A Journey of Peace

Report of Conference on Religion and Conflict Prevention, Peace building and Reconciliation in Eastern Africa

Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania 2008

Edited by: **Johnson A. Mbillah**

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

PROCMURA
NAIROBI KENYA

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Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA)

REPORT OF

Conference on Religion and Conflict Prevention, Peace Building and Reconciliation in Eastern Africa

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Abbreviations

BAKWATA	Baraza Kuu Ya Waislamu Tanzania (Supreme Council of Muslims in Tanzania)
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CCT	Christian Council of Tanzania
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
ECOSOCC	Economic, Social and Cultural Council
FECCLAHA	Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa
GA	General Adviser
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IC/GLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
IMC	Interfaith Mediation Council
NCCK	National Council of Churches of Kenya
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PROCMURA	Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
SUPKEM	Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims
UJCC	Uganda Joint Christian Council
UNAMID	African Union – United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNMEE	United Nations Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia

Forward

The gathering of Muslims and Christians in the Eastern African city of Dar-es Salaam, Tanzania, to conference on conflict prevention, peace building and Reconciliation, was one of the very few occasions in Africa where one could reflect and say Christians and Muslims are now doing what they should have been doing a long time ago.

We are honoured that PROCMURA provided the much needed platform for religious leaders of the region to openly and frankly discuss issues of conflict in the region and how they can contribute to mitigate such conflicts and ensure that peace and reconciliation become the norm and not the exception.

As a person who comes from Kaduna in Nigeria, a city which has over the years experienced wanton destruction of lives and properties including Churches and Mosques, this conference reminded me of so many things. It made me recognise as ever, the importance of Christian and Muslim leaders coming together to talk peace and call on their followers to live peace.

At the conference the General Adviser reminded us severally that Islam prides itself to be a religion of peace while Christianity prides itself to be a religion of The 'Prince of Peace yet the African continent which has majority Christian and Muslims do not experience peace. We were challenged to transform the good precepts our respective religions into good practice.

In the conference Muslim and Christian leaders (as may be seen in the communiqué issued after the conference) recognised that the well known statement which states: "if you want peace, prepare for war" is obsolete and not beneficial for human development. The proliferation of small arms in the horn of Africa and some parts of the Eastern Africa region has only produced a vicious circle of violence where innocent lives are destroyed day in and day out.

In Dar-es Salaam PROCMURA initiated the Journey of Peace for Christian and Muslim leaders in the continent. We hope that many others from the two religious communities and the wider society will join us in this journey so that together the small arms menace in the region will be curbed. With such a concerted effort weapons of war may be transformed into tools of development that would help feed the hungry and restore justice to the poor and those who are displaced but such instruments of war.

As management of PROCMURA, we have urged the General Adviser and his team of Regional Coordinators and Area Advisers at the grassroots level, and the Central Office staff, in Nairobi. to work hard to ensure that this programme for peace that has began in earnest become the norm and not the exception. We do so not just because one of the key principles of PROCMURA is to facilitate Christian and Muslim constructive engagement for peace and peaceful co-existence between their adherents and the wider society, but more so because peace in the continent of Africa has become an expensive commodity that we have to work hard to get and transform it into a cheap commodity to the extent of it being the norm of our living.

We pray God to lead us in this journey.

Right Rev. Josiah Idowu Fearon
Chairperson, PROCMURA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The PROCMURA journey for peace which brought together Christian and Muslim leaders from Eastern Africa to Dar es Salaam would not have been possible without people who directly and indirectly supported the cause.

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of TrustAfrica, an organisation based in Dakar, Senegal and which we only got to know barely two years ago. PROCMURA' quest to bring together Christian and Muslim leaders around Africa to look into situations of peace in the continent received a boost when TrustAfrica invited the General Adviser to its maiden workshop on '*The challenge of religion and pluralism in Africa*'.   The workshop which took place in Dakar, Senegal, July 10 -12, 2007 brought together twenty-six religious leaders and scholars of religion to deliberate on a number of issues, an important aspect of which was religion and conflict, peace and peaceful living with others of different faith traditions, and reconciliation. On his return the GA informed the Central Office staff that in TrustAfrica PROCMURA had definitely found an ally it could work with to fulfil its stated objective of bringing Christian and Muslim leaders together to look at issues of peace in society and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims.

True to what we had learnt about TrustAfrica they very willingly provided the bulk of the financial support that enabled PROCMURA to organise the conference. For us we feel that they lived up to their name "Trust Africa". They actually trusted us and we believe that we did not disappoint them since the conference was very successful.

We would also like to acknowledge one of PROCMURA's pioneer partners KerkinActie who heard what the GA described as the 'Macedonian call for help' and acted promptly. The financial support from TrustAfrica was originally thought to be sufficient for the conference. In the middle of the year the then much publicised fuel crises caused airfares and all that had to do with travel shoot up. We recognised that unless we got some funds somewhere to top up we would get ourselves into a financial mess and the conference would not live up to the expectation we had hoped since we would have had to reduce the number of participants. We made a phone call to KerkinActie and explained the difficulties we were facing. They saw value in what we were about to do and sent us funds to make up for the projected deficit.

What KerkinActie did reminded me personally of the saying that you only know your good friends when you are in trouble and not when all is well.

The Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania, the Honourable Samuel Sitta, The Guest Speaker, His Excellency Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, former Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU) and special envoy of the African Union mediating team in the Darfur crises, Dr. Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Dr. Pastor James Wuye as well as our own colleague and brother Fred Nyabera have to be acknowledged for presentations they made as such added value to the conference and provided the basis for our discussions.

Joy Wandabwa
Team Leader, Finance and Administration

Introduction

For the past four years The Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) held a number of consultations with its field/grassroots workers made up of Area (country) Advisers, Regional Coordinators, and women programme leaders around the continent. The objective of the consultations was to identify critical and important issues in Christian-Muslim relations which PROCMURA has to direct its energy. It was also to map out a strategy by which such challenges could be met, and ensure that the Central Office Staff comes up with short, Medium and long term projects and programmes to meet the challenges.

One issue that came up strongly in these consultations was the growing conflicts and religious intolerance in some parts of Africa. At a joint meeting of the field/grassroots workers with the governing council of PROCMURA and partners from Europe and North in January, 2006, at Nairobi to discuss a draft strategic plane for PROCMURA the issue resurfaced.

It was made clear that violent civil strife and rebel activities which seem to jump from one country to the other needed to receive special attention. It was unanimously agreed that that though these conflicts are caused by multiple factors, they are nevertheless carried out by people who profess to be Christian or Muslim or at least bear those labels. Instances were cited of Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Uganda, Burundi, Sudan, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, to name but a few, in the Eastern Horn of Africa and Central Africa regions. In the West Africa sub region Nigeria (especially the north), Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, Togo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea were some of the countries cited in that region.

It was made clear that if PROCMURA with its vast experience in Christian-Muslim relations did not come up with high profile programmes targeting the leadership of Church and Mosque in the countries listed, and raise critical issues for the Christian and Muslim leaders to consider, the situation could become worse in the not too distant future.

It was emphasised by the PROCMURA Executive Committee at a separate meeting that unless religious leaders became proactive in working together for peace

and development in the continent the stereotyping image of religious leaders by politicians as a people who are supposed to concentrate on life after death and they (Politicians) take care of life before death will be seen as true.

The report on the proceedings of the Conference on Religion and Conflict Prevention, Peace building and Reconciliation in Eastern Africa is a high profile 'Journey of Peace which Christians and Muslim leaders have embarked on and which PROCMURA remains a facilitator. This journey has pushed PROCMURA to combine its 'quiet diplomacy' for peace which it exercised for over 40 years and outside the glare of the media to now come into the open be media friendly.

**Johnson A. Mbillah**
General Advisor

1.0   Proceedings of the Conference

The PROCMURA General Adviser, Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah called the conference to order on 2nd September 2008 at 8.55am. He indicated that the participants were religious people and therefore there was need to ask God to lead and be with us during the conference. Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome, representing the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) and Bishop Evans Mukasa, representing the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) prayed for the successful proceedings of the conference and its outcome.

Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah

After the prayers the General Adviser informed members that it is the custom of PROCMURA that all its meetings are hosted by its Area Committee under the auspices of the National Councils of Churches. He indicated that the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) was our host, adding that we were privileged to have the Chairperson of CCT, Rt. Rev. Donald Mtetemela to welcome participants to the conference. Bishop Mtetemela in his welcome address thanked God for His care and grace on all participants in their travel to Dar es Salaam. He entreated participants to enjoy the hospitality of the Dar es Salaam community and the peace of Dar es Salaam-the harbour of peace. He also hoped that participants
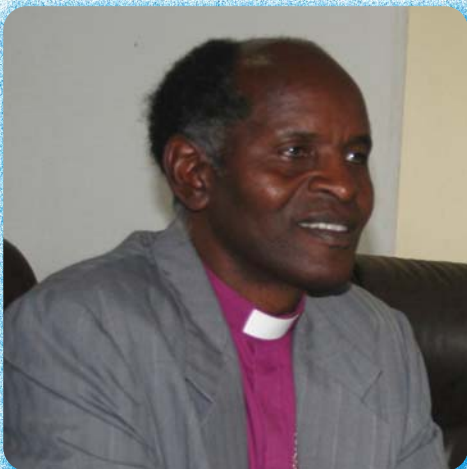
would experience the fellowship of having come from several countries in the region and get to know each other as they interact with one another.

Turning his attention to the subject of the conference, Bishop Mtetemela emphasised that religious leaders have a role in ensuring that peace and justice are upheld in all the countries from which they come and beyond. He noted that a calling/vocation to work for peace with

Rt. Rev. Donald Mtetemela

justice was necessary for religious people and called on all to continue to engage themselves in the struggle for harmony and tranquillity in the region. He indicated that Tanzania was grateful to God for the fellowship and close working relationship that exists between religious communities and the Tanzanian government. He welcomed the participants and wished them a fruitful conference and an enjoyable stay in Tanzania.

The General Adviser introduced the PROCMURA central office staff to participants and asked participants to consult them for assistance on things they may need. He then introduced some members of the Executive Committee of PROCMURA, Area Advisers and Chairpersons of the Area Committees. The details of those associated with PROCMURA and their roles are found in the list of participants.

After the introductions the Rev. Dr. Leonard Mtaita, General Secretary of the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) introduced Sheikh Suleiman Gorogosi, the Deputy Mufti of Tanzania and Sheikh Ally Mzee, the Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Muslims in Tanzania (BAKWATA), and Dr. Issa Haji Ziddy from Zanzibar. He informed participants that the Secretary General of the Tanzania Episcopal Conference would be joining the conference later. The Deputy Mufti of Tanzania and the Secretary General of BAKWATA expressed their appreciation for the invitation to attend the conference and commended PROCMURA for its good work in promoting peace between Christians and Muslims and the wider society at large.

Sheikh Suleiman Gorogosi

The General Adviser expressed his gratitude to the Muslim clerics of Tanzania for their kind words and proceeded to ask participants to introduce themselves indicating that it was important to mention the country from which a participant came and the organisation he or she represented. Upon conclusion of the introductions, the General Adviser then begged the indulgence of participants to postpone the agenda item entitled Expectations of the Conference to the afternoon session and proceed with the opening ceremony since the dignitaries for the opening ceremony had arrived.

1.1   Opening Ceremony

The Master of Ceremony, Mr. Bernard Okok Obuoga, welcomed the participants to the official opening ceremony of the conference. He then called upon Rev. Iteffa Gobena, immediate past Chairperson of PROCMURA, and Sheikh Ally Mzee to proceed with the opening prayers. The Master of Ceremony then invited Rev. Angèle Dogbe, PROCMURA's Women and Education Programme Coordinator to introduce the chairperson for the opening ceremony who was in the person of Bishop Josiah Idowu Fearon, Anglican bishop of Kaduna, Nigeria, who is the Chairperson of

Mr Bernard Okok Obuoga

PROCMURA. Rev. Angèle Dogbe in her introduction said that Bishop Idowu is a Christian theologian who also holds doctorates in Christian-Muslim relations and Sociology. She indicated that the Chairperson by his education and in his many years involvement in Christian-Muslim relations is well versed in both the theory and practice in interfaith relations.

Opening Remarks of PROCMURA Chairperson, Bishop Josiah Idowu Fearon

Bishop Josiah Idowu Fearon

In his opening remarks, the Chairperson indicated that it was a special privilege for him to chair the first session of the conference-the opening ceremony. He began by thanking Christian Council of Tanzania and the PROCMURA Area Committee for hosting the conference. He then on behalf of PROCMURA welcomed the participants and resource persons to the conference. He appreciated the sacrifices they made to come as a result of the importance of peace in the region and acknowledged the assistance of ecumenical partners towards the conference.

The Chairperson noted that if there is no peace there can be no development. There cannot be peace in the world if there is no peace between the religions. Reflecting on the on the book of Job in the Old Testament of the Bible (Job 13) where Job is saying to his friends: 'are you going to keep lying to God, to do God a service? Are you going to make stories and get God off the hook?' and urged that in the ministry of Christian-Muslim relations all are called to be honest in speaking the language of love and peace. He urged that all be honest and speak the truth in love so as to be able to pass on the wealth of experience to be shared in the conference. For the conference to be productive, he urged that all should stop lying in the name of God and share the truth for Africa to experience the truth. He thanked the participants and prayed that God bless them and the conference.

After the opening remarks he invited Bishop Alex Malasusa, Chairperson of PROCMURA Area Committee in Tanzania and Presiding Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Tanzania to introduce the guest of honour. Bishop Malasusa in introducing Hon. Samuel Sitta, the Speaker of the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania, as the guest of honour indicated that guest speaker was a church elder who actively participates in church activities in the country. In politics, he has been a Member of Parliament for more than a decade. Hon. Sitta was also recently elected the President of the Society

Bishop Alex Malasusa

of Parliaments of Commonwealth countries. Bishop Malasusa then asked the guest of honour to feel free when participating in the conference as he was rightfully a religious leader and the conference was for religious leaders.

The Chairperson, Bishop Fearon, warmly welcomed the guest of honour and asked the General Adviser of PROCMURA to say some few words about what PROCMURA is and what it stands for. Dr. Mbillah in introducing PROCMURA said that it was organisation with a long history that goes back to 1959 when African nationalist movements were agitating for independence. He said that African churches during the period were aware that nationals of the different countries would be made up of   Christians, Muslims and other religious communities. The churches were, therefore, reflecting on how they would accompany the

independence/liberation movements to ensure good relationships between the religious communities so as to live together peacefully.

A section of participants

The General Adviser then outlined two principles that undergird PROCMURA's work. The first principle is: Faithful Christian witness in an interfaith environment of Christians and Muslims that respect the spirit of good neighbourliness and by extension how Muslims can carry out Muslim *da'wah* (invitation/call to non-Muslims to become Muslims). The second principle is Christian constructive engagement with Muslims for peace and peaceful co-existence for the holistic development of the human family. In conclusion, he indicated that PROCMURA's principal objective is how Muslims can be truly Muslim and truly African and how Christians can be truly Christian and truly African.

1.2 Official Opening Address by Hon. Samuel J. Sitta (MP), Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania

(See annex II for the full address).

In his address, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania reiterated the following:

Hon. Samuel Sitta

- That the overwhelming majority of humankind should realise the essence of peace for sustainable development;

- That real peace comes from enlightenment and educating people to behave in a manner acceptable to God who wishes that we all live in peace;

- That religious leaders are key actors in peace and conflict resolution and the United Nations (UN) recognises this role. Religious leaders therefore have a special role and leverage in society and they should use it;

- That there is need for caution as seemingly peaceable countries could implode. He gave the example of Kenya that was hitherto praised as a haven of peace but imploded early in the year with devastating consequences for its people and the region;

- That there cannot be peace without justice;

- That people who feel they do not have a stake in their society, and have nothing to lose, consciously or unconsciously destroy their society;

- That religion is peace and peace is religion. Islam and Christianity and their teachings underscore peace;

- That if all adhered to their religious teachings there would be no conflict;

- That poverty is the ultimate threat facing humanity. If left unchecked poverty and marginalisation of the poor could lead to perennial conflicts;

- That without peace and security it will not be possible for developing nations, in Sub Saharan Africa, to attain the Millennium Development Goals of halving poverty by 2015;

- That absence of meaningful accountability in governance contributes to conflicts in the continent;

- That institutions of governance, including parliaments, are necessary for checks and oversight over government by ensuring efficient and effective accountability;

- That the 9th Parliament of Tanzania is repositioning itself to carry out its mandate through: a review of its Standing Committees that are now able to originate bills; a review of its house rules of procedure; and the institutionalisation of the Prime Minister's question time to foster government accountability; and

- That the Tanzanian parliament is willing and ready to work with PROCMURA. Religious leaders should also seek to work closely with relevant parliamentary committees in their countries and with the AMANI Forum.

Hon. Samuel Sitta indicated that he was greatly honoured to be asked to speak at such an important conference of the religious leadership from the region and commended PROCMURA for its over four decades work in Africa that has had impressive achievements in accompaniment of religious communities in the continent and advocacy for abiding by religious teachings. He urged participants to intermingle with Tanzanians to experience their hospitality. He then declared the conference officially opened and thanked the participants for their kind attention.

The PROCMURA Chairperson, Bishop Josiah Idowu Fearon, praised Hon. Sitta for challenging the participants, as religious leaders, on the need for them to challenge other people to abide by religious injunctions. He thanked him for challenging religious leaders on poverty and indicated that religious leaders have a special role in the work towards poverty eradication. He also welcomed the invitation to engage with African parliaments and indicated that PROCMURA would initiate dialogue with the AMANI Forum. He then urged all religious leaders present to open avenues of collaboration with relevant parliamentary committees in their countries.

