



PROGRAMME FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN AFRICA  
PROGRAMME DES RELATIONS ISLAMO-CHRETIENNES EN AFRIQUE



# ADDIS ABABA REPORT



## AFRICA CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS CONFERENCE ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
January 8th-13th 2012**

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## 1.2 Conference Rationale

The rationale of the conference which was expected with a lot of enthusiasm was presented by the General Adviser of PROCMURA, Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah. The General Adviser began his presentation by reminding participants that the rationale of the conference comes in the concept paper that was sent to all participants earlier and hoped that most, if not all participants have been able to read it. He proposed to outline salient points with the understanding that those who have not yet been able to read the script will do so tonight in preparation for the proceedings the following day.

The concept paper begins with a justified statement of the obvious that Africa, the second largest and second most populous continent in the world, after Asia, is a continent of religion and religious people. The social fabric of Africa is therefore a religious one while Christianity and Islam currently wield the largest following within the continent's religious landscape. What this means in practice and in the light of this conference, explained Mbillah, is that there can be no peace in the African continent if Muslims and Christians are not at peace among themselves and with one another. In the over 50 years of PROCMURA's life and work, it has always been recognised that even though Christianity and Islam claim to be religions with peace at the centre of their teaching by many, history has shown that Christians and Muslims have not always lived up to this core value which they claim to be innate in their respective religions.

They have in some instances used the concept of a 'Just War' (Christian) and Jihad (Muslim) to perpetuate violence in society and violence among and between themselves. When it comes to the issue of development, Christianity and Islam have always stated clearly that according to their respective scriptures and traditions, humankind are stewards (Christianity), viceroys and vicerents (*Khalifas in Islam*) of God's creation. The rationale behind the organisation of the Addis Ababa conference, is best understood in terms of one of PROCMURA's programme focuses in the continent; its commitment to work towards peace and live peace and to have a broader understanding of how religious leaders can team up with state actors, civil society, regional and continental bodies, towards the material and spiritual development of the African peoples as true stewards of God's creation.

PROCMURA's work on peace and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims as a prerequisite for development falls within its second operational principle of 'Christian Constructive engagement with Muslims for peace and peaceful co-existence', and its stated vision of a "continent where faith communities in spite of their differences work together for the wholistic (spelt holistic) development of the human family."

The focus of this particular conference, far from duplicating what has been done over the past few years, brings together influential Christian and Muslim religious leaders and media representatives, with the understanding that the presence of the media from each participating country will help spread the conference proceedings far and wide.

The choice of countries (Cameroun, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania (main land and Zanzibar) depicts a mix of varied wealth of experiences some of which may be unique and peculiar to any given country. This variety of experiences, it is hoped, will stimulate sharing across the regions and the different countries and help produce a broader impact on participants across the religious divide.

On the objectives of the conference, the General Adviser referred participants to the main document in the appendices. He however gave a gist of the principal objective by making it clear that it is to provide a platform for the Christian and Muslim religious leaders to deliberate on the reality that human beings are economic, political, social, cultural as well as spiritual beings constituted with body, soul and mind as a unit. It is hoped that this reality will provide good grounds for participants to come up with a holistic developmental approach that shall attend to these realities. Apart from this, the conference is expected to launch an added phase in PROCMURA's cooperation with its partners in Denmark and stakeholders in Africa, towards an African Christian and Muslim renaissance for peace and development. *(Full texts of the presentation can be found in the Appendix I)*

After Mbillah responded to questions from the floor, Sheikh Conteh thanked the General Adviser for a well written and brief presentation and encouraged all to re-read the paper so that they may not digress from the conference rationale in their deliberations.