the good for a just communal life. This aspect is captured in the African expression: *“I am because we are.”*

AFJN Proposal for Civil Societies

AFJN proposed to African Church leaders the creation of civil society organizations whose political values reflect traditional Catholic teachings to be developed in partnership with the appropriate departments of SECAM and its Regional Episcopal Conferences, especially the offices of Justice, Peace, Development and Good Governance and Catholic University’s Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies (IPR). Such will be parish based and led by lay people with diocesan oversight. What is imagined in AFJN’s proposal is a sustained

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President Obama's Second Term: looking ahead and looking back on his Africa policies

By Bahati Jacques, Policy Analyst

What kind of Africa policy will President Barack Obama adopt during his second term? Who will the new key players be in his administration? These questions are debated each time US citizens exercise their democratic right to free elections. The answers interest Africa advocates, policy and business analysts, peace and war promoters, responsible investors and resource grabbers, government officials, and religious leaders.

Here is one aspect of this debate that played out recently. When rumors of nominating US Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice as the Secretary of State surfaced, her judgment was questioned on the genocide in Rwanda, the crisis between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the 1996 Rwanda and Uganda invasion of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and her recent position on the ongoing Rwandan support of the rebellion in DRC, and much more. This protest against Ambassador Rice's potential nomination ended Thursday December 13 when she dropped out of the race for this position.

On a positive note, the reelection of President Obama brings certainty that sections 1502 and 1504 of the *Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010*, also known as the Dodd-Frank law, will not be repealed.

Some components of this law have direct implications on African nations. Section 1502 requires companies which are registered with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and use tin, tantalum, tungsten, or gold in their products to publicly disclose evidence of due diligence they exercised to ensure that their supply chains do not contain the above mentioned minerals in their products and do not come from the conflict mineral network financing the war in eastern DRC. Section 1504 promotes transparency in the extractive industries. It requires oil, natural gas, and mining companies registered with the SEC to disclose certain payments made to governments for every extraction contract.



President Obama speaking in Ghana, 2009

This information is key to civil societies and other bodies who want to combat corruption, and track revenue and allocation from these contracts.

Furthermore, we hope that President Obama will continue implementing and improving some of his predecessor's policies which have had a positive impact. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has been a successful project in some parts of Africa such as Uganda and South Africa. Similarly, the campaign to prevent and treat malaria and tuberculosis has made progress in places where it is implemented in Africa. Congressional funding for these programs has been bi-partisan for the last decade and we hope that it will survive into fiscal year 2013 despite necessary government spending cuts. For example, it used to be that every 30 seconds a child died from malaria, but now half as many children are dying. This also means children are spending more time in the classroom instead of the hospital, and families are saving money on medical bills. In cases of pregnant women, we have seen tremendous progress in preventing mother to child HIV-AIDS transmission. It is estimated that Africa spends about 12 billion dollars on malaria treatment every year. If funding was to be cut, major

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gains in the past decade in the fight against malaria, HIV-AIDS and tuberculosis would be lost.

However, President Obama strengthened the militarization of US aid to Africa through the Africa Command (AFRICOM). AFRICOM, a project begun by President George W. Bush in 2007, initially faced strong protests and has its headquarters in Germany as a result. Many Africa advocates suggest as an alternative to AFRICOM, which serves American interests, more robust policies focused on trade, diplomacy, development, conflict resolution and prevention and promotion of democratic institutions. These are not new ideas and some of the goals are included in President Obama's Sub-Saharan Africa strategy which he launched in June 2012. Previous administrations have set these goals, but the report card shows more support of dictatorial regimes than promotion of citizen-led democratic principles.

AFRICOM is active in several parts of Africa including Mali, Rwanda, Uganda, South Sudan, DRC, and Egypt, just to name a few. Taking

into account terrorist threats to US interests in Africa, the best policy remains a very limited US military footprint on the ground and more empowerment of local and responsible governments.

While President Obama positioned the US on the right side of history in his first term by supporting the revolution that ended the dictatorial regimes of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (1987-2011) in Tunisia, Muammar Muhammad Abu Minyar al-Gaddafi (1969-2011) in Egypt, and Muhammad Hosni El Sayed Mubarak (1981-2011) of Libya, the real challenge remains to be seen if President Obama sides with African civil society in these nations and everywhere in Africa where people want to replace dictatorial regimes with peaceful, accountable and democratic leadership. In the coming weeks as President Obama makes his second term administration public, Africa Faith and Justice Network is (as it has been for the last thirty years) ready to engage the administration and congress on the grounds of fair and just policies toward Africa. •

AFJN at SECAM, Continued from page 2

process of education and cultivating enduring civil society organizations that are informed by the Church's rich teachings on justice, accountability and transparency, the principles of subsidiarity and the common good as they apply to different contexts. Several African emerging democracies would greatly benefit from civil society organizations that empower local communities on issues of citizenship and government accountability.