Ms. Joy Wandabwa, the PROCMURA Team Leader for Finance and Administration gave the vote of thanks. She expressed appreciation that the Speaker of the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania found time to officially open the conference. She indicated that even though the participants were not parliamentarians, the Speaker had called them to order on issues of peace and justice in the continent. She urged the participants to carry the words of wisdom given by the guest of honour. She asked the Speaker that whenever he hears the Muslim *muezzin* call

Ms. Joy Wandabwa

to prayer or the ringing of church bells inviting the Christian faithful to worship, he should remember that he was with Muslim and Christian participants at this conference. She also urged the participants that whenever they hear the Speakers' of their national parliaments' calling out 'order, order, order', to remember that they were called to order by the Speaker of the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania. She entreated all to take up the challenge of the Speaker on their role and leverage in peace and justice issues in the continent.

1.3 Keynote Address Outlining Conference Focus

by Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah, PROCMURA General Adviser

In his keynote address, the General Adviser began by setting the conference parameters of engagement by reminding participants of the focus of the conference. He indicated that the essence of the conference was to reason together on issues of peace and peaceful coexistence in Eastern Africa. The choice of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania as the venue of the conference was informed by the name Dar es Salaam that means the 'house/abode/place of peace'. He was optimistic that this house/abode of peace would encourage participants to talk and live peace at the conference and thereafter, when they are back to the different countries from which they come.

Dr Mtaita, General Secretary, CCT (left) and Dr Mbillah

Turning his attention to the venue of the conference the General Adviser divulged that PROCMURA staff together with the Tanzania Area Committee after having visited many hotels in Dar es Salaam settled for Giraffe Ocean View Hotel. The 'Giraffe', contended the General Adviser, is the tallest animal of our time after the extermination/extinction of the dinosaur. PROCMURA, therefore, chose the hotel bearing the name 'Giraffe' with the understanding that the giraffe is able to see far - it sees danger from afar and moves clear of the danger. In essence, as the giraffe sees that which may create a situation of non-peace and takes precautionary measures, the conference participants are challenged not just to deal with peace issues in the present time but to have the foresight into what will create conflict in the future and take measure to curb it. In order words, we are called upon to envisage the future and recognise the things that may interfere with peace and work, in a proactive manner, to prevent situations that will create conflicts in the region and the continent.

The General Adviser pointed out that the critical issue in Muslim-Christian relations that the conference would deal with was getting out of the comfort zone of both Muslims and Christians, and talking truth to each other with love. He noted that often, in analysing the causes of conflicts that create situations of non-peace in the continent, religious leaders join politicians in typologising the emerging conflicts as: social conflicts, economic conflicts, political conflicts, resource/livelihood conflicts and so on. He noted that often, Christians and Muslims caught in situations of conflict tend to be alarmist. This entails blowing out of proportion a small happening/incident and lumping together, demonising and criminalising a whole religious group. This is evident, for example, in the observations: 'See what the Christians are doing…', 'See what the Muslims are doing…' while the participants in the conflict are a small segment of the religious groups and their actions may not necessarily be motivated by their religious beliefs nor be shared by other members of their religious group.

Conflicts in Africa have multiple causes. The spark often assumes the identity of the main cause of a conflict but underlying this are many other causes.

Building on the thesis that the continent of Africa is a religious continent, he indicated that this means that the African is a religious being and a religious being is arguably an African. Religious beings

Bishop Evans Mukasa from Uganda (closer to the camera), Ms. Veronica Mtaita,(centre) from Tanzania and Imam Ashafa from Nigeria

are African[1]. The General Adviser wondered why there are conflicts in Africa if an African being is religious and a religious being is African. He sought to know why Africans are involved in meting out violence against fellow human beings.

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1. There could be other religious beings that are not African but the current focus and context is Africa. The thesis also acknowledges the existence of Atheists or Agnostics-a person(s) who say that whether God exists or does not exist no human being is capable of knowing. The perception is that an African who is atheist or agnostic is not African or there is an import from outside that has affected him/her

Noting that Christians and Muslims are the majority in the African continent, he argued that Christians and Muslims are involved in such conflicts since those who carry out the conflicts bear Christian and Muslim labels – they bear Christian and Muslim names. The General Adviser said that even though it is not necessarily true to say that anyone who bears a Christian or Muslim name necessarily adheres to that religion, there is evidence to suggest that Christians and Muslims speak about the ideals of their respective religions but are not able to live up to such ideals. He argued the failure of Christians and Muslims to translate the good precepts in their religions into good practice is an issue religious leaders need to look at.

Elaborating further Dr. Mbillah said that the word 'Islam' is submission to the will of Allah. But within the word 'Islam' is the derivative 'salaam' which means peace. Islam, therefore, means both submission to the will of Allah and peace. In Christianity, Christians pride themselves by talking of being followers of 'the Prince of Peace', Jesus Christ. How then is it that Christians, who claim that Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace and Muslims who claim that Islam means peace, create situations of non-peace? He said that by the analogy above it is clear that the problem of violent conflicts is not religion. It is not Christianity and Islam. It is Christians and Muslims – it is religious people.

Working towards peace as Muslims and Christians requires having peace between the two religious groups before engaging other actors including state actors. The General Adviser gave an example of Ghana in the late 1990's when conflict between the then ruling Party of the then President Jerry John Rawlings and the then opposition party led by the current president of Ghana John Agyekum Kufuor. During the same period itinerant polemical Christian and Muslim preachers created violent conflicts between Christians and Muslims in some parts of the country. The political situation in the country was so tensed that the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Muslim Representative Council among others, invited the political leaders to broker peace between feuding factions. The then President Jerry John Rawlings rose up and asked the religious leaders whether they were themselves at peace with one another so as to come and teach political actors about peace. He asked the religious leaders to go back and reconcile themselves, and their followers who engaged in violent conflicts and come back to reconcile them who are political leaders. Unless they did that, he argued, they could not come and teach political actors about peace. The meeting ended abruptly.

The General Adviser advised that unless Christians and Muslims consciously talked and lived peace they would have no moral authority to broker peace anywhere. It was his contention that if Christians and Muslims are not at peace with each other as religious communities they have no right to engage in peace building and conflict transformation with other actors.

Areas that Create Conflicts Between Us and Among Us and Which We Have to Deal With

Negative Solidarity

In Christianity, all Christians are said to belong to The Body of Christ. As a body when one part is ailing the entire body feels the pain. Christian solidarity is further elaborated by the hymn which says that in Christ there is no East no West, no North, no south etc. Just as in Christianity, within Islam there is the concept on the Universal *Ummah,,* which constitutes the Muslim community. The concept of the *ummah* means that Muslims everywhere and anywhere are part of this Umma*h*, and therefore what happens to a Muslim anywhere affects Muslims everywhere.

This universal significance of Christianity and Islam create situations whereby Christians and Muslims import conflicts from other continents into the African continent and impose it on Africans who rise and fight one another over a conflict that is not home-grown. This kind of solidarity, argued the General Adviser, is negative solidarity. He explained that Negative solidarity in the context of Christian-Muslim relations entails being in solidarity with erring adherents of a religious tradition just because you are of the same faith tradition.

The GA made it clear that since the formation of nation states Christendom belongs to history just as the notion of the caliphate also belongs to history. The *ummah* and the body of Christ far from carrying with them political notions remain in the spiritual realm and therefore a spiritual union. In fact Christians and Muslims of today see themselves as being nationals of their countries first before their affinities with their co-religionist anywhere and everywhere. He said that in the great European war also called World war Two, for example, Christian countries fought against other Christian countries. Germany, which was regarded as a Christian country, fought against Britain and France etc who were at the time regarded as Christian countries. In a similar scenario Iran and Iraq had bitter wars in the 1980's even though their nationals claim to belong to the

Muslim *Ummah.* He wondered why some African Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, for example, rose in arms against each other in the name of being in solidarity with the *ummah* and the Body of Christ, when America invaded Iraq during the Operation Desert Storm in the early 1990's and more recently when America and the allied forces were fighting Saddam Husein's Iraq. He questioned whether a section of Nigerian citizens were American and another section Iraqi.

The GA noted that until and unless Christians and Muslims in Africa see themselves as Africans and by extension nationals of their countries who happen to be Christian or Muslims they will continue to import conflicts and wars to the continent. He called on the Christian and Muslim leaders to help reorientate the minds of Christians and Muslims so to see themselves as African Christians and African Muslims who share religious fraternities with the worldwide church as the Body of Christ and the worldwide *Ummah* that constitute the community of Muslims

Until and unless we come to the recognition that an African Christian who bears the name John is not necessarily an American or British etc, and an African Muslim who bears the name Yahya is not necessarily and Arab, a Persian etc, we are bound to globalise conflicts. It was his contention that the nametags that Africans assume when they become Christians or Muslims do not necessarily make them any less African. He called for a deeper understanding of religious differences arguing that it is possible to be truly African and truly Muslim or Christian and thus live peaceably with one another and collaborate for peace within the wider society.

In concluding his presentation he called on participants in the room to reflect on whether   they see themselves as African Christians and Muslims or Christian Africans and Muslims adding though there is deep theological considerations on this we still have to consider whether we are Africans who happen to Christians and Muslims or Christians and Muslims who happen to be Africans. In the broader sense teased the GA we have to ask the question whether we are Christians and Muslims who happen to be human beings or human beings who happen to Christians and Muslims. The manner in which we answer the question will definitely assist us to consider what we have in common as we seek to talk, live and promote peace with one another and with the wider society

Plenary Discussion

Father Anthony Makunde, the Secretary General of the Tanzania Episcopal Conference, chaired the plenary session.

Rev Fr Anthony Makunde

Sheikh Jaffer Senganda from Uganda indicated that the speaker had handled the causality of conflict with reference to religious people. He noted that whereas religious communities preach peace, they are not in isolation to political actors. He opined that in some countries the President who may belong to one religious group or the other uses his position to favour the religion, which he belongs.

Hajjat Sekibembe Kaherebu Amina also from Uganda noted that there was a funny element in conflict: men are the key actors in conflict and women and children are on the receiving end. She wondered why people kill each other when Africans are said to be notoriously religious. She agreed with the General Adviser that religious people have not been able to transform the good precepts of their religions into good actions. In her opinion, until men are able to work towards peaceful living from family levels change will not be forth coming; adding that the family was the entry point for talking and practicing peace, appreciating each other's differences and listening and appreciating one another.

Pastor Dr. Wuye James Movel from Nigeria wondered whether there were times when a religious leader could justify violence.

The chairperson asked the General Adviser to comment on the issues raised. The GA indicated that more often than not when a state has a Muslim or Christian Majority there are sometimes allegations from the minority faith that they are marginalised. He explained that in Africa this feeling is a recent phenomenon, which may be true or false. He argued a situation where people ask questions whether the leader of country is Muslim or Christian already suggests that divisions and polarisation along religious lines are taking shape. In the 1940's, said the GA African nationalist movements saw themselves as Africans. When African countries gained their independence from the late 1950's onwards religion and religious affiliation were not issues that received much prominence

in political campaigns. He gave the example of Senegal, which has an overwhelming majority of Muslims, opting to vote a Leopold Sedar Senghor Catholic as their president. In that situation, the Senegalese saw Senghor as a fellow national. They did not view him on religious lines. The same applies to Bakili Muluzi of Malawi who was voted in as president of a majority Christian populated country. He called on religious leaders to think about the current situation and advise politicians to stop using religion as a platform for their political ends since it only leads to the polarisation of society along religious lines.

On Hajjat Sekibembe Kaherebu Amina's views on structural violence and human suffering the GA agreed with her that violent conflicts sometimes proceed from homes and get to the community and there is need to address them at the family level.

Hajjat Sekibembe Kaherebu Amina

On justifying violence, the GA indicated that one could not pretend that there were no times when religious leaders would be compelled to root out evil with violence arguing that such should be an exception and not a rule. He gave the example of Hitler in Germany. There may be times when evil is consuming the whole society and there is need for Christians and Muslims to come together and deal with it. The problem arises when there are sectional interests, where one group seeks to root out the other. He implored the Christian and Muslim leaders to work hard to ensure that whatever conflict emerges among them is resolved in a non-violent manner.

Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome from the Supreme Council of Ke nya Muslims (SUPKEM) sought to know the nature of the comfort zone sought by Christians and Muslims. He wondered whether it was part of buck-passing or what indeed it was. He also sought to know whether solidarity, as underscored by belonging to the body of Christ or belonging to the *Ummah*, was wrong. He also sought to know whether the General Adviser was a Ghananian Christian or a Christian Ghanaian.

Bishop Josiah Idowu Fearon indicated that the Speaker of the Parliament of the

United Republic of Tanzania had said that Africa was very religious yet had a lot of conflicts. He wondered whether the GA had reflected on the similarly religious continent of Asia that is not beset by the conflicts evident in Africa.

Mrs. Grace Masalakulangwa of the Christian Council of Tanzania sought a definition of a religious person whether it was an issue of faith or robes. His Grace Abba Yacob of the Orthodox Church in Ethiopia sought to know the definition of a good religious person as the issue emerges in conversion. He also sought to know the place of a good religious person in society.

His Eminence Abune Berhaneyesus

The General Adviser responded as follows: The comfort zone sought by Christians and Muslims entails running away from addressing problems as they arise. He said that when conflicts between Christians and Muslims arise in any country and Churches and Mosques are burnt down Christians and Muslims are usually quick to attribute such conflict to political, economic and social causes. They will say everything that caused the conflict except religion. The question to ask is why other causes of (except religious causes) are lead to the burning of churches and mosques. He opined that the correct identification of a problem is part of the solution. Identifying a problem wrongly scratches the surface and derides finding a real solution. The GA indicated that sometimes there are conflicts that are religiously instigated and submitted that religious leaders ought to come to terms with that and approach such appropriately.

On Sheikh Lithome question the explained that Christians and Muslims should not alienate themselves from belonging to the Body of Christ and the *Ummah* respectively. He singled out negative solidarity as the issue to be wary of. On the issue of being a Ghanaian Christian or Christian Ghanaian, he indicated that the answer was simple. There is need to be truly Ghanaian and truly Christian and there is no contradiction at all. Both identities have areas of dominance and areas of being let out. On the example of Asia being a religious continent that is not replete with conflicts evident in Africa, he indicated that the magnitude of problems in Asia associated with Christianity and Islam may not be so pronounced

as in Africa but nevertheless they exist. In the African continent, explained the General Adviser, Christianity and Islam, which currently have the largest following, are vehemently missionary religions that seek converts and therefore embark on negative and unhealthy competition. The quest for dominance coupled with the number game are usually recipes for conflict as their no guiding ethic on how Christians and Muslims can speak about their faith without caricaturing the other – an area which PROCMURA works on.

On conversion and good religious persons, the GA emphasised what he said before that there is the need for the two missionary religions of Christianity and Islam to think about a guarding ethic of propagating their religions whereby Christians and Muslims will speak about how good their religions are and not how bad the others religion is. On the definition of a religious person and whether to wear religious robes necessarily means one is truly religious, the General Adviser noted that religious commitment is difficult to measure and this should be taken as seriously as recognising that bearing a religious label or robes does not necessarily mean commitment in religion. He, however, cautioned against judgemental stands adding that we are expected to take seriously people who bear a particular tag and base our discussions on that face value since we are incapable of examining the heart.

Sheikh Saliou Mbacke of the Interfaith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA) posed the question of identity and indicated that he would identify himself as an African Muslim because for him Islam is a universal language that one embraces and this is not determined by where one is. Culture has something to do about the faith itself. He noted that the Qur'ân had more passages that were harmful to Jews than to Christians. He indicated that he would not view the Middle East conflict as pitting Christians against Muslims but as a land issue or a political issue than a religious issue. He noted

Sheikh Saliou Mbacke

that in the Sudan conflict, the government of Sudan had put criteria for defining an Arab-one who speaks Arabic. He however indicated that the question of who we are in relation to the religion we profess is important. Wrong interpretation of religious scriptures also comes into play and there is need to address it and

place it in the right context. The manipulation of scripture for political or other interests needs to be addressed.

Mr. Oliver Kisaka Simiyu, Deputy General Secretary, NCCK, noted that received religious instruction presents faith as the absolute word of God. There is no effort to practice the *Ummah* or Body of Christ in the way Islam and Christianity relate to the obtaining contexts in Africa and the African consciousness. This limits Africans in terms of their engagement with their values and in their attempt to practice authentic African Islam or African Christianity. The issue of solidarity is also questioned at other levels such as the ethnic group. He argued that there was need to reinterpret our religious instruction in determining what it means to be peaceful with each other while also practicing the religion.

Mr. Oliver Kisaka Simiyu, National Council of Churches of Kenya

The GA noted that reiterated that one source of conflict is the fact that Christianity and Islam are missionary religions. Christians talk about witness and propagation of the faith while Muslims talk of the invitation of non-Muslims to become Muslims referred to as *Da'wa*. The GA explained that in his opinion open-air religious debates between Christians and Muslim in East Africa which is often referred to as '*Mihadhara'* militate against peace and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims. He said that there are radio stations owned by Christians and others by Muslims, which embark on hate preaching. He wondered whether religious leaders in Eastern Africa could not come out with a guiding ethic for propagating their respective faiths as alluded to earlier.

To emphasise the issue the GA said that religion apart from everything else, is also an emotive issue. When one begins condemning the other's religion it hurts them to their soul and provokes violent actions. The *'mihadhara'* or debates as modes of propagation of Christianity and Islam in open preaching needs to be re-evaluated. Religious leaders have to ask the question whether it builds relations or destroys them. There is an urgent need to address this issue. PROCMURA's principle is clear: Christian evangelism and Muslim *da'wa* are mandates that

have to be pursued. The question is how. As said before, there should be a guiding ethic, for example, in saying how good one's religion is and not how bad the other person's religion is. Governments may not legislate on this but religious communities must sit and address the issue. Religious leaders must be wary of their escapist mentality of heaping of blame on a few fundamentalist adherents or extremists who embark on the mihadhara. For we are all aware that when their preaching and debates instigate violent confrontations all suffer the consequences.

