



STATEMENT AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE 8TH REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF CARITAS AFRICA

We, the Member Organisations of Caritas Africa, comprising 46 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, assembled at the Church Village in Rome for our 8th Pan-African Conference from 9 to 12 May. Even as we held our Conference in Rome, we were reminded of the many painful situations and challenges in the African continent and expressed our solidarity with the affected people. We expressed our gratitude to the members of our Regional Commission and to the outgoing Executive Secretary who served their tenure so dutifully and with excellence.

During our Conference, we reflected on the theme “Love of Christ urges us: together in service to the poor”. The theme brought us to a greater realisation of service as imitation of the personality of Jesus, service as practice of the culture of encounter and reaching out, service as promotion of participation and inclusiveness; and service as expression of solidarity and working together.

Our conference provided us a unique opportunity to learn from one another the real experiences on the ground in our countries. Cases of enormous threats, challenges and despair were so vividly articulated and shared but so were opportunities, hopes and prospects. Some of the sorrowful reminders include: the devastation to life by the Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa, the demise of so many young African migrants in the Mediterranean Sea in their attempt to flee from poverty and conflicts, the socio-economic and natural disasters in some countries, the scourge of Islamist terrorism in Nigeria and renewed wars in Sudan and South Sudan, and the senseless persecution of Christians in some countries in and outside of the region. We commit these situations and the affected people to prayer for God’s merciful intervention. At

the same time, we condemn the actions, inactions and irresponsibility of the Governments that lend support to these painful occurrences.

The capacity building workshop on Risk Management heightened our awareness and understanding of how we can effectively position our Regional Organisation to respond to these contextual dynamics. Thus our 2016-2019 strategic framework has been informed by these emerging contextual realities and will be our main instrument to deliver transformation for the common good during the coming years. We have also elected new members of the Regional Commission with Most Rev. Gabriel Justice Yaw Anokye, Archbishop of Kumasi, Ghana as President of Caritas Africa for the next four years.

We concluded our Conference with a renewed confirmation of Caritas being a constitutive part of the Church's fundamental mission and structure. Consequently, we have realigned our Statutes and Internal Rules with Caritas Internationalis and the Symposium for the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM). It is our hope that Caritas will be further strengthened to deliver its socio-pastoral mission with efficiency and effectiveness; always measuring our results by the hope and wellbeing that the poor and marginalised truly experience in their life. We will achieve this by both addressing the direct needs of the poor, marginalized and vulnerable through our services but especially engaging in advocacy that will transform the unjust systems and policies that perpetuate poverty, exclusion, deprivation and abuse of nature.

The love of Christ is our inspiration. There is much reason to sustain our hope for our continent of Africa. Prayer will give strength to our feeble limbs, discernment to our confused minds and zeal to our hearts when they get faint.

Rome, 12 May 2015