Shady Deals by "Agro-Investors"

The issue of land grab throughout Africa, disguised under the banner of "agro-investment" was mentioned as a case that deserves urgent attention, a social cancer that remains unchecked because of the lack of strong civil societies. The process of land acquisition by investors is marred by shady deals between investors and African political leaders, displacements of local communities from fertile lands, interfering with water supply sources and human rights violations, in addition to mortgaging the resources of future generations to unscrupulous investors. The consequences of land acquisition if allowed to continue will be worse than colonialism.

A Warm Reception of the Proposal

The presentation was well received and several Church leaders at the workshop expressed strong interest in the proposal. AFJN looks forward with eagerness to the next steps in translating the proposal to reality. •

"At the heart of Catholic teachings for society and governance is the idea of the common good ... This aspect is captured in the African expression: 'I am because we are.'"

Ghana: Religious Bodies Meet Political Leaders

The Ghana Conference on Religion and Peace (GCRP) called on stakeholders of the general elections to ensure that peace prevailed during the elections. Most Rev. Joseph Osei-Bonsu, President of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference and Chairperson of the GCRP, made the call recently at the final meeting with political party leaders and the electoral commission at the National Catholic Secretariat in Accra.

The GCRP comprises the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference; the Christian Council of Ghana; the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council; the National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches; the Federation of Muslim Councils; Office of the National Chief Imam; Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission; Council of Independent Churches; The Eminent Persons Group of the Christian Council of Ghana along with other stakeholders.

Bishop Osei-Bonsu said the meeting agreed that the Security Services were important in these elections and recommended that security personnel and other election officials should be known in accordance with the law before the elections and provided with tags for easy identification.

On rejected ballots, Bishop Osei-Bonsu said the meeting urged the electoral commission and the Security Services to ensure that steps were taken to reduce them to the barest minimum.

At its earlier meetings, The GCRP called on Ghanaians, the religious community and civil society to support with prayer all efforts at ensuring peace and stability in the country. They said of acknowledging the role of religious leaders in promoting and sustaining peace, "we are taking steps to contribute to efforts by other interest groups to ensure peaceful, free and fair elections in Ghana."•

Support for African Women Researchers *By Rita Murphy*

Funders have renewed support for African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD), a program that helps women in Sub-Saharan countries develop leadership and scientific skills.

A second grant, spanning five years, was announced in October, and comprised of US\$14 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and US\$5 million from the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

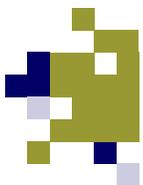
It will spark more effective innovations in agriculture according to Karen Homer, AWARD's spokesperson. "We believe that effective solutions for African agriculture will come through empowered women scientists," she said. The majority of those who produce, process and market Africa's food are women, but only one in four agricultural researchers is female, according to a 2008 study conducted by AWARD.

Every AWARD fellow attends courses on leadership and management, science skills and proposal writing. They are also twinned with senior scientists as mentors. The first phase of AWARD, in 2008, enlisted 250 African women agricultural scientists from 11 countries. •



Aniedi with H. E. Tebelelo Seretse, Ambassador of Botswana to the United States at the AFJN annual Dyer Lecture. Seretse spoke about *Empowering Local Communities: Africa and Good Governance to a full house.*

Photo: Kyle Gildea



Mali: A State in Crisis

By Melaura Homan-Smith, AFJN Program Coordinator

On Wednesday, December 5th AFJN attended a hearing entitled: "Addressing Developments in Mali: Restoring Democracy and Reclaiming the North" held by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs, and chaired by Chris Coons, a senator from Delaware. The US and the international community have been far from decisive in taking action to stop what Nii Akuetteh, an independent witness at the hearing, calls a "deadly cocktail" which is destroying Mali's young democracy.

Witnesses gave their testimony to a standing-room-only audience; the statements

came from the State Department, Department of Defense, Human Rights Watch, National Democratic Institute, and the VP of a development organization brought in via webcast directly from Bamako.