Turning his attention on the parameters of engagement, the General Adviser informed the participants that the conference was on peace and therefore discussions should revolve on how religious communities in the region can build peace. It was not a theological engagement, as this would involve scholars from both Islam and Christianity. However, theology of peace building was welcome in the conference. He concluded by talking peace and giving examples of situations of conflict we should be wary of asking the question who is wrong. The question is not who went wrong but what went wrong. To do so will enable us to discuss issues and not personalities.

Pastor Fred Nyabera revisited the issue of identity and noted that identity was tied to the issue of security and this was noted in Kenya during the post election political violence. Imam Dr. Nurayn Ashafa Muhammad argued that spiritual people should have the spiritual identity as primary and most important and highest level of identity. The other levels of identity should come after the spiritual identity. He reported that his Islamic identity comes first then his African identity followed by the ethnic, family and other identities.

Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome indicated that for him, to be born Maasai and Kenyan was a divine design. Therefore, what is important is to be a good Muslim or Christian-truly Muslim/Christian. Other identities should come after this. Sr. Mary Goretti Kisaakye underscored the need to address the role of religion in society. Being African, there is always the temptation in African settings to accept religious differences and live peacefully. However, it is important to understand the various identities (the personal/individual identity and the spiritual identity) and abide by religious principles.

Sheikh Saliou Mbacke noted that the manipulation of who we are by others to achieve certain interests is the cause of our problems. The different perceptions we develop about who we are from this manipulation heightens our problems.

Fr. Anthony Makunde opined that egoistic tendencies often overshadow the ideal identity and leads to conflict.

Mrs. Jacqueline Uwimana emphasised the place of education in socialising children towards peace. Children need to be educated and nurtured in peace for them to be able to give peace a chance. It was her contention that good education to children will contribute to peace and peaceful co-existence.

Mrs. Grace Masalakulangwa noted that knowing each other was important in inter-religious relations as lack of knowledge of each other was an issue of concern. She reported that in Tanzania there was a rich book titled *Sons of Abraham* that gave in depth information on Christianity, Judaism and Islam from a historical point of view and that it was worth reading it.

Sheikh Jaffer Senganda, using an excerpt from a Ugandan Newspaper with the headline 'Born-agains fight in Uganda' cited how 'born-agains' in Christianity organise crusades in Uganda and abuse Muslims. He urged that people need to be taught to appreciate each other and how to transform conflicts. He reiterated the General Adviser's words that Christians and Muslims need to be taught that religion is an emotive issue and there should be no insults at each other. Stereotypes and prejudices prevail because of lack of understanding.

Sheikh Jaffer Senganda from Uganda

Dr. Issa Haji Ziddy underscored the importance of religious education. He therefore called for a review of the curriculum in education to appeal to the youth and change them from adopting extreme positions. He narrated his experience in a recent visit to Jerusalem where he met a Jewish lady married to an Arab. She informed him that their children were attending a Jewish school where they were told that the Arabs will kill them. He therefore emphasized that education was important in moulding children to grow well and in a peaceful environment.

Bishop Josiah Idowu Fearon on his part emphasised the need for Muslim brothers

and sisters to know more about Christianity from the Christian side and also for Christians to undertake an academic study of what Islam is about. He urged PROCMURA to encourage inter-religious education. He wondered whether there was anything in Islam that forbade Muslims from learning about the other religions. Africans, he said, need to hold the bull by the horn by seeking honestly and sincerely to know what the other believes in. He then sought for ways of dealing with unjustified fears for learning about the other and what they believe for fear of conversion.

Hajjat Sekibembe Kaherebu Amina noted that schools in Uganda were founded or established by missionaries. She called on the religious community to seize the opportunity and review the curriculum using the leverage they have of established national organizations such as the supreme councils of Muslims in the different countries and the Episcopal Conferences.

Rev. Iteffa Gobena noted that education is important but in many countries, Islam and Christianity do not seek each other in joint advocacy but operate in a parallel manner. There is therefore a need to think differently. He urged that in the communities and neighbourhoods, there should be talks about religions, values, history and what people believe in so that they begin to learn about each other. Dialogue needs to be localised at these levels in informal settings and sharing about each other. This will make people united to protect their peace and build a culture of co-existence. This will be a departure from the focus on schooling and other formal education approaches.

On negative solidarity and globalization, he noted that there was mobility of people and ideas both positive and negative and the mobility of preachers-both Christian and Muslim. This mobility comes with strange teachings that are not rooted in the local context and are from a different cultural setup. This then creates problems for the local Christian and Muslim leadership. He sought to know how this new dimension could be handled, taking out the dangerous teachings and retaining the good. The General Adviser indicated that what Iteffa said was becoming widespread. He appealed to the leadership of Church and Mosque to sincerely identify where these teachers were coming from and evolve ways and means of dealing with it as Christians and Muslims.

Pastor Dr. Wuye James Movel informed the conference of the entry into Kano, Nigeria of Reinhard Bonnke a German international evangelist, with the theme, 'Kano for Christ' for his crusades. His message stimulated violence. He urged

that sensitivity to context is very important. He urged participants to process their speeches before they come out having noted that Christian participants were beginning their statements with Christians and Muslims while Muslims begun Muslims and Christians. Lack of prudence should be addressed as often superiority issues emerge. Media practitioners also project their own religious tradition. There is need for humility in this as such little things often comes into our societies and present difficulties in inter-religious solidarity. There is need to check on how to break barriers and move towards solidarity. This calls for reconscientising ourselves.

Rev. Fr. Willybard Lagho

Rev. Fr. Willybard Lagho, representing the Kenya Episcopal Conference, revisited the issue of legislations against street preaching and noted that such legislations cannot be done by governments. However, he argued against exonerating governments from their responsibility. Governments need to legislate on mechanisms to manage religious plurality. He argued that religious plurality is a modern phenomenon and many state actors have not developed mechanisms to manage it and there is need to help them in proposing appropriate ways of managing it. Commercialisation of religion is also rampant in the continent and is a source of modern problems that need to be addressed. He noted that as long as there are religious preachers who benefit from religion and therefore see religion as a source of income that is not audited in the name of the religion, there will always be a problem. There is therefore a need to reflect on how these religious preachers could be regulated from within the religious community.

Mrs. Grace Masalakulangwa noted that many conflicts in Africa were instigated from outside Africa and often religious actors danced to the tune being orchestrated from outside. There is need to sensitize people not to be used commercially for their own interests. As churches and mosques there is need to teach people not to be used and played against each other. There is also need to orient visiting preachers and missionaries about the local context and give ethical guidelines on what to do and what not to do bearing in mind the obtaining context in Africa.

Ms. Esha Mwinyihaji indicated that the media contributes a lot to conflicts especially in misinforming people about each other. The expansion of the media in Africa presents challenges as religious people have a limited reach to their faithful but the media is available to the people. There is therefore a need to explore how well to regulate the media and ensure it is not divisive.

Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome noted that the issue was not concessions. However, there was need to deal with the mistrust that exists between Muslims and Christians. He noted, for example, that PROCMURA as a Christian organisation only has Christians in its decision making process. External observers who may not know what PROCMURA's ideals and goals are would view the purely Christian organisation as having its own agenda. There is therefore the need to deal with the mutual mistrust between Muslims and Christians at all levels.

Sr. Mary Goretti Kisaakye noted that community involvement could be achieved through outreach by the mosque and churches in education for peace. It was her contention that religion has a role and can impact the society if it fulfilled its responsibility to teach peace using different channels.

Sr. Mary Goretti Kisaakye

The General Adviser indicated that a lot of time has been used by many interfaith organisations to holding seminars and workshops for Christians and Muslims, for example. He emphasised Christian and Muslim leaders meetings will be more meaningful if what they discuss and decide are carried on to their membership at the grassroots levels. He said that when PROCMURA organise workshops for Church leaders, Women leaders, and Youth leaders on working towards building bridges of understanding between them and Muslims one question always emerges thus: "You in PROCMURA go round the continent talking to Christians about how they have to constructively relate with Muslims for peace. Why are Muslims not going round asking or talking to fellow Muslims on how to constructively relate with Christians for peace? Does it not take at least two to quarrel and two to make peace? The GA on this note challenged Muslims in Africa to consider establishing a sister continental organisation similar to

PROCMURA so that the two organisations can relate. He wondered whether the founding of a Programme for Muslim-Christian Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) was not plausible. He indicated that Muslim leaders have often given the excuse that different groups in Islam will not agree to team up to form one organisation to relate with Christians. To this, the GA pointed out that PROCMURA was inclusive of the Catholics and Protestants and there is a good working relation. He therefore threw the challenge to the Muslim community to consider establishing a continental institution. He informed the conference that PROCMURA reaches out to Churches and impresses on them the essence of positive tolerance and engagement with the other. He indicated that not all churches buy to the PROCMURA approach but was quick to add more churches that year in and year out more churches and church institutions that hither to were sceptical about the PROCMURA approach are joining this noble cause.

1.4 Transforming Armed Conflicts in Eastern Africa: The Role of Faith Communities

Presentation by Pastor Fred Nyabera, Executive Director, FECCLAHA
(See annex III for the full presentation).

Key highlights of the presentation were:

- That the potential for religion to make a difference in conflicts is considerable;

- That religion possesses a strategic position which provides it with access both to the grassroots level of society and the top government officials and state apparatus;

- That religious leaders and institutions have clear comparative advantage in dealing with peace and reconciliation. This includes: having a clear mission and message that resounds easily with adherents and other people; their permanent historic and widely spread presence in society; well-developed infrastructure and communication networks; legitimacy that enables them to make clear and courageous statements during crises; and their traditional orientation towards peace and promotion of respectful human relations;

Pastor Fred Nyabera

- Some causes of the region's conflicts include: long term causes such as: history, demographic changes, poverty, illiteracy and unemployment and feasibility of predation; and short-term causes such as: exclusionary policies and discrimination, mismanagement of economic rents, erosion of the state, sub regional instability, easy access to small arms and external factors;

- Key areas where religious organizations should be involved in conflict transformation are: fact finding missions, advocacy and lobbying,

mediation, monitoring elections, monitoring human rights, capacity building, media and communications, use of religious symbols and ceremonies, truth and reconciliation commissions, regional peace processes, the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and in social reintegration.

◆ The lessons learnt are: that well equipped African religious leaders can rise to the occasion and live up to the expectations of their constituency; and religious leaders are critical actors who cannot be ignored.

Plenary Discussion

Dr. Issa Haji Ziddy of Zanzibar chaired the plenary session. He sought clarification on the role of religious leaders in managing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome sought explanation on the comparative advantage religious leaders have of legitimacy. He gave the example of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), which is perpetrated by women on fellow women, but often when women are approached with an aim of ending the practice, they ask that religious leaders, as gatekeepers of society, should have a final word on the practice.

Dr. Issa Haji Ziddy

Rev. Fr. Willybard Lagho sought clarification on the factors that undermine the legitimacy of religious communities. He noted that in the Eastern Africa region, the faith community had taken sides and therefore there was need to analyse the factors that may undermine their legitimacy to the extent that they may not make use of their comparative advantage in peace and conflict resolution. He also revisited the issue of Africa being a religious continent and indicated that in pre-colonial times, Africans fought and therefore the thesis that Africans are religious beings and religious beings do not mete out violence on others may not hold water. He sought to know whether contemporary Africa was immune to conflicts of yore.

Imam Dr. Nurayn Ashafa Muhammad sought to know whether the presenter

had identified individuals and institutional role models of interfaith engagement in peace building and conflict resolution in his work in the Eastern Africa region. Pastor Fred Nyabera indicated that religious communities were well placed in controlling small arms and light weapons at the local level through mobilising and collecting them. This could also include advocacy efforts with state actors for the ratification of the arms trade treaty. He agreed with the proposal for an analysis of religion as a resource for peace or a source for conflict and the place of religious leaders as gatekeepers in society. He challenged religious leaders to honestly indicate where their security was as often there are suspicions in peace building and conflict transformation. He reported that Ethiopia had made headway in working on interfaith relations but there was need for a network that had a clear framework for engagement.

Bishop Nzeyimana Noé from Burundi sought to know why exclusion is a long-term cause of conflict. Mrs. Rachel Ramadhani All Africa Conference of Churches Representative sought to know the place of traditional leaders in peace building while Mrs. Spéciose Mukagahima from Council of Churches in Rwanda referring to the situation in Rwanda wondered why there was a repeat of religious leaders failing the people in Kenya as earlier experienced in Rwanda. She sought to know how religious leaders could stop the cycle of violence and the lessons church leaders in Kenya had learned from the recent post election political crisis.

Pastor Fred Nyabera explained that historical reasons were not short term as they were often translated or enshrined into policies that are carried over time. He noted that traditional justice and peace mechanisms have a role in peace building and conflict resolution and gave the example of Mato Oput in Northern Uganda. The lessons learned by Kenyan religious leaders from the post election political crisis were many including: that traditional leaders played a facilitative role in nurturing the conflict rather than stopping it; ethnic communities are nations in their own right with frameworks for mobilization and there is need for more research on this and its implications for peace and conflict transformation; religious leaders do not ordinarily cause conflicts and are often part of the players and on their own they may not settle conflicts; religious leaders need to exercise caution in adopting a similar perspective on issues as political actors do in order to meet short term political interests and desires; and religious groups have a vision that does not change over time-this includes an aspiration for fundamental issues.

If religious leaders lose sight of the fundamental things they aspire to, then there is a problem. In the Kenyan situation, religious leaders have learned and regret the situation that happened. The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) took a position on the role religious leaders played in the conflict, gave guidance and that position has begun to bring healing in the country. There is need to build the capacity of religious leaders, including nurturing their competence in peace building and conflict resolution, before conflicts emerge for them to be effective in a crisis moment. The NCCK in its peace and reconciliation efforts has already held a pastors' conference for member churches. The conference attracted 1,300 people and entailed a redemptive process for religious leaders.

Mrs. Grace Masalakulangwa indicated that capacity building for religious leaders should also focus on preventing conflicts. It should also involve ways of handling social tensions so that they do not degenerate into violent conflict. The General Adviser expressed PROCMURA's appreciation to Pastor Fred Nyabera for sharing with the conference from his work in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa region.

1.5 Conflicts in Africa and What Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders Can Contribute to Bring about Peace and Reconciliation

Address by Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Former Prime Minister of Tanzania and Former Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).
(Refer to annex IV for the full address).

The following were the highlights of his address:

Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim

- A meeting of religious leaders from the main denominations of our regions, devoted to discussing the subject of peace and reconciliation is a profound and powerful event;

- Religious leaders' influence as social and spiritual guides has a profound impact in the overall wellbeing of many people;

- Africa has a proud history of indigenous leadership that is rich in norms of leadership;

- Conflicts have been a curse on the African continent. They have caused untold suffering, loss of life and limb and destruction of property;

- The phenomenon of coup d'etat in generally reflects an expression of dissatisfaction and grievances among some factions of society and weaknesses of the internal democratic institutions;

- Our lowest moment was the occurrence of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda;

- Africa has the dubious distinction of being among the regions having large numbers of refugees, internally displaced persons and orphans in the world;

- Institutions that provide stewardship on issues of norms and values, on shaping perceptions, and on maintaining spiritual wellbeing often times
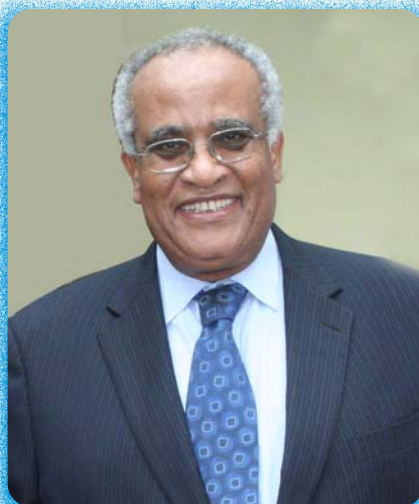
play a part in refining moral standing of citizens and inculcating norms and values which uphold an harmonious existence;

- The African experience seems also to present a challenge pertaining to institutions that provide normative and spiritual guidance;

- Religious leaders and institutions need to do more in inculcating among the faithful the spirit of tolerance, understanding, peace and reconciliation;

- Our relationship as Muslims and Christians is sometimes strained because we do not sufficiently engage each other. We do not take time to know and understand each other. We rush to condemn and pass judgment; and

- An Africa without conflict is an aspiration that we all have.

Plenary Discussion

Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome chaired the plenary session. He quoted a verse from the Qur'ân that says that: 'God will not change the situation of a people/community until they themselves do something about it'. He indicated that all are answerable to God for their acts of omission or commission. Religious leaders cannot therefore sit down and wait but have to do something to prevent conflicts.

Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome of the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims

Rev. Fr. Willybard Lagho expressed appreciation for the presenter's analytical exploration of conflict trends in the continent. He indicated that he had observed a trend in the continent of zealous religious leaders seeking political positions bearing in mind the assumed support they have from their religious communities. He expressed his reservation that overzealous religious leaders would offer alternative political leadership in the continent. He sought to know whether this trend (of religious leaders taking political office) calls for celebration or caution.

Sheikh Abdurahman Mohamed Hikam sought to know more about the Horn of Africa conflict system particularly the Somali conflict. He sought to know the nature of the conflict given that it was pitting one people with one religion against each other. He also sought to know how the conflict could be resolved. Hajjat Sekibembe Kaherebu Amina sought to know what would be done to resolve the Ethiopian conflict.

Imam Dr. Nurayn Ashafa Muhammad sought to know what could be done to make political leaders engage religious leaders in mediation across the continent because of the legitimacy and empathy religious leaders enjoy in the continent. He pointed to positive developments in the setting up of an interfaith advisory council for the Commonwealth.

Mrs. Grace Masalakulangwa referred to the involvement of the presenter in the resolution of the Darfur conflict and sought to know the place of religious leaders in the resolution of the conflict. She also sought to know whether the conflict was more religious than political or social. His Grace Abba Yacob indicated that he was happy to be in a conference hosted by PROCMURA in the East African Community, one of the regional economic communities in the continent. He sought to know whether religious leaders and institutions such as PROCMURA could have observer status at the regional economic communities and at the African Union (AU).

H.E. Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim responded as follows: On overzealous religious leaders seeking political positions, he indicated that Africa is a continent of diversity where Christians and Muslims make the largest segment of the population and therefore if an overzealous religious leader comes into power it is recipe for problems due to the possibility for them to interpret issues from his religious perspective. But this possibility calls for proper legislation to check excesses. He gave the example of Algeria where there has been instability. He opined that legislation is a problem in a multiparty society but the solution lies in working towards making it difficult for overzealous religious leaders to take political positions. This could be done through education, and sensitization. It was his contention that extremism of any kind is repugnant and needs to be fought through varied ways and not necessarily through legislation.

The Horn of Africa is in problems and Somalia is the most depressing. The situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia is extremely fragile after the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE). Anything could happen

Participants at the session

between the two countries. Somalia is in a class of its own as there are no antecedents in modern history where a country could go without a government for over 17 years. A homogeneous community in terms of language, religion and culture, its people began to divide themselves into clans, sub clans and then into families. The African Union is currently involved but faces the failure of the international community in providing adequate resources to deploy an adequate force in the country. Somalia is almost like an orphan with the major international powers having little interest in resolving the conflict. However, no one can impose peace in Somalia. There is need for political will among the political actors and the people of Somalia. The international community has a responsibility to help Somalia and stop the cycle of death and the miserable conditions the people of Somalia are living in.

H.E. Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim reported that he had facilitated the inter-Sudanese dialogue in Abuja, Nigeria that culminated in the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in May, 2006. The agreement was not implemented due to the fractionalisation of the rebel groups, lack of resources and lack of an adequate peace keeping force to enforce cantonment and other cessation of hostilities agreements. There is still a mandate to reenergize the political process but it faces the challenge of dealing with over 20 to 30 factions of rebel groups. The Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), for example, has developed into different factions. The Darfur conflict has nothing to do with religion. The population of Darfur is majorty Muslim. The central problem is marginalization and neglect including

alienation. It is a political, social and economic conflict. It is also not an African versus Arab problem as in the recent past the conflict has pitted Arab tribes against themselves. Darfur used to be an independent and proud region. Now there are over 2 million people living in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in Darfur.

External actors in the Darfur conflict include Egypt, Eritrea, Chad and Libya. It was the presenter's considered opinion that there cannot be peace in Darfur until the Chadian conflict is resolved. The government of Sudan needs to understand that it has a role to play-to ensure the security of its people. The international community also needs to provide adequate resources for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) forces.

He noted that observer status with regional economic communities and the African Union is possible and requires an application. This could begin with guest status and then observer status is granted. The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union was also launched in Arusha, Tanzania recently and is the ideal forum for civil society engagement with the African Union. Religious leaders should also explore avenues of engaging with the African Union Panel of the Wise. In conclusion, he indicated that religious leaders' actions on the ground would dictate the nature of engagement with state and multilateral actors. There is a clear openness to engage with the civil society at the African Union and also at the regional economic communities. Civil society and faith based organizations are best placed to inculcate values to the society including in peace building and conflict resolution. He challenged participants to urgently address the welfare of children in the continent.

Mrs. Jacqueline Uwimana
Vice Chairperson (PROCMURA)

Mrs. Jacqueline Uwimana on behalf of PROCMURA expressed sincere gratitude to the presenter. She indicated that the presenter had played a key role in fostering the unity of Africa. She indicated that she has had a dream, as a young person, to meet the presenter one day and now her dream had been achieved through the conference. She thanked the presenter for the wisdom shared in the conference.

Group Work

The General Adviser informed participants that the following session would be dedicated to group work so that participants can get the opportunity to share their thoughts on peace building and conflict transformation. The participants were divided into three groups to discuss the following questions (question one to three were to be handled by the three groups respectively while question four was to be responded to by all groups). The questions were as follows:

⇨ Identify areas of Christian-Muslim conflicts that you think we need to address in our bid to bring peace to our region. Propose possible solutions to these conflicts;

⇨ Identify areas of conflicts in the region outside the arena of religion, which religious leaders can team up to work together towards conflict management, peace and reconciliation. Propose or suggest an action plan to deal with such;

⇨ There is always a feeling that some of the conflicts in Africa and in the region in particular are not homegrown. Discuss this and provide suggestions as to how we can avoid importation of conflicts into our region or environment; and

⇨ Tabulate five points in order of importance/priority on what you think should form the outcome of this conference.

Group Work Presentations

Group One:

Areas of Christian-Muslim conflicts that need to be addressed in order to bring peace to the Eastern Africa region are:

⇨ Mistrust;

⇨ Contempt between religious communities;

⇨ Misunderstanding;

⇨ Incitement from within and without;

⇨ Stereotypes;

⇨ Negative competition/rivalry for followers;

⇨ Incompatible rituals and practices;

⇨ The media;

- ⇨ Political manipulation;
- ⇨ Real or perceived discrimination; and
- ⇨ Globalisation and its negative influences.

Solutions to these conflicts include:
- · Promotion of inter-religious dialogue;
- · Imparting correct religious teachings;
- · Ensuring that people know their religion well;
- · Educating adherents on areas of commonalities with other religions;
- · Development of a joint mechanism for conflict early warning systems; and
- · Nurturing deeper understanding of each other.

Group Two:

Areas of conflicts in the region outside the arena of religion which religious leaders can team up to work together towards conflict management, peace and reconciliation are:

- ⇨ A focus on protracted conflicts in the region;
- ⇨ The Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict;
- ⇨ The conflict in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo;
- ⇨ Somalia;
- ⇨ Mt. Elgon, Kenya;
- ⇨ Mara Area of Tanzania;
- ⇨ Zanzibar;
- ⇨ Burundi;
- ⇨ Karamoja, Uganda; and
- ⇨ Lamu, Mombasa.

Miss. Zubeda from Rwanda presenting the group work

The action plan for dealing with these conflicts will entail:
- ⇨ Fact finding missions facilitated by PROCMURA;
- ⇨ Orientation of stakeholders;
- ⇨ Peace building processes; and

⇨ Rejuvenation of the earlier peace initiatives by the religious leaders together with other actors.

Group Three:

There is a feeling that some of the conflicts in Africa and in the region in particular are not home grown. The following are suggestions on how to avoid them:

Conflicts

Ethnicity and territorial conflicts: Ethnic conflicts stem from the colonial divide and rule legacy that has wrought dominant versus minority parts of the population in African countries coupled with a neo-colonial support (often in the form of arms and funds) to these competing societal cleavages.

Conflicts over natural resources especially gold, oil and diamonds. It destabilises people through the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Socio-religious conflicts: These entail the commercialization of religion; individualism; insensitivity to religious norms of the 'other'; and misrepresentation of religious news by the media.

The following are suggested ways of avoiding the conflicts:

Ethnic conflicts: Governments should develop policies that ensure equitable distribution of resources; and governments and other actors should promote tolerance and avoid any kind of discrimination.

Resource-based conflicts: Nationalisation of the natural resources by buying out multinational companies. This will ensure natural resources will benefit all.

Socio-religious conflicts: These can be avoided through personal responsibility; promotion of responsible reporting by the media; increased interfaith dialogue and interaction; regulation of media houses through government policies; Faith Based Organizations to regulate the commercialization of religion; and sensitivity to other peoples' religious beliefs and practices.

The anticipated outcomes of the conference include:
⇨ The creation of a Programme for Muslim-Christian Relations in Africa;
⇨ Formation of a standing consultative committee to liaise between PROCMURA and the Muslim institutions in Africa;

⇨ Dissemination of the conference report;

⇨ Dissemination of the conference communiqué;

⇨ Better understanding between Muslims and Christians;

⇨ Joint responsibility in peace building and conflict transformation;

⇨ Shared values in certain issues; and

⇨ Muslims should come up with a similar initiative like PROCMURA.

⇨ PROCMURA should organise such a conference in the different countries represented at the meeting so that many religious leaders get informed.

The General Adviser appreciated the proposals and recommendations emanating from the group work. He assured participants that their reflections and proposals will be carefully studied and action taken. He further assure participants that PROCMURA will do all that it can to ensure that it accompanies participants as they seek to ensure that the outcome of the conference tickles down to the grass roots.

1.6 Presentation of the Practical Reality of Christian and Muslim Conflicts

Presentations by Imam (Dr.) Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa and Pastor Dr. James Movel Wuye of the Interfaith Mediation Centre, Kaduna, Nigeria

(See annex V and VI for the full presentations by Pastor Wuye and Imam Ashafa)

The presentations were preceded by participants watching a video titled: *The Pastor and the Imam.* The General Adviser pointed out that interfaith relations are not about theorising on what it is and how it should be carried out, but actually practising it. He intimated that he had invited the imam and the pastor to come and share with participants what it means to practically engage in peace building between Christians and Muslims. He emphasised that the story of how the two who were bitter enemies during the many Christian and Muslim conflicts in Kaduna, Nigeria became friends and now collaborate for peace is very telling.

Imam (Dr.) Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa

Plenary Discussion

Plenary discussions concentrated on both the video clip and presentations made by the pastor and the imam.

Sheikh Jaffer Senganda sought to know how the issue of plural legal systems that embodies the common law and the Sharî a are addressed. He gave the example of the United Kingdom and Denmark where there is absolute freedom of religion while in order situations that is not the case. Mr. Titus Kazungu commended the presenters and sought clarification from Imam Ashafa on his assertion that Christians cannot study Islam and claim to be experts it. Sr. Mary Goretti Kisaakye sought to know the presenters views on the separation of state and religion and how the press covered the signing of the Kaduna Peace Agreement. Mrs. Rachel Ramadhani sought to know how the presenters would

deal with a Christian boy who wants to marry a Muslim girl since the both seem to assume hard-line positions on the issue and yet are activist for peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims.

Imam Ashafa responded on the issue of freedom of religion arguing that he felt that such freedom was more to the Jews than Muslims. Pastor Wuye on his part said noted that such freedom was as a result of secularism that has permeated western society. Imam Ashafa added that there was a difficulty inherent in defining secularism hence the separation between state and religion in the West. They both urged religious leaders to define the notion of a secular in their own perspective so that political leaders do not mislead them.

On Christians studying Islam, Imam Ashafa indicated that mot authors in the West had written negatively about Islam. It was his contention that as long as one does not profess Islam, they cannot claim to be experts in Islam. On the issue of marriage, he indicated that marriage between a Muslim girl and a Christian boy is not allowed and indicated that Muslim boys could marry Christian girls. Pastor Wuye opined on his part said that because Muslims have a divine injunction to marry Christian ladies and not to marry their daughters to Christians, it was up to Christians to address the issue and also educate their young people on the importance of marrying within their religion. He reported that the press in Nigeria had made mistakes in religious reporting but with time, they have been compelled to report positively.

Rev. Iteffa Gobena indicated that Sharî a law was good for Muslims but not to non-Muslims and that it was an area the bread conflicts. Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome sought to know the presenter's views on Sharî a law in Nigeria. He also sought to know how the presenters were viewed by their respective religious communities.

Mrs. Jacqueline Uwimana sought to know where the government of Nigeria was when people were killing each other. She also sought know what motivated the two to come together after a period of enmity and violent exchanges. She particularly sought clear mechanisms the presenters would propose for nurturing greater understanding between Christians and Muslims.

Pastor Wuye responded as follows: that the Interfaith Mediation Centre was started by chance and that it was not planned. On the Sharî a, He noted that the problem arose when during a constitutional review the different states in Nigeria were given the mandate to make decisions on what legal system to follow in their

states. This led to the widespread implementation of the Sharî a in states that Muslims were the overwhelming majority. On the support they receive from their respective religions, he indicated that mainstream churches in Nigeria support him in his interfaith work but a few young people still have reservations on his sudden transformation. He opined that it was okay for Christians to study Islam and the Qur'ân objectively – he had no problems with that.

Pastor Dr. James Movel Wuye

Imam Ashafa indicated that one could not appreciate Sharî a law from outside the fold. It was not correct to judge Muslims from one's belief systems and standards. He indicated that in Islam there was a level of jurists who interpret Islam and they do so collectively. He noted that hijab was part of Islamic culture and it was about modesty. He noted that some Muslims in Nigeria saw him as a traitor, a sell-out while others support him in his interfaith relations work. He reported that Sharî a law in Nigeria was applicable for Muslims alone and it was supported by the tax payers since Muslims also pay taxes and have a right to protection. He indicated that his motivation in Islam comes from the Qur'ânic teachings on humility, listening to the other, openness and sincerity. The General Adviser thanked the presenters for sharing their experiences and being honest with their feelings. He indicated that a key strength in PROCMURA was the requirement that the Area Advisers be schooled in both Christianity and Islam so as to ensure that they understand both religions as they work with their adherents for peace and peaceful co-existence.

Closing Session/Submissions

The session began by the adoption of the conference communiqué (See annex I for the conference communiqué) and on-the-sport evaluation where participants were given a questionnaire to fill in their impressions about the whole exercise.

The General Adviser led the participants through a validation process of the key action points after the conference. The following were agreed upon:

- ➲ The establishment of PROCMURA area committees in the countries where they are not yet established;

- ➲ Muslims to help/motivate Muslim brothers and sisters to start a similar organisation similar to that of PROCMURA, to be called the Programme for Muslim-Christian Relations in Africa, and to popularise inter faith relations activities within their communities.

Rev. Iteffa Gobena

- ➲ PROCMURA to initiate Christian and Muslim youth conference on peace since the youth are often the one that embark on violent confrontations.

- ➲ PROCMURA to develop a guide for Christian-Muslim relations in Africa;

- ➲ That PROCMURA engage women more by calling in a regional conference for Christian and Muslim women on issues of peace and issues of common concern to women in Christian-Muslim relations.

- ➲ PROCMURA to ensure that the conference communiqué, report, and presentations are sent to participants and shared with all mainstream religious institutions;

- ➲ PROCMURA to organize a joint conference of religious leaders and government officials in the region

- ➲ PROCMURA organise country peace programmes for Christian and Muslim leaders to enable the conference ideals to have a wider multiplying effect.

➲ Participants commit themselves to responding to correspondence from PROCMURA.

➲ Participants commit themselves to sharing what they have learnt in the conference with their constituencies

Rev. Iteffa Gobena thanked the organizers and hosts of the conference and the hotel management for a successful conference. The conference ended on 4th September 2008 at 5pm after prayers by the two communities.

2.0 Annexes

2.1 Annex I: Muslim and Christian leaders Dar es Salaam Communiqué

We, Muslim and Christian religious leaders from Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda, meeting in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania from September 1-5, 2008 under the auspices of the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA), on the theme: Religion, Conflict Prevention/ Management, Peace Building and Reconciliation in Eastern Africa:

HAVING deliberated on the causes of misunderstandings that lead to violent conflicts in the region;

AWARE of the fact that religion and religious differences have been misused and manipulated to poison relations and lead to the loss of human lives and properties;

CONCERNED about the sufferings that have resulted from violent confrontations perpetrated by some of our followers;

RECOGNISING that there are some positive steps that have been and are still being undertaken to bring about peace and reconciliation where violent conflicts have occurred;

HAVING recognised our common mission to build, uphold and sustain peace in the society at all times;

Do hereby rededicate ourselves to remain in solidarity with each other in pursuit of peace, justice and reconciliation in the region in particular, and Africa in general, and reaffirm that:

* Religious leaders have the utmost responsibility to ensure that justice and peace prevail in the region;
* Religious communities in the region should be mobilised to promote understanding and trust for peace and peaceful coexistence;
* Religious leaders and communities must ensure that there is mutual respect, understanding and appreciation of each other's religious values, beliefs and practices; and
* Interfaith engagement is a strong tool that can be used to identify and harness potentials for the realisation of peace and peaceful coexistence.

On account of the above, we call upon:

* Religious leaders to recognise anew the value of remaining politically impartial and desist from partisan politics in order to play effective roles as peace-builders and reconcilers;

* Governments and political leaders to observe and practice principles of good and responsible governance;

* Governments and policy makers to develop and implement policies that respect and uphold religious and cultural pluralism;

* Religious leaders to constructively engage with policy-makers to re-examine the education curriculum and policy with the view of inculcating the spirit of mutual understanding and trust among communities;

* Governments and those in positions of authority to desist from the tendency to manipulate state resources to favour specific communities or one's own community as this is not only immoral but also a recipe for conflict;

* All stakeholders in interfaith work to collaborate and complement each other's efforts rather than be in competition in addressing human needs in society; and

* Governments, political leaders, and economic planners to regularly and deliberately involve religious leaders in matters of policy development and conflict management.

We adopt the above as our resolve to remain in unity and work with each other as partners in addressing our regional religious, social, economic and political challenges.