Earlier this year, on March 22nd, US-trained Captain Amadou Sanogo carried out a military coup against Mali's democratically elected president, Amadou Toumani Toure and proclaimed himself the leader of the National Committee for Recovering Democracy and Restoring the State (CNRDRE) in Mali. With this, the Tuaregs (nomadic peoples residing in northern Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Libya, and Algeria) re-opened their bid to secede from Mali.

The international community (excepting the US) refused to recognize this military incursion and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) negotiated a deal instating the former speaker of the National Assembly, Diounounda Traore, as President of an interim government, effectively re-

moving the coup leader, Captain Sanogo, from power.

Yet, according to Christopher Fomunyoh of the National Democratic Institute, military friends of Captain Sanogo have been appointed in several key ministries of the transitional government and Sanogo himself "seems to pull the levers of power from behind the scenes." This new divided political structure did nothing to ameliorate the crisis in the north.



Witnesses in the Senate hearing. Photo: CSPAN

Northern Mali is a desert area roughly the size of France, a large, sparsely populated region with porous borders. This mixture made northern Mali an ideal climate for terrorist organizations like AQIM (Al Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb) and MUJAO (Movement for Oneness with Jihad) to take hold of the Tuareg's upheaval in order to enforce Sharia law. The witness from Human Rights Watch expressed a dire human emergency inside this military-political conflict. Amputation, execution, rape, use of child soldiers, torture, and suppression of free speech and religion were enumerated in detail at the hearing. Women are being "married" to generals and then raped for having their faces uncovered; men are beaten in the streets for having musical ringtones on their phones. Upwards of 400,000 people have been displaced, and more than 4.5 million people require food aid in an already food-insecure time in the Sahel.

On the eve of the UN deciding whether to approve a multi-lateral ECOWAS military intervention, Mali stands with at least four separate and intertwined arenas to address, according to Mr. Akuetteh's statement: "(1) the Bamako-centered broken democratic

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rule; (2) the deeply-rooted, recalcitrant secessionist aspiration and wars of the Tuaregs; (3) Mali's loss of integrity over most of its territory and the control of that area by violent religious extremists, significant numbers of whom are foreigners; (4) and the humanitarian crisis centered in the north, epitomized by mass displacement of the population..."

The further upheaval of the transitional government (worsened by the arrest and forced resignation of Prime Minister Cheick Modibo Diarra by the coup-makers in early December) should not be used as a reason to delay intervention. Insecurity should not be a license for more diplomatic hand-wringing.

The US State Department and President Obama have strongly decried Captain Sanogo's continued destabilization of the Malian government. According to the Washington Post "U.S. officials once had high hopes for his career" due to his US-based military education and training. The US also has engaged in professionalizing and training the Malian forces to resist terrorism and to strengthen that region of the Sahel through the US Africa Command's (AFRICOM) Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Program (TSCTP), and Operation Flintlock. The US should examine the efficacy of TSCTP training and consider other non-military options to fight terrorism in Africa.

It is worth mentioning that some of the fighters in the Mali crisis are foreign mercenaries who fought against the National Transitional Council (NTC) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), on the side of Libya's longtime dictator, President Muammar al-Gaddafi before he was killed in October 2011. Unaccounted-for small arms also flowed from the Libyan conflict into Mali.

Though the US and the international community do and should play a role in the events in Mali, the conflict's origins and solutions are regional and African. We should not wait for elections to take action--any elections held as of this writing would not be fair, and could give further grievances to the northern population on the basis of political exclusion--hundreds of thousands of citizens are refugees or barely secure in IDP camps. The US and the UN should throw full diplomatic support behind an ECOWAS and African Union (AU)-led solution to restore security in Mali. The time for delicate political moves and attempts at sanctions are over; the terroristic reign and governance vacuum need to be addressed with strong policy and action. •

[Click to watch the hearing.](#)

Smiles

From the Newspaper of the National Bishops' Conference of Cameroon

So too goes the story of an old man from a remote village who came to town to visit his son.

"What are those numbers that are written in front of all these cars?" he asked. "Those numbers Papa," the son replied, "are called tag numbers, so that each car can be easily identified." "I see," said the old man with evident relief written all over his face, "I thought the numbers showed how many people the driver has killed."

Africa Faith & Justice Network,
inspired by the Gospel and informed
by Catholic Social Teaching, educates
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