Signed by all participants at the conference on September 4, 2008 in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

2.2 Annex II: Official Opening Address by Hon. Samuel J. Sitta (MP), Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania

Honourable Chairperson, Your Grace Bishop Josiah Idowu Fearon;
Distinguished Religious Leaders of all major faiths from across the region;
The staff and workers of PROCMURA;
Conference Participants;
Invited Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Addressing a gathering of young people and seminarians at St. Joseph's Seminary in New York on Saturday 19th April 2008, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI made the following plea for world peace:

> 'God of peace, bring your peace to our violent world: peace in the hearts of all men and women and peace among the nations of the earth, turn to your way of love those whose hearts and minds are consumed with hatred'.

The overwhelming majority of humankind realize peace is a priceless commodity. Human progress towards abundance and equity is wholly dependent on peace. There is no alternative to it. Without peace there can be no sustainable social economic development. A report released recently by the World Bank Institute indicates that without peace and security it will not be possible for developing nations, in Sub Saharan Africa, to attain the Millennium Development Goals of halving poverty by 2015. But it is very easy to destroy peace. And it takes quite a long time to restore or rebuilt it. I should take this opportunity to commend the leadership of this illustrious organization (the Programme for Christian Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA)) for the efforts you are undertaking to ensure lasting peace in the Eastern Africa sub region and Africa as a whole. The famous musician and philosopher Carlos Santana once remarked that:

> 'Peace has never come from dropping bombs. Real peace comes from enlightenment and educating people to behave more in a divine manner'.

Honourable Chairperson,
I feel greatly honoured and privileged to have been invited to participate in this event. I am grateful to the leadership of the Christian Council of Tanzania for

honouring me by requesting me to speak at this opening ceremony of this important event for our region. I'm told that this is not your first time to meet here. In February last year you held a similar conference hosted by the Christian and Muslim religious leaders from the Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa region here in Dar es Salaam to deliberate on peace building and reconciliation in the Horn of Africa.

Honourable Chairperson,
Allow me to extend a warm welcome to all our brothers and sisters from Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya and the host Tanzania. It is gratifying that once again the organizers of this conference have chosen Dar es Salaam as a venue of this important conference. Obviously, this is not a coincidence. It is befitting that conferences to discuss important questions of peace and security are held in a peaceful atmosphere. The choice of Dar es Salaam, the harbour of peace, as your conference venue is therefore quite appropriate. I trust all our visitors will use the occasion to sample the warmth and generosity of our people.

Honourable Chairperson,
Religious leaders occupy a special position in society. As opinion leaders you have high leverage in influencing the deeds and actions of our people. To achieve sustainable peace and security all the stakeholders have to be involved. The international community alone or governments cannot bring peace. Religious leaders are key players in this respect. The international community has recognized the role of religion in peace building and conflict prevention. To this end, in 1970, the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP) was founded as an avenue for dialogue amongst the world's religious leaders to identify common concerns, formulate plans of action and articulate a vision for the future.

Through this initiative, the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP) has mediated dialogue among warring factions in Sierra Leone and Liberia. At present there are a large number of religious organizations in the world engaged in conflict resolution and peace building, the fight against HIV/AIDS and against other social vices. There exist today in the world a number of religious organizations concerned with peace building and conflict resolution. Some of these organizations include The Fellowship of Reconciliation; International Council of Christians and Jews; Institute of Interfaith Dialogue; Muslim Christian Dialogue; United Religions Initiatives; The Ploughshares Institute; and the Community of Saint'Egidio.

Honourable Chairperson,

Africa is a continent that is replete with ethnic conflicts and civil strife. Despite recent achievements in restoring peace in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, the continent is still engulfed by conflicts notably in the Western Province of Darfur in Sudan. The sources of these conflicts are many and varied. Even in those countries, which are seemingly peaceful, there are signs and the potential of conflicts erupting. Anything can happen any time if we do not take appropriate actions to address this pernicious situation. Who would have thought that Kenya, our next door neighbour, a country which had enjoyed peace and economic progress since her independence 45 years ago could this year turn out to be a temporary battlefield with over 1,500 deaths and several hundred thousand internally displaced people!

Honourable Chairperson,
What are the underlying causes of conflict in Africa?

The Commission for Africa established by the former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, in its report titled: *Our Common Interest: Report of the Commission for Africa* outlined the following as the underlying causes of conflicts in Africa:

> 'The causes of those sources of tension in Africa vary considerably from one place to another. Weak institutions and poor governance are risk factors, as are authoritarian rule, poverty and inequality, and the exclusion of minorities from power. States with high levels of corruption and low levels of accountability seem particularly prone to violence. So do economies which are dependent on one or two primary commodities for most of their income'.

It is clear therefore that there cannot be peace without justice as the two are inseparable. The late Martin Luther King Jr. in one of his famous speeches, *I have a dream*, is quoted to have said:

> 'There is nothing more dangerous than to build a society with a large segment of people in that society who feel that they have no stake in it, who feel that they have nothing to lose. People who have a stake in their society protect that society, but when they don't have it they unconsciously want to destroy it'.

The promotion of human rights and good governance therefore remains the most effective strategy for eliminating inequalities between countries and social

groups and for increasing security. Indeed the victims of hardship and despair, whose human dignity is violated with impunity, become easy prey to the call to violence and they can then become violators of peace.

Honourable Chairperson,

Religion is simply a discipline of peace, an ideology of peace. Someone once aptly remarked that religion is peace and peace is religion. It is interesting to note that both Islam and Christianity recognize the value of peace. All the teachings of Islam and Christianity are oriented towards the goal of peace. It is worth noting that the name of Islam connotes peace. Thus, peace is basic to Islam. Likewise, Christianity is a religion of peace. Christian teaching emphasizes peace.

Honourable Chairperson,

There would be no conflict in the world today if all of us had adhered to the teachings of our religions. Conflicts, wars and civil strife are a result of man's rebellion from the word of God. In other words they are aberrations. I therefore once again commend PROCMURA for the measures you have adopted in addressing the underlying causes of conflicts in Africa through advocacy for abidance to religious teachings.

Honourable Chairperson,

As I hinted earlier in my address, good governance and accountability are critical for ensuring lasting peace and harmony in our country. The majority of our countries especially in Africa are today embroiled in violent conflicts because of absence of meaningful accountability in the administration of government. Favouritism, highhandedness, inequitable application of laws and regulations are common. Moreover, poverty and marginalization of the poor, if left unchecked, could lead to perennial conflicts. Michel Camdesus, the former Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) once observed that:

> 'Poverty is the ultimate threat facing humanity. The widening gaps between rich and poor nations are potentially socially explosive. If the poor are left hopeless, poverty will undermine societies through confrontation, violence and civil disorder'.

Besides, uneven resource allocation and distribution creates avenues for conflicts in a longer-term perspective. To reverse this perilous situation the institutions of governance and democracy, notably parliament, have to be vigilant and

accountable in performing their duties if the society is to be salvaged from the abyss of confrontation.

Honourable Chairperson,
It is now widely acknowledged that a strong and accountable parliament is a pre-requisite to bringing sustainable human development and hence lasting peace and security. A strong and well-resourced parliament exercises rigorous oversight over government by ensuring effective and efficient implementation of policies, programmes and strategies. It is through parliament that governments are held to account and live up to the expectations, aspirations and the needs of the people. This can be achieved through an effective committee system, formation of select committees to probe into specific issues of concern to the public and the strengthening of watchdog committees to ensure value for money in government operations.

Honourable Chairperson,
The ninth parliament of Tanzania, which I am privileged to lead, is now repositioning itself to effectively carry out its constitutional mandate of law making, oversight of the executive and representation. One of the measures we undertook immediately after the inauguration of parliament in December 2005 was to review the House Rules of Procedure with a view to making them more open, transparent and effective. I therefore formed a special committee to review our Standing Orders. In November 2007, we concluded the review process and we now have a new version of the House Rules of Procedure of 2007.

In the new rules of procedure, for example we have streamlined our Standing Committees to make them more effective and relevant. In particular, we have empowered our committees such that they can now originate bills either to amend or enact new legislation. Moreover, the impartiality of the Speaker and other Presiding Officers has been further entrenched in the new rules of procedure. More importantly, we have introduced the Prime Minister's Question and Answer Session to further enhance government accountability especially on policy and topical issues of the day.

Honourable Chairperson and Distinguished Delegates,
The thrust of all these reforms is to achieve our vision of having a parliament that is a model of excellence in Africa by 2012.

Honourable Chairperson,

I note that the theme for your conference is '*Religion and Conflict Prevention, Peace Building and Reconciliation in Eastern Africa'*. Besides deliberating on this important theme you are also meeting for the purpose of creating a forum for Muslim and Christian leaders of Eastern Africa to deliberate on peace, peaceful co-existence, mitigation of conflicts and working towards reconciliation of broken societies. I wish you fruitful discussions on this crucial subject.

Honourable Chairperson,

I am told that PROCMURA's vision is to have a continent where Christians and Muslims coexist peacefully and collaborate to promote peace in the wider society for the holistic development of the human family.

Honourable Chairperson,

I have had the opportunity to skim through the PROCMURA profile. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate PROCMURA for the laudable achievements it has registered for the past forty years of its existence. In its over forty years of existence, PROCMURA has pioneered Christian and Muslim joint peace missions to the Sudan in the early 1990s, stimulated Liberia and Sierra Leone Christian and Muslim peace initiatives to bring peace in these war torn countries. Moreover, PROCMURA accompanied the Christian and Muslim communities in Nigeria in seeking solutions to the perennial conflicts in the northern part of the country. Besides, it offered advice to conflict prone situations around Africa involving Muslims and Christians. Furthermore, the organization has been proactive in bringing Muslim and Christian women and youth together to discuss issues of common concern, for example, the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Such programmes I am told are currently being carried out at region and country levels in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Malawi, Ethiopia and West Africa.

Honourable Chairperson,

Despite these landmark achievements, our region and indeed Africa is still troubled with humanitarian and social crisis, armed conflicts and the violations of basic rights of women, children, the elderly, the disabled, the youth and of recent the electoral crisis.

Honourable Chairperson,

I managed to go through the resolutions of your last meeting held in DarEs-Salaam in February last year. After extensive deliberations of topics, you came up with the following five main resolutions:

- Actively continue engaging in sincere Christian-Muslim dialogue and collaboration for peace in each of our countries and in the region;

- Remain committed to the cause of peace, healing and reconciliation in Somalia/the Horn and seek to do everything within our capacity to reduce further escalation of violent conflict in the Horn of Africa;

- Ensure the active participation of Christian and Muslim leaders from all the IGAD countries and the Eastern part of Africa in the on going peace processes;

- Organize solidarity, fact-finding and support visits to troubled areas and countries in our region; and

- Pay a visit to the African Union (AU) and IGAD to get first hand information on their current peace building processes in the region with the aim of strengthening genuine partnership and collaboration in our peace building missions.

Honourable Chairperson,

In order to ensure timely implementation of these recommendations, I urge you to work closely with other stakeholders such as relevant governments, parliaments, other civil society organizations and intergovernmental associations. In respect of parliament, I assure you that the Tanzanian parliament is willing and ready to work closely with your organization to achieve your noble objectives. I therefore humbly request you to open up avenues of dialogue with the relevant committees of our parliament such as the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committees. Besides committees, parliamentarians in the Eastern Africa region have established the AMANI Forum with the similar object of promoting peace in the region.

Honourable Chairperson,

In conclusion, once again I commend PROCMURA for the initiative you are advancing to ensure peace not only in the Eastern Africa sub region but also in Africa and the world in general. With much pleasure and humility, I now declare this conference officially open.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

2.3 Annex III: Keynote Address Outlining Conference Focus

BY Rev. Dr. JOHNSON Mbillah, PROCMURA, General Adviser

1. Introduction

The chairperson, Christian and Muslim religious leaders, we in the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) are humbled by your response to our invitation to come so that we may reason together on matters of peace in the countries from which we come, peace in the sub region, and peace in Africa which is our wider home. We consciously chose Dar es Salaam, a city, whose name means house or abode of peace. We have come to the house of peace to talk peace.

As we all may be aware, situations of non-peace usually do not come in one day and go away in one day. It has its incubation period and the time that it hatches. In other words it starts slowly and then gradually explodes. When we came to the 'the house of peace' to find a suitable hotel for our conference, we went to several hotels and finally settled for Giraffe Ocean View Hotel. I wondered why we chose this hotel out of the many hotels that we visited.

Upon reflection it dawned on me that the Giraffe which is arguably the tallest animal on earth after the extermination of dinosaurs on earth, uses its height to see danger from afar and take measures to protect itself. Symbolically, it may be said of this conference that we have met not just to talk about peace but also to look afar and see what types of dangers to peace may exist, so that we may take measures to prevent them from getting closer to us.

2. Religious Leaders as Agents of Peace

We have come here as religious leaders to deliberate on how to work together to prevent conflict, build peace where peace is broken, and to bring about reconciliation where strife exist. Our coming together as religious leaders is based on our firm conviction that:

❖ Africa is a religious continent and its people a religious people. Therefore sustainable peace in the continent can be achieved through the contribution religious people, especially Christians and Muslims who form the majority of Africa's religious landscape.

❖ From time immemorial, Africans listened to their religious leaders and looked up to them for guidance to bring about peace in conflict situations.

The situation, by and large remains the same today. Religious leaders therefore religious leaders are an asset to peace in the continent.

❖ The Christian and Muslim faiths have peace as one of their central focuses and if harnessed properly, can be an asset to peace.

❖ Religion is an emotive issue that touches the heart and soul of the human being, and should not be denigrated by another, for history has shown that when people's faith/religion is denigrated they will do everything to defend it – even die for it.

❖ Religious extremism is on the ascendancy and something must be done to curb it.

❖ Christians and Muslims talk about each other and it is high time they talked with each other on issues of mutual concern.

❖ Christian and Muslim leaders can play intermediary roles in conflict situations to manage and eventually eradicate conflicts and bring about peace and reconciliation.

❖ Churches and Mosques can work towards peace in society and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims since people engaged in conflict can and do profess to belong to one religious group or the other.

3.   Peace between the Religions as a prerequisite for Religious Leaders to promote Peace within the wider society.

There is evidence to suggest that Christian-Muslim relations in Africa faces a number of challenges relating to peace and peaceful coexistence which need proactive measures to attend to them, if we have to make our message of peace acceptable to all others. These challenges can be looked at in four broad areas:

a. Negative religious expansionist policies

b. The politicisation of religion

c. Globalisation/internationalisation/importation/ exportation of conflicts

d. The challenge of translating good precepts in religion into good practice in every day life

4. Negative Religious Expansionist Policies

The well known fact that Christianity and Islam are the two great missionary religions in the world today means that the two religions are competing for membership and for space to practice their respective faiths. Sub-Saharan Africa appears to be the region where the two religions are growing faster, perhaps

than anywhere else in the world. The methods employed to make converts are without a guiding ethic, and therefore give room for some preachers from both sides of the religious divide to use inconsiderate, and in some cases offensive language to propagate their religion.

Negative perceptions of Christians and Muslims of each other's religions, drawn from medieval polemics between Christians and Muslims, for example, are deployed by these provocative preachers. These methods are known to breed conflict, which in many cases usually degenerate into violent confrontations.

In Eastern Africa, Christian and Muslim polemics against one another in the form of a debate known in Tanzania and Kenya as *Mihadhara,* have created such animosity in some parts of the two countries. Government instituted measures to curb the practice in Tanzania, for example, are often met with resistance as each religious group blames the other for failing to obey the rules. The practice is so rampant that some religious radio stations simply embark on 'hate preaching' that provokes rather than convicts the listener of the targeted religion.

5. The Politicisation of Religion

The use or misuse of religion by politicians for their partisan political ends is well known. There is a growing trend in African politics whereby adherents of one religion or the other vote for political candidates not because they have good development policies, but simply because they share the same religion. In a similar vein, it is a well-known secret that certain political appointments in Africa are made not because of the competence of an individual but rather for the sake of religio-politico correctness or to appease/influence one religious group.

Ethnicism or what people choose to call 'tribalism' is known to have militated against the unity of nations and communities. While efforts are being made in African countries to minimise ethnicism or 'tribalism', the current situation suggests that if measures are not taken, ethnicism could be minimised and what we in PROCMURA coin as 'religious tribalism', would take over. Since religion can be an emotive issue, 'religious tribalism' if allowed to take roots, could be more challenging if not dangerous for the unity of communities and nations.

The Kenyan elections which came on December 27, 2007 assumed religious undertones with accusations and counter accusations of the two main political

parties trying to unduly influence Muslims to support them. Church leaders were divided along ethnic lines and asked their members to vote for one political party or the other. In some parts of Africa, the polarisation of religious communities during political campaigns makes it clear that some form of bridge-building between and among religious communities always have to be carried out after each election.

6. Globalisation/Internationalisation/Importation/Exportation of Conflicts

The universality of Christianity can ordinarily be seen by the fact that Christians are spread through out the globe. On Christian solidarity in a spiritual sense, however, the universality of Christianity is seen by the Christian understanding that all Christians belong to the body of Christ – the Church. This concept means that all Christians everywhere and anywhere belong together in a mystical union that transcends political borders, colour or race. In Christ there is no east, no west, no north, no south, no white, no black etc.

The universality of Islam is also seen by the fact that Muslims are spread through out the globe. The unity of Muslims, however, is seen in terms of the Islamic concept of the universal *Ummah* (Community) which Muslims everywhere and anywhere belong. This form of unity is understood to be both temporal and spiritual and thus transcends established borders of nation-states/countries. In the *Ummah* there is no east, no west, no north, no south, no white, no black etc. The model of the *Ummah* provides a form of Muslim citizenship which is difficult to define but which shows itself more and more in times of crises. It is well known, for example, that Muslims anywhere and everywhere more often than not go on demonstrations in solidarity with fellow Muslims who are facing any form of persecution and injustice from any other.

6.1 Negative Solidarity

An upsurge of religious particularism influenced by the concept of Christians belonging to the **Body of Christ** and Muslims belonging to the universal ***ummah*** have militated against the unity of nations and the quest for common citizenship that would enable neighbours to live together in peace. The perception that the European West is Christian, and the Arab East is Muslim has created a situation where conflict between the West and the Arab East is perceived to be conflict between members of the Body of Christ (Christians) and members of the *Ummah* (Muslims). This was more pronounced and almost became the norm in some

parts of Africa during the Gulf War of 1991, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the Danish cartoon saga in 2006. In Nigeria (the northern part), for example Christians and Muslims literally slaughtered each other and burnt down worship places.[1]

In a situation as described above Christians and Muslims had exercised negative solidarity. They had imported conflicts outside Africa into the continent. If this negative solidarity was to become the norm, conflicts anywhere could be exported or otherwise imported to countries that in terms of physical proximity are far away from the conflict zone.

What we have said so far make us ask questions on African identity. It is true that the average African has multiple identities. One may say for example that I am a Kusasi of the Gbani clan, a Christian of the Presbyterian Church denomination and a Ghanaian by nationality. Multiple identities of this nature mean that people sometimes shift loyalties in different situations. But how does this play itself when nationals of a given country rise up in arms against one another over a war fought far away?

The critical question for Christians and Muslims to ask themselves is whether Christians in Africa regard themselves as African Christians or Christian Africans? In the same vein do Muslims in Africa see themselves as African Muslims or Muslim Africans? We need to conceptualise this even when it comes to our own countries. Are we Ethiopian Muslims of Muslim Ethiopians and for that matter are we Burundian Christians or Christian Burundians? Though there are deep theological considerations on this, we still have to consider whether we are Africans who happen to be Christians and Muslims or Christians and Muslims who happen to be Africans. In the broader sense we have to ask the question whether we are Christians and Muslims who happen to be human beings or human beings who happen to be Christians and Muslims. The way in which we answer these questions will definitely assist us to consider what we have in common as we seek to talk, live, and promote peace with one another and with the wider society.

 We need a deeper understanding of religious differences that would enable us to understand that it is possible to be truly African and truly Muslim or Christian and thus live peaceably with one another and collaborate for peace within the

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1. We will like to clarify that the situation in the northern part of Nigeria is more complicated than meets the eye.

wider society.

The past and immediate fallacy of the emerging trend of religious particularism that sets the African against his own kind in the name of the Body of Christ and the *ummah* is that in the West, Christians have fought wars against fellow Christians (the Body of Christ) as evidenced by the two world wars, and Muslims have fought wars against fellow Muslims (the *Ummah)* as evidenced by the Iraq-Iran war in the 1980's.

Christians and Muslims leaders need to openly discuss the universal nature of their religions so as to ensure that Africa is not accused of importing so many things into the continent to the extent of importing conflicts into their environments and therefore fighting proxy wars.

7.   The Challenge of Translating Good Precepts in Religion into Good Practice in Every Day Life

 As we have said earlier In this presentation Christianity and Islam wield the largest numbers of adherents in Africa when it comes to a head count of people of religion; one needs no scientific census to come to that conclusion. Adherents of the the two religions are always at pains to convince all others that they are religions of peace. Christianity, for example, argues that the advent of Christ was announced with the angels' song 'Peace and goodwill among humankind' (Lk 2:14), thus indicating that the Christ who was born brought peace to human beings. In fact Jesus is referred to as the 'Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6).

Muslims on the other hand have always passionately explained that the word Islam, which translates as submission also has in it '*salaam*' which means peace. In fact the normal routine greetings of Muslims is 'as *salaam aleikum*' (peace be upon you) with the respondent saying '*aleikum salaam*' which literally means unto you also peace. This greeting of the Muslims is not any different from the *Judeo-Christian* greeting of *shalom* (peace).

If the two religions which have the largest following in Africa are religions of peace then one would expect the continent to be experiencing peace. This is certainly not the case as conflicts shoot up in many parts of Africa including the countries represented at this meeting. There have been violent conflicts in Uganda, Orchestrated by Joseph Kony's 'Lords Resistance Army' and organisation which typifies how the name of the Lord can be used in vain. Burundi is gradually

coming out of several years of Conflict, Rwanda experienced a genocide and is trying hard to rebuild itself and unite its people. The seeming unending strife between the government of Ethiopia and the Oromo Liberation Front is an area of concern. Kenya, a country known to assist other countries to broker peace experienced violence of unimaginable proportions in its history following the aftermath of the 2007 general election.[2] Intermittent violent confrontations between Christians and Muslims stimulated by irate preachers who embark of condemnation and verbal attacks of doctrines of the other in debates (*Mihadhara)* are simmering and could explode further if nothing is done to curb it.[3]

What all these situations as described above mean is that either the ideal precepts of peace embedded in Islam and Christianity have failed to influence lives or the leadership of Church and Mosque and by extension Christians and Muslims or the leaders of Church and Mosque have not been doing enough to ensure that the ideals of their religion are not mere theoretical concepts. This is a challenge that religious leaders gathered here will need to seriously look at.

8. Causes of Conflicts

On causes of conflict, it is well known that Christian and Muslim leaders join politicians in describing causes of conflict as: social, economic, political, struggle over resources and for livelihood so on. Much as these are core issues in any conflict, Christian and Muslim leaders should not shy away from asking the question why such conflicts sometimes assume a religious colouring leading to Christians and Muslims fighting against each other and in some places Mosques and churches are set ablaze. We should not always sound escapist by attributing all the conflicts to any other cause except religious differences. We need to be objective and frank since the identification of the real cause of any given conflict is part of its solution.

Having said these, there is also the danger of stereotyping, demonising and criminalising a whole religious community as the source of conflict. 'See what the Christians are doing…', 'See what the Muslims are doing…' while the participants in the conflict are a small segment of the religious groups and their

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2. The violence was such that even people who took refuge in a church building with the hope that such will be a safe-haven were killed.

3. At the time of the conference such *mihadhara* violent confrontations had just taken place and the Christian Council of Tanzania were in discussion with the leadership of the Muslim community to see how to stop it.

actions may not necessarily be motivated by their religious beliefs or be shared by other members of their religious group.

9. Advocacy for Peace by Example

Working towards peace as Muslims and Christians requires having peace among the two religious groups before engaging other actors including state actors. If I may give an example here. In the late 1990's there was simmering conflict in Ghana between the then ruling Party of former President Jerry John Rawlings and the then opposition party led by John Agyekum Kufuor who later became president of Ghana.[4] During the same period itinerant polemical Christian and Muslim preachers created violent confrontations between Christians and Muslims in some parts of the country. The political situation in the country was so tensed that the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Muslim Representative Council among others, invited the political leaders to broker peace between the feuding political factions.

In his opening remarks the then President Jerry John Rawlings rose up and asked the religious leaders whether they and their membership were themselves at peace with one another so as to come and teach political actors about peace. He asked the religious leaders to go back and reconcile themselves, and their followers who engaged in violent confrontations and come back to reconcile them who are political leaders. Unless they did that, he argued, they could not come and teach political actors about peace. The meeting ended abruptly as a result of that statement.[5]

The example we have put forward suggests that unless Christians and Muslims consciously talked and lived peace they would have no moral authority to broker peace between politicians and any feuding factions. In other words, unless and until Christians and Muslims are at peace with one another as religious communities, they have no right to engage in peace building and conflict transformation with other actors.

10. Conclusion

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4. President Kufuor stepped down as president in January 2009 after serving the mandatory two terms in government.

5. The Christian and Muslim leaders later convened a meeting and sorted out their differences. After that period there has not been violent confrontations involving Christians and Muslims in the country. The irate preachers were stopped by the two communities in a concerted effort, and they ceased preaching at each other.

I have in this presentation highlighted issues for reflection and commented as I went along on issues that are not on this paper. In concluding this paper, it is worth emphasising that Christian and Muslim religious traditions (like other religious traditions not represented at this meeting) can speak of the peace elements in their different faiths. The question therefore is not whether or not the various traditions have peace and peaceful co-existence in their teaching, but whether such high values are put into practice. The truth of the matter is that it is not so much Christianity and Islam which creates situations of non-peace but those that bear the labels of Christianity and Islam – in other words Christians and Muslims. It is Christians and Muslims who interpret their respective scriptures of the Bible and the Qur'ân respectively to promote peace or misinterpret it and call for war.

People of faith can promote peace and peaceful co-existence in the continent if they do not only talk about peace but work hard towards the securing of peace and endeavour to live in peace with one another. To collectively do this require people of religion to talk with each other as we do now and will do in the next few days and not just about each other. It is in talking with each other that we can cooperate and collaborate, exercise positive tolerance, and constructively engage one another to help Africa to see itself and its people as a unity in variety. That unity can then link-up with the common humanity of the human family worldwide.

In many of our African societies (especially at grassroots levels) families live together in the same households with intra-faith and interfaith differences. They eat together, work together, celebrate the diverse religious festivals together, share in the joys or birth and the sadness of death, and jointly work towards the development of the community. This phenomenon, which I have always described as practical theology of religious plurality brewed in the African pot, demonstrates the innate African spirituality that focuses on existential matters and has thus become the bedrock of African religiosity which is live and let live with our religious diversities in harmony. This is one of the models that PROCMURA operates on, a model that we can all contribute to the nations.

 If our assertion that in Africa, people of faith continue to listen to their religious leaders and in most cases take directives from them is anything to stand by then Christian and Muslim leaders gathered here have to take advantage of this in their collaboration with other leaders across the faith divide to bring about peace in a continent yearning for peace.

2.4 Annex IV: Transforming Armed Conflicts in Eastern Africa: The Role of Faith Communities

Presentation by Pastor Fred Nyabera, Executive Director, The Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA)

Mr./Madam Chair,

PROCMURA Chairperson, the PROCMURA General Adviser, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen; thank you for giving me the opportunity to address this meeting.

My task is to present the topic: **'Transforming armed conflicts in Eastern Africa: The Role of Faith Communities'**. In my presentation, I will briefly touch on the following four sub-themes: comparative advantages of faith communities in conflict transformation; causes of the Region's conflicts; key areas where faith communities should be involved in conflict transformation; and lessons learnt.

FECCLAHA'S Profile

The Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA) was formed as a response to the escalating conflicts in the region and their cross border nature. FECCLAHA was officially launched in 1999 and provides a platform through which the Churches can share perspectives on issues of common concern, and map out ways of addressing these issues together.

The vision of FECCLAHA is the creation of communities that are inclusive, harmonious and living an abundant life in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa. The vision is guided by the core values of human dignity, compassion, justice, and peace. FECCLAHA therefore seeks to work towards the establishment of a peaceful, united, and democratically governed region. Fundamental to its vision is the assumption that solutions to the issues of conflict must essentially come from within the region, with inhabitants taking ownership and responsibility for the problems and proactively seeking solutions. To achieve this vision, FECCLAHA will facilitate ecumenical cooperation and fellowship within the context of a holistic Christian ministry. The region FECCLAHA covers has nine countries namely: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Comparative Advantage of Faith Communities in Conflict Transformation

The potential for religion to make a difference in conflicts is considerable. Ideally, religion universally stands a better position to broker peace in a world embattled by cruel forces that embitter and endanger life and the dignity of humankind. Religion possesses a strategic position which provides it with access both to the grassroots level of society and the top government officials and state apparatus. Stein Villumstad referring to the Carnegie Commission identified five clear comparative advantages of religious leaders and institutions, in dealing with peace and reconciliation:

⇨ A clear mission and message, which resounds easily with those belonging to religious communities and often far beyond their traditional constituencies;

⇨ A permanent historic and widely spread presence in society at large and local communities in particular;

⇨ Well-developed infrastructure, often including communication networks that link local, national, and international offices;

⇨ The legitimacy enabling them to make clear and courageous statements during crises; and

⇨ A traditional orientation towards peace and promotion of respectful human relations.

Some Causes of the Region's Conflicts

Understanding the causes of conflict is critical to stopping and preventing war. The causes may be complex and country specific, including long-term and short-term issues. And new factors tend to emerge during conflict (for example, grievances of those who have lost the most), adding to the initial causes. Each situation demands a detailed and specific conflict analysis. However, I will outline some of the common risks across the region.

Long Term Causes[1]

History: A rich history dating back to pre-colonial times or to the anti-colonial struggle and the formation of states, sometimes underlines local antagonisms and may explain the lack of the state's legitimacy in some countries in the region.

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1. Serge Michaialof, Markus Kostern, and Xavier Devictor, Post-conflict Recovery in Africa: An agenda for the African Region, April 2002

Mr./Madam Chair, as you may be aware, one of the most important legacies of the colonial era was divide and rule. North-south dichotomies were cemented during colonial rule. Separate administration of northern and southern Sudan, British Somalia and Italian Somaliland, and Eritrea (Italian) and Ethiopia (not colonized), as well as regional or ethnic favouritism in Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi helped lead to political disputes directly after the departure of the colonial administrations.

Some analysts argue that the current conflicts result from colonialism and 'incomplete nation-building'. During colonization, heterogeneous populations were united into single parties and movements against the common enemy. Some states still experience conflict between those who won and those who lost out at independence.

Colonial borders are a further source of conflict. During the Cold War these conflicts were not easily distinguishable as internal or inter-state wars. The end of the Cold War has weakened ideological models and internal security mechanisms, resulting in new demands for self-determination.

Demographic changes: In recent years, many African countries have seen unparalleled demographic growth and migration to cities. This population expansion now puts unprecedented pressure on land and natural resources. In some cities it has caused a collapse of the demographic and the natural resources balance. The competition for natural resources and land in already densely populated areas (Burundi, Rwanda) or rapid and massive influx of foreign immigrants as in Kenya and Tanzania is fuelling resentment and potential violence. Finally, competition for scarce water resources is a new risk factor and is creating tension in the region (for example, with the Nile Basin Countries).

Poverty, illiteracy and unemployment: Widespread poverty and inequality fuel a broad range of social tensions. Large-scale unemployment, combined with rapid demographic growth, creates a large pool of idle young men with few prospects and little to lose. Illiterate and poor groups are easy targets for the war recruiters and political extremists.

Feasibility of predation: Recent research shows a close correlation between the risk of conflict, and the predation of natural resources, that is, the possibility for rebel groups to either exploit natural resources or to easily tax their production. Conflicts happen more frequently and last longer in countries rich in mineral

resources, such as diamonds and oil (For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Sudan).

Short-Term Causes

Risk factors do not automatically translate into conflict unless political circumstances aggravate them. African countries are not fated to go to war; but behaviours, deliberate actions or policies may fuel tensions through for instance[2]:

Exclusionary policies and discrimination: In many African countries, large groups are excluded from political and economic life on regional, ethnic, religion or social grounds. Within the context of high ethnic and linguistics fragmentation, such policies kindle deep frustrations, particularly when combined with inequalities. In countries where one group is dominant there is likelihood to oppress the minorities or even to commit genocide.

Mr./Madam Chair, it is becoming increasingly recognized and acknowledged that many contemporary conflicts are triggered and maintained by manipulative leaders who often use ethnic prejudice, religious fundamentalism, and national sentiment to pursue their own political causes. Such insecure and opportunistic political figures take advantage of the increasing trend towards ethno-nationalism and encourage exclusive **'identity politics'** amongst the population, thus creating popular support for war. Classic examples are the conflicts in Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and recently Kenya. Contrary to common belief, formal democratic process, including free and fair elections, may not be enough to address these issues. Deliberately inclusive policies have proved themselves key to successful management to these kinds of tensions.

Mismanagement of economic rents: In some countries a small minority that controls the state (the so called 'patrimonial states') appropriates economic rents linked to specific exports (such as oil, timber, diamond or gold). Combined with poor governance, corruption and widespread poverty, these result in profound inequalities that trigger resentment and political instability. Gaining and maintaining control over economic rents is often at the heart of conflicts in this region of Africa and the wider continent.

2. Ibid, p.4.

Erosion of the state: Poor governance, endemic corruption and economic failure can weaken the state to the point that it gradually loses large parts of its territory. The absence of state authority and the widespread insecurity in these areas can easily degenerate into conflict (for example, in Somalia and parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo). Typical steps in the erosion process include fiscal and market collapse, degradation of basic social services, paralysis of the transport system and greater insecurity caused by the collapse and criminalization of the security forces. In some cases, however, the presence of a strong and centralized security apparatus may prevent or delay the collapse of the state.

Sub regional instability: Recent observations show that generally countries neighbouring a conflict will also experience insecurity and possibly slide into war. Often a large number of refugees in an area put pressure on local natural resources, heightens social tensions and creates instability in host communities (for example, in Tanzania and Kenya). In addition, refugee camps may become havens for rebel movements from where they launch attacks against government forces in their own countries. This in turn may bring incursions of foreign troops into the host country, initiating a cycle of border incidences and fighting.

Easy access to small arms: Since the end of the Cold War, small arms have become easily available at low cost from both regular army stock and from the international market. This has drastically increased the lethality of conflicts in this region.

External factors: The exploitation of natural resources such as oil, diamonds and timber by multinationals has generated local armed conflicts in the region. In addition, conflicts in Eastern Africa have been fuelled by external military aid to governments and rebel groups by the countries of the North. Good governance, as you are aware, is a Northern condition for aid, but the North over the years has and continues to export armament that supports some autocratic and corrupt governments in the region. In this light, the strategic significance of the region to the countries of the North in general and the United States of America in particular, in their war against terror, cannot be ignored. The northeastern corner of the Greater Horn of Africa is particularly targeted because it is close to the Persian Gulf and borders the Red Sea with its oil traffic and strategic importance for introducing or countering naval blockades.

Key Areas Where Religious Organisations Should be Involved in Conflict Transformation

Mr./Madam Chair,

There are many areas that faith communities can play key roles in ensuring peace and in promoting democracy. I will sample just a few and draw most of my illustration from our work in the region.

Fact finding missions: First, the intervention strategies and actions carried out by religious actors in peace building and conflict management should involve fact-finding missions to conflict affected areas. During these missions, religious leaders are able to observe the effects of conflict firsthand and engage in discussions with the affected populace. Based on their findings, they can formulate advocacy strategies targeting the relevant stakeholders. This has been one of the key engagements of the ecumenical family in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa Region. A number of solidarity and pastoral visits have been organized over the years to Northern Uganda, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi and Sudan. After such visits, we have deliberately stepped up our engagement in different peace building processes in the region. For example, by engaging on a solidarity visit to Northern Uganda in 2006 we were able to hold hands with the people of Northern Uganda and witness the dehumanizing conditions of people living in the Pabo Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp. This experience compelled us to apply for an observer status at the Juba peace talks, which was granted.

Advocacy and lobbying: Secondly, religious actors can engage in advocacy and lobbying for the respect of basic human rights, justice, and equality. The wide coverage and span of faith communities gives them an edge and is a positive factor in peace advocacy strategies like mobilization and dissemination of information as well as its being able to elicit broader participation.

One way religious actors can take up this role is by advocating and putting pressure on government authorities to develop and implement the right policies for the citizenry. In addition, they can also challenge citizens to take up their responsibility by empowering them on their rights and duties in a democratic society.

This can be done through meetings of high-level religious leaders convening to speak collectively as advocates for justice and peace. For example, the

Ufungamano Initiative in Kenya was able to move Kenya's constitutional review process at a time when the political class had failed.

Mediation: Thirdly, religious actors can successfully play intermediary roles. In most cases, governments in Africa tended to respond to problems and conflicts with military or security measures. However, according to Mr. Oliver Kisaka, the Deputy General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), 'conflicts should be seen in the first place not as a matter of security, but as a social, psychological, emotional, and human process'. Governments mostly aim at stamping out the problem, but sustainable conflict transformation calls for complex problem solving strategies within the society requiring a change of attitudes, forgiveness, and healing. These aspects accompany human life, and the faith organisations are well placed to respond appropriately to these dimensions. The role played by the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative in mediating peace in Northern Uganda is such an example.

Monitoring Elections: Fourthly, faith communities should also be engaged in electoral processes with a view to strengthening their contribution in promoting free and fair elections. In Africa, internal inter-group conflicts and political disputes coalescing around elections, poor governance and competing visions for constitutional dispensations are at the core of political conflicts in the region. Kenya and Zimbabwe offers a case in point. We believe that free and fair elections are the definitive processes for legitimizing political leaders and hence preventing conflict. For this very reason, religious communities have a role in observing elections.

Through this, the faith communities can learn from the experiences of other countries in order to promote democratic electoral processes in their own countries. We have also been engaged in capacity building programmes on strengthening laws governing elections to ensure that election losers do not use loopholes in the electoral laws to cause conflicts.

Worth mentioning here is the participation of the faith communities in the Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo elections. In Burundi, some of the national civic education materials were developed by the National Church Council in Burundi (CNEB). This, Mr. /Madam Chair, was a great contribution to the transitional process of that country. The impact of faith communities in the elections and transition phase in the Democratic Republic of Congo is difficult to overestimate. As you may be aware, the head of the Independent Electoral

Commission (CEI) was a religious leader, the president of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a religious leader and the religious leaders in the Democratic Republic of Congo with accompaniment of other faith-based institutions spearheaded the training and mobilization of thousands of elections observers, both local and international. Having been part of the observation team in both elections I can confidently say that if the faith-based institutions did not play their role in election monitoring and in the post-peace accord transitional phase in their countries, the Great Lakes Region would have slid back to war.

Monitoring Human Rights: Religious organizations can play an integral role in monitoring human rights practices by states. The religious doctrine of equality and human dignity along with justice and fairness transcends all faiths and this gives them authentic reasons to discourage the violation of human rights. It is also instructive to note that the vast network and expanse faiths possess gives them a veritable reason and physical presence to effectively discourage violation of human rights, violence, electoral rigging, corruption and other social ills.

Capacity Building: Conflict transformation training is needed in hot conflicts phases. This would include training in human rights, non-violence, and conflict resolution and the principles and processes of democracy. For example, through the Inter-Religious Council in some countries in this region, joint trainings in conflict resolution techniques has been offered to both Muslim and Christian clergy. This has not only enhanced dialogue but it has also promoted peaceful co-existence and trust building within the faiths.

Mr./Madam Chair, religious organizations also need to develop new theological paradigms that offer practical perspectives for intervention in conflict transformation. As conflicts evolve they take new dimensions and to be able to offer pragmatic interventions, faith based organizations need to offer solutions that are current and attuned to all actors in conflict.

Media and Communications: Religious organizations should also pay attention to the media given its enormous potential to influence the perception, attitudes and behaviours of citizens, for example, in the case of the Rwanda Genocide. The media often highlights and glamorises radical perspectives and behaviours to the detriment of peace. Hence, it is imperative for faiths to invest in a well-trained, autonomous media that can serve as a strong building block for the transformation of peace.

Religious symbols and ceremonies: Religions have age-old symbols and ceremonies for prayer, confession, repentance, forgiveness, grief, healing, reconciliation and communion. These ceremonies are recognizable and predictable both for the perpetrator and the victim, and they create an atmosphere of trust. Such fora often provide opportunities for sharing grievances and articulating the suffering of communities in conflict.

Truth and Reconciliation Commissions: This is a new phenomenon, which is also suitable for inter-faith involvement. 'Governments or the United Nations (UN) may run such commissions but civil societies including religions are also in a position to create these spaces for post-conflict transition' or be part of the process. Truth and Reconciliation Commissions enhance sustainable conflict transformation especially when underpinned by such religious values like repentance and forgiveness.

Regional peace processes: Churches should be engaged in regional and international processes of peace, security, governance and development. Since regionalization of conflicts is a recurrent phenomenon in the African continent, as in many other parts of the world, we contend that responses to these conflicts should also be regional. In addition, issues of peace, security, governance and development now go beyond the individual state system. In this regard, we, in the Eastern Africa Region must continue to advocate for regional solutions to regional conflicts and emphasize that durable solutions to conflicts in any one country in the region will only be effectively addressed within a regional framework.

To this effect, religious actors need to engage with intergovernmental organizations like the African Union (AU), The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the East Africa Community (EAC) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (IC/GLR) among others.

Small Arms and Light Weapons: The importance of involving faith communities in the management of small arms and light weapons cannot be underestimated. Of the 640 million small arms circulating in the world, estimates state that 100 million circulate in Africa. Despite the efforts by some African governments to deal with the menace caused by small arms, arms brokers and governments undermine these efforts by providing small arms to 'non-state actors' often to gain control over an area with valuable mineral resources or for political reasons.

The Nairobi based Ecumenical Working Group on Small Arms and Light Weapons, a regional network of five organizations committed to the fight against arms proliferation, together with the Ecumenical Network on Small Arms and Light Weapons have formed a partnership which seeks to strengthen and co-ordinate ecumenical work in this particular field. Together, we are developing strategies that are substantially enhancing our role, as faith based institutions, in the broader framework of the United Nations (UN) Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Social Reintegration: One lesson from civil wars is that social reintegration cannot be resolved by quick legislations. Former adversaries have to return to co-exist as neighbours if not friends. Social reintegration is therefore no longer just about veteran benefits and rebuilding roads and bridges, it is a matter of trauma and social healing and reconciliation. If this is not resolved, conflict is bound to recur.

Religious actors are well placed to head this process especially in ensuring reconciliation and healing of psychosocial wounds of entire communities. They need to consider the changing nature of the conflict and apply suitable intervention mechanisms to sustainable peace transformation. Due to their proximity to the family unit and the community, they are well placed to address the problem of trauma and psychological problems. This can be done through counselling and rehabilitation facilities to those affected through the faith-based networks.

Lessons Learnt

Mr./Madam Chair,

In our work we have learnt some very important lessons. Namely, that well equipped, African religious leaders can rise to the occasion and live up to the expectations of their constituency. Secondly, in Africa, religious leaders are critical actors. On one hand, they are actors who can bring about positive change if well mobilized (for example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo), and, on the other hand, they can also bring about negative influences (for example, in Rwanda and Kenya); in essence, they are actors who cannot be ignored.

Conclusion

A sage speaking to his prodigy said the following: 'A terrible fight is going on inside me…a fight between two wolves. One is evil, and represents hate, anger, arrogance, intolerance, and superiority. The other is good, and represents joy,

peace, love, tolerance, understanding, humility, kindness, empathy, generosity and compassion. This same fight is going on inside you, inside every other person too'.

The young man asked: 'Which wolf will win?' His mentor replied simply: 'The one you feed'. As is the case with peace building and conflict transformation, the struggle to end conflict in this region and beyond will be realized by feeding 'peace triggers'.

Thank you for your attention.

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2.5 Annex V: Conflicts in Africa and What Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders Can Contribute to Bring about Peace and Reconciliation

Presentation by Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Former Prime Minister of Tanzania and Former Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)

Chairperson,
Distinguished Participants,

I am honoured to be invited and to address this eminent gathering. Much as you have referred to this congregation as a conference and the Kiswahili invitation describes it as a '*Kongamano*'-in my view, the calibre of participants and the subject you intend to address makes this meeting to be above the everyday meaning of these words. A meeting of religious leaders from the main denominations of our regions, devoted to discussing the subject of peace and reconciliation is a profound and powerful event. Your responsibility to our Creator, your stature and influence in society, combined with the deeper meaning of peace in both Islam and Christianity give this gathering a unique significance. I wish to pay sincere tributes to the initiators of this process and to the organizers of this meeting. In particular, I commend the Christian Council of Tanzania for hosting this peace conference.

As leaders of Christian and Muslim communities, you do have a special responsibility in our two regions. There is no doubt that the majority of the people of Eastern and Central Africa and indeed of the whole continent belong to these two faith communities. Your influence as social and spiritual guides has a profound impact in the overall wellbeing of many of us. This meeting reflects a positive affirmation of a commitment on your part to cooperate and collaborate in fulfilling collective responsibilities. Undoubtedly, the outcome of such an initiative is to reinforce the noble spirit of understanding, cooperation and tolerance among the adherents of the two faiths, a process which in itself consolidates the foundation for peace and stability in our continent.

Chairperson,
Distinguished Participants,

In the past three decades the people of our continent have experienced the horrors and devastation associated with the breakdown of peace and security. We have witnessed coup d'etats, civil wars, genocide, rebel insurgencies and

violent confrontations among nations. Lives have been lost, limbs maimed, property damaged and worst of all hope and prospects destroyed.

Conflicts have been a curse on our continent. They have caused untold suffering, loss of life and limb and destruction of property. They engender hatred and a culture of violence within our societies. They traumatize generations of Africans and undermine the very fabric of our societies. They affect the most productive section of our societies and jeopardize the chances of African children to have a decent and dignified life. They have devastated our women and in the process undermine a crucial component of our societies. They produce orphans and armed children and constitute a fundamental obstacle to our socio-economic endeavours.

Conflicts remain, by and large, the main root cause of humanitarian tragedies in our continent which has the in enviable record of hosting the largest number of refugees and displaced persons. Furthermore, as a result of unbearable burden created by the massive influx of refugees to countries of asylum, the environmental degradation caused and resentments and frustrations generated among local populations there has been a decline in the traditional African compassion and hospitality towards refugees.

Distinguished Participants,

At the dawn of independence, we as Africans rallied around our leaders and governments in pursuing a vision of building nationhood and overcoming the differences exaggerated by colonialism. There was a quest to strengthen the institutions of governance and to confront the challenges of poverty, disease and lack of formal education among many others.

Despite the different paths countries took, there was a determination to invest our collective energy in forging unity, solidarity and to achieving what we had been denied through the centuries of slavery and colonial domination as well as apartheid. We united in nationalist and liberation movements with a hope that we would eliminate the artificially forged differences of ethnicity, race, regionalism, access to wealth and religion. In most cases, we endeavoured even at that early stage, to establish the foundation for a harmonious co-existence in our respective faiths as Christians, Muslims as well as other religions.

That early period was one of hope and great expectations because we acknowledged that Africa is a blessed continent-with its resilient people, massive

expanse of fertile land, precious minerals and other natural resources as well as the most favourable weather. We are also blessed because of the wealth of social diversity that marks our character as African people-in terms of cultures and traditions, in terms of races, spiritualism as well as social and political institutions. We are blessed because we have a proud history of indigenous leadership, which is rich and profound in terms of values, norms and responsibilities. Our notion of leadership, that you as religious people also represent, is all encompassing and relates to the past, the present, the future and the hereafter. This is the Africa that endows us with a collective identity and which distinguishes us from the others.

Unfortunately, the seeds of eroding this idyllic vision and expectation of our continent and germinating the evil of violent conflicts were sown on January 13th 1963. It was on that day when the first President of the Republic of Togo, Sylvanus Olympio, was murdered in cold blood and the military took over the reins of government. We may have forgotten this event, but it was a very significant episode in the history of the continent.

Quite at that early stage it marked the beginning of a trend that was by then only common in Latin America, in parts of Asia and in the Middle East-that is, change of government through military takeover-in other words-coup d'etat. In the following three decades Africa witnessed dozens of military take over, with all the attendant consequences. The most recent one being the toppling of a democratically elected President of Mauritania, Sidi Mohammed Ould Sheikh Abdallahi some three weeks ago.

It can be conceded that the phenomenon of coup d'etat in general reflects an expression of dissatisfaction and grievances among some factions of society and weaknesses of the internal democratic institutions. Nevertheless, our experience in these last three decades has also confirmed that military takeover in itself has not been able to address the underlying causes of those dissatisfactions. In fact, in many instances it has only triggered continuing tension and instability in the affected countries. Of even more serious concern is the elevation of violence and force into becoming the moral imperative of either effecting political change or maintaining stability. The prevalence of such a political culture undermined the foundation of societal sustainability through shared norms and values, a sense of spirituality, respect for the sanctity of life as well as consolidation of peace and harmony. In other words, coup d'etat asserted the morality of power, intimidation, repression and threat to life.

By the late 1970s and into the 1980s, there was a proliferation in the use of force and violence degenerating beyond the organized institution of the military into the 'rebel movements'. Unlike coups, which are often restricted in terms of execution to the institution of the military, rebel movements incorporate factions that are outside the army and permeate society itself. It is an escalation of conflicts leading not only to massive physical destruction but also to the rupturing of the social fabric. Identities are threatened, relationships destroyed, humanity demonized and the foundation of faith communities undermined. It is in this context important to bear in mind that in conflict situations the perpetration of violence goes beyond religious affiliation. In most cases, the murders and destruction in conflict situations are inflicted by and to members of the same faith communities.

For us as Africans our lowest moment was the occurrence of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. It represented humanity at its worst when for 100 days not only internal political and social institutions failed to protect but also in some cases even facilitated the systematic murdering of close to a million innocent civilians. While this was happening, the international community stood by and watched without taking any action. More than in any other tragedy, the Rwanda genocide underscores the collective guilt and responsibility that we all bear in ensuring peace and security not simply of governments and borders but also of the people of this continent. The events leading to those three months, the manner in which the evil was executed, the nature of its victims confirm that the dynamic of genocide were nurtured within society.

As the then Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), under the guidance of African Heads of State and Government, I appointed an International Panel of Eminent Personalities chaired by the Former President of Botswana, Sir. Ketumile Masire, to investigate the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the surrounding events. The title of their final report captures the tragedy that took place and the implications for all of us as Africans and especially leaders. They called it: *The Preventable Genocide* indicating that there were steps that could have been taken before and immediately when it started that could have arrested that terrible massacre. In the report, the eminent personalities observe, and I quote:

> If there is anything worse than the genocide itself, it is the knowledge
> that it did not have to happen. The simple, harsh truth is that the

genocide was not inevitable; and that it would have been relatively easy to stop it from happening prior to April 6, 1994 and then to mitigate the destruction significantly once it began. In the words of one expert, 'this was the most easily preventable genocide imaginable'.

While still on this broad overview of the nature of African conflicts, let me briefly remark on the phenomenon of conflicts among African nations, which at times have also culminated into inter-state wars. For us in Tanzania we do remember the unfortunate developments in 1979 that triggered a war between ourselves and Uganda under Iddi Amin. More recently, however, from May 1998 to June 2000, the two nations of Eritrea and Ethiopia were involved in a devastating war that led to tens of thousands of their citizens killed or wounded as a direct consequence of the conflict, costing hundreds of millions of dollars to their fragile economies.

At a much larger scale was the Great Lakes conflict, which some commentators described as Africa's Third World War, involving about eight African countries and a score of independent rebel groups. And a variant of this has been the Mano River conflict where rebel groups sometimes sponsored by people like Charles Taylor and other leaders created mayhem among the states of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. The same complications currently prevail in the relationship between Chad and Sudan where instability in the respective nations is compounded by the existence of rebel groups in the two countries.

All what I have described up to this point illustrates the different forms in which violent conflict has manifested itself in our continent. I wish to reiterate that each of these forms have brought about massive damage to the well being of our nations and our people. Africa has the dubious distinction of being among the regions having large numbers of refugees, internally displaced persons and orphans in the world. By last year (2007), close to 3 million people were living in refugee conditions and more than 7 million were displaced from their permanent settlements. Indeed while the millions of orphans currently found in Africa are mainly the outcome of the HIV pandemic, quite a substantial number are also a result of the internecine conflicts of the past decades. Even when children are not orphaned, they have constituted the major victims of wars and conflicts by growing up in the difficult conditions of deprivation, instability and denied prospects of the future. I do hope that some of you have heard of that story of

the little girl who was asked as to what she would like to be when she grows up. Her response was: 'To be alive!'.

Distinguished Participants,

All those forms of conflicts and their violent manifestations are mainly underlined by causes, which are part and parcel of our social and political existence as a people. In addition, the situation is rendered even graver with the continent also falling victim to external manipulation mainly associated to the resources which Africa has been blessed with. And while this is happening, our capacity to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts as well as to sustain the reconstruction process when the conflict has ended seems to be inadequate.

Almost in all cases, the underlying causes for the outbreak of violent conflict in Africa have been associated with a justifiable or manipulated sense of alienation and exclusion on the part of one or more sections of society. It is the sense of not being part of the polity in expressing voice, in accessing collective benefits the society has to offer and in taking part in defining the destiny of society. It is a breakdown in the shared vision, values and norms and feeling of unequal treatment by what are seen to be the others. Invariably conflicts in Africa have been connected with a breakdown in the perception of fairness to an acute degree where the meaning of existence seems to be lost and sections of citizens are prepared to pay the ultimate price, that is, life.

Under normal circumstances, perceptions of alienation and exclusion or inequality and unfairness are expected to be easily addressed by the institutions of governance, be these political parties, local governments, parliaments or court systems. In the same regard, institutions that provide stewardship on issues of norms and values, on shaping perceptions, and on maintaining spiritual wellbeing often times play a part in refining moral standing of citizens and inculcating norms and values which uphold an harmonious existence. In this respect, the outbreak of conflict is, primarily, an indication that the secular institutions of governance have not been robust enough to accommodate differences and to reconcile them.

The African experience seems also to present a challenge pertaining to institutions that provide normative and spiritual guidance. Indeed, it is acknowledged that it is an over-simplification to suggest apriori that conflict is also a demonstration of lapses on the part of these institutions. Nevertheless, the fact that citizens in

conflicts have at times responded and behaved in a manner in which no scripture would condone, such behaviour as rape, murder, brutal maiming of limbs-does point out to certain deficiencies of those perpetrators. It may suggest that there are people who have not yet accepted the message that life is sacred, that a just cause also needs just means of pursuing it. Clearly religious leaders and institutions need to do more in inculcating among the faithful the spirit of tolerance, understanding, peace and reconciliation.

I am aware that in many instances you as religious leaders and as custodians of righteousness and moral wellbeing may find yourselves in situations of difficult judgment. Because of your responsibility as stewards of justice and fairness there are occasions when you may find yourselves and your congregations becoming victims of conflict due to positions of principle that you may be compelled to take. I leave it to your meeting to deliberate on the complexity of such dilemmas and their implications for contributing to peace and reconciliation.

Indeed, past experience has also exposed another dimension relating to the origins of conflicts in our continent. There are occasions when our plight and differences are exploited by some forces external to us leading to a magnification of those divergences and the triggering of violent conflicts. There is a popular wisdom in our continent commenting on the disturbing pattern of intractable conflicts in locations where precious resources such as oil and minerals seem to exist. The people in areas where such resources are found have only been victims suffering the horrors of violence and instability while the benefits of resources are siphoned off outside the respective countries. In many of such incidences, the capacity to prevent and overcome the manipulations taking place has been either weak or miserably lacking.

How can religious leaders contribute to ensuring peace and reconciliation in our continent?

I would like to submit that you and your colleagues elsewhere in the continent do have a major role to play, not only in bringing about peace and reconciliation, but also, and equally significant, in preventing the breakdown of peace and security among our people.

A bulk of the 800 million African people derive their social and spiritual guidance from your leadership. By virtue of your status as religious leaders a majority of these people listen to you, look up to you and turn to you at times of their inner

difficulties and tensions. You are designated to provide them with the foundations for developing norms and values to guide their eternal lives. Perhaps more needs to be done in re-asserting this unique and privileged position that religious leaders have in our lives as African citizens. Your message of peace, tolerance and shared humanity goes a long way in restricting the scope of differences to degenerate into violent conflict.

A message that accepts and celebrates the African diversity-in its multiracial nature, its multi-ethnic composition, multicultural and variation in faith will definitely consolidate this feature into becoming an asset rather than a liability. I do believe that the scriptures underscore our common descendent and the shared acknowledgement that there is a Higher Power who created us. I do get an impression at times that our relationship as Muslims and Christians is sometimes strained because we do not sufficiently engage each other. We do not take time to know and understand each other. We rush to condemn and pass judgment. Once again, I pay tribute to the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA). It is a valuable initiative, let us all support it.

I had mentioned earlier in my address that the 1963 coup d'etat in Togo exalted the principle of force and violence and made it part of our political existence. It substituted the higher morality that religious leaders inculcate to us for our spiritual wellbeing. The sacredness of life, the inner essence of humanity, brotherhood, solidarity, peace and the unity of the universe and the cosmos, the linkage between the present and the hereafter, justice and righteousness. All these are the primary creed that if fully internalized will negate the evil of force and violence when we seek for inner peace and reconciliation within our own souls and with those of the others.

An Africa without conflict is an aspiration that we all have. The reality on the ground is that conflicts are now with us, we failed to prevent them. Your meeting is asking, what can religious leaders do at this juncture? Once again, I respond that you have a role in managing the escalation of these conflicts and the ultimate reconciliation and resolution, directly and indirectly. The bureaucrats in government, the politicians, the fighters and the victims are members of your respective congregations. In fact, you are the closest people who live with the stakeholders, apart from yourselves also being stakeholders. You can organize yourselves to use your networks and channels of communication to convey messages of peace and reconciliation. I am reliably informed that a recent conflict in a nearby country confirmed that in neighbourhoods where community leaders

took a firm position to organize for peace and reconciliation, violence did not take place even though members of the adversary communities were also living there.

Your role in de-escalating conflicts and promoting reconciliation should not necessarily be ad hoc, marginal and informal. As institutions you need to build systems and capacities for conflict mediation, reconciliation and resolution. A new generation of negotiators needs to be trained with mediation skills and complementary infrastructure is needed to support the inter-governmental facilities that are being put in place under the auspices of the African Union and the United Nations.

The task of peace making and peace keeping should not be allowed to remain as an upstream undertaking taking place in high level conference rooms involving mainly the national leadership. I was moved by the reaction of a peasant who was forced to flee a recent post-election violence. While applauding the final peace deal that brought the conflict to an end, he asked a poignant question: 'What about my reconciliation with my neighbour who still has my cow!'. His statement only underscores the need for reconciliation to reach the grassroots where the original animosity was manifested and where peace has to prevail. You as religious leaders are best positioned to play that role.

As I conclude, I should also point out that a major challenge for peace and reconciliation is also in ensuring its sustainability. We have witnessed in this continent frequent violations of terms of reconciliation agreements and the resumption of hostilities among adversaries. More critical is the task of reconstructing the social, psychological and physical damage that has been inflicted among the population. The rebuilding of lives is a long and protracted process which requires resources, organization, determination and perseverance. After the tragedies of the last 30 years, Africa is now at that state where it is giving priority to reconstruction and the establishment of durable peace.

You and your colleagues elsewhere in Africa have a lot to contribute. Your vision, your capacities and your closeness to the people are precious assets at this stage of African development. Above all, in your role as spiritual leaders you can do a lot in assisting the African people to re-possess their humanity and to re-kindle their hope for a decent life of peace now and in the hereafter.

I thank you!

2.6 Annex VI: Religion, Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Across Muslim-Christian Relations in East Africa: A Muslim Perspective

Presentation by Imam (Dr.) Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa, Co-Executive Director, Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC), Kaduna, Nigeria

State of Affairs

Muslim-Christian relations have become much more polarised politically within the last quarter of the century. It has taken an alarming proportion whose consequence is undesirable. Various religiously motivated global events are not helping the situation. Trends of devastating events and genocide are committed against one another between Christians and Muslims in Africa. Religion has been used, misused and abused by various stakeholders. Religious crises have been successful economic enterprises for some politicians, religious leaders and institutions. They downplay the dominant unifying factor and play games with the minor dividing issues.

Most of our children are no more aware that we are all children of Abraham by faith, one angel sent to us both through the seed of Sarah and Hagar; one source of revelation we both share and one supreme being we both worship from different dimensions of manifestation. Today we are more at war with one another across the trialogue of Abraham, than at war with forces of evil that send our ancestors out of the Garden of Eden.

Consequently, East Africa has had its own share of these negative trends:

- From 1986, Uganda has faced Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) terrorism in the name of God.
- In 1994, priests participated actively in ethnic cleansing and genocide in Rwanda and also in Burundi;
- There is a high rate of social and structural injustices, indecency, rape, and corruption by those who profess to be Christians and Muslims in East Africa.

Religious leaders across the Abrahamic traditions seem to be silent in the face of these undesirable atrocities. Therefore, this conference has come at the most appropriate time. In sharing the Nigerian experience of interfaith engagement, I shall focus on seven areas as follows: the causes of Muslim-Christian conflicts; preventive mechanisms; successful stories of intervention; modules for restoration

of confidence between Muslim-Christian relations; practical methodology for building reconciliation; recommendation; and conclusion.

The Causes of Conflicts in Muslim-Christian Relations

The following are some of the causes of conflicts in Muslim-Christian relations:

- Lack of deeper understanding of the essence of religion;
- Rivalry and negative competition for proselytization, this includes the extremism that goes with evangelization and Islamization;
- Hatred and demonization of Islam and Muslims as a result of stereotypes and prejudices;
- Ignorance of Islamic cultural value system and orientation such as Sharî a, Hijab, Jihad, interest free economic system and so on;
- Negative handling of theological differences by incapable scholars among ignorant followers;
- Misuse and abuse of religion and religious and socio-political leaders;
- Deliberate distortion and negative publications against Islam and the Muslims by Judeo-Christian world media and some Christian missionary institutions. Publications such as: *Who is Allah*; *Hidden Secret of Islam*; *The DaVinci Code*; the offensive cartoons in the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*; Fitnah films and so on;
- The interpretation of secularism and the role of religion in modern states between Muslim and Christian scholars;
- Lack of religious leaders in the forefront of mediation and peace-building in conflict prone communities;
- Poverty as a result of states failure to provide basic necessities to its citizens; and
- Lack of role models and effective modules for dialogue engagement and mentorship for young religious leaders.

Preventive Mechanisms

Preventive mechanism is a principle used in Islam to safeguard and respect the sanctity of life, property, religious signs, symbols and sanctuaries of Islam and other faiths as the glorious Qur'ân affirmed thus:

'…And where it that Allah checks the people, some by means of others, there would have been demolished monasteries, Churches,

synagogues and mosques in which the names of Allah is much praised …' (Qur'ân 22:40).

The following are some preventative mechanisms:

- A shift from debate to dialogue by the religious leadership;
- Learning from the scriptural text of the others, learning from the other without subjecting them to our own interpretation;
- Exposition of the scriptural text that glorify the other to our youth;
- Promotion of peace education and a culture of acceptance;
- Respect for theological differences;
- Respect for human dignity and diversity;
- Re-orientation of our adherents and living by the dictates of our professed faith;
- Re-orientation of Judeo-Christian media and publications to be honest, just and sensitive in reporting or writing about Islam and the Muslims;
- Re-definition of secularism and its consequences;
- Promotion of religious freedom, rights and responsibilities by the leadership of faith communities;
- Promotion of good governance and accountability; and
- Joint action by the trialogue of Abrahamic faith leadership to reduce poverty and all forms of social injustices across the African continent.

Successful Tools for Inter-Faith Conflict Management

Islam affirms pluralism and the multi-religious nature of the universe and it encourages healthy rivalry among religions as the glorious Qur'ân confirmed thus:

'…To each of you we prescribed a law and a method. Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation (limited in religion), but (He intended) to test you in what He has given you, so race to all that is good. To Allah is your return all together and He will then inform you concerning that over which you used to differ'. (The Qur'ân 5:48).

The following are some successful tools for inter-faith conflict management:

- Inter-faith dialogue engagement in religiously motivated and divided communities;

- Inter-faith peace treaties, declarations and affirmations such as those of Alexandria, Kaduna, and Shendam;
- Inter-faith peace constituency and peace zones in conflict prone communities;
- Honouring religiously motivated peacemakers across the African continent;
- Inter-faith peace clubs in conflict prone institutions;
- Peace festivals across divided communities;
- Film documentation of successful inter-faith interventions as tools for peace building;
- Special prayers and sermons for peace as tools for pre-and post-conflict healing and reconciliation;
- The tent of Abraham as a tool for de-programming hate infected religious society;
- Dialogue between religious and media practitioners;
- Inter-faith cooperation and joint socio-development ventures; and
- Contextualization of scriptures in the light of modern day challenges.

Restoration of confidence in Muslim-Christian Relations

To build effective inter-faith relations, the notion of forced conversion is rejected in Islam as the glorious Qur'ân affirmed thus: 'And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed-all of them entirely. Then, would you compel the people in order that they become believers …'. There shall be no compulsion in acceptance of religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong …'. (The Qur'ân 10:99; and 2:256).

Therefore, Islam affirms its own truth and respects the truth of the others. Thus 'for you is your religion and for me is my religion'. (The Qur'ân 109:6 and Qur'ân 3:84-85). Restoration of trust and confidence among Muslims and Christians is a tedious task. We are aware that there are some of us who are victims or perpetrators of various religiously motivated acts of injustices. However, some effective tools for the restoration of confidence, peace building and reconciliation include:

- Acknowledgement and respect for theological differences;
- Re-affirmation of common ancestral origin of faith;

- Dismissal of stereotypes and prejudices;

- Re-humanizing the other;

- Promoting the culture of forgiveness and reconciliation;

- The courage to move beyond tolerance without compromise of basic principles of one's faith;

- The courage to face the evil within one's constituency/faith community;

- The courage to take risks and become a pacesetter in the area of interfaith peacemaking;

- Honouring role models in other faiths and traditions; and

- Healthy competition and celebration of diversity, this is, the promotion of the paradigm of a 'salad pot' against a 'melting pot'.

An effective reconciliation process towards peaceful co-existence should entail: promotion of the spirit of non-compromise and creation of a space for the other; exercising the paradigm of a 'salad pot' against the 'melting pot'; monitoring and evaluation that includes social justice and joint interfaith engagement in socio-economic development; effective methods of handling conflicts including the ability to deal positively with emotions and remain an impartial mediator; de-programming of stereotypes and getting to real issues; enhancing intra and inter-communal dialogue processes while upholding confidentiality in the processes; government will-power to support the processes and implement the outcomes impartially; and the stakeholders will-power to accept the outcome of the reconciliation process.

Recommendations

- Religious leaders to move beyond the pulpit, and outside the gates of their monasteries and sanctuaries;

- Religious leaders to be in the forefront of campaigns for social justice and economic empowerment. For example, Sheikh Abdullahi of Saudi Arabia, Ibn Abdhul Wahab and Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. of the United States of America at the beginning and middle of the last century;

- The need for effective training of religious leaders as inter-faith peace makers and mediators;

- The need for collaboration with the Interfaith Advisory Council of the Commonwealth Foundation and other faith based organizations that

share similar objectives in capacity building for religious motivated peace practitioners and institutions; and

- ◆ Introduction of peace education in our seminaries and madrasa across the African continent.

Conclusion

A Canadian Muslim Professor of religion, Dr. Turgey, during an interfaith engagement in Algeria organized by the Interfaith Mediation Centre, Kaduna, summarized the three Abrahamic faiths thus:

'If I am asked to summarise Judaism, Christianity and Islam in one word each I would say the following: Judaism: law; Christianity: love; and Islam: justice'.

Therefore, if the Abrahamic tradition is about law, love and justice, we all need to be true role models to make the world much more safer if we live by the dictates of our faith traditions. I wish to end with an inter-faith prophetic prayer of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) which reads:

Oh Allah show us the truth and nothing but the truth, and give us courage to follow it, and show us falsehood and nothing but falsehood and give us courage to abstain from the path of falsehood, Amin.

2.7 Annex VII: Conflict Management, Peace Building and Reconciliation

Presentation by Pastor Dr. James Movel Wuye, Interfaith Mediation Centre, Kaduna, Nigeria

Background

Ethnicity, economic mismanagement and lack of justice have contributed to the incessant conflicts that have claimed many lives and property worth millions of dollars. Recurring flare-ups between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria have left thousands dead, wounded, and rendered many homeless over the years. It is important that we know the types of conflicts we encounter daily. There are numerous kinds of conflicts but we will limit ourselves to the following: intrapersonal conflicts, this is, the type of conflict that occurs within the person. These include use of time, choice of partner, moral questions and goals and aspirations; interpersonal conflicts: these are conflicts between groups such as clubs, classes, and families; international conflict: these are conflicts within a nation or involving different groups within a nation or nations. This could be inter-ethnic, inter-religious, or competition for resources as manifested in the revenue sharing in Nigeria. Conflicts between nations could be for ideological reasons, territorial claims and due to political competition.

Causes of Conflicts

Conflicts are inevitable and keep occurring. Everyday, every individual encounters at least two or three conflicts, either at home, at work, at social outings or even when we sleep in our bedrooms without talking to anyone. Therefore, we are no longer new to the things that cause these conflicts, the sources of conflicts. These causes though inexhaustible can be categorized into three: conflicts over resources: These are usually easy to identify because they can be seen and are also more potentially easy to resolve. This occurs when two or more people want the same thing and there is not enough to go round; conflicts involving values: these are the most difficult to understand and resolve as they are based on belief systems and world views. Most times people could die for what they believe in; and conflicts over psychological needs: these are conflicts, which cannot be seen but affect the psyche of the individual if denied love, security, belongingness and friendship. The individual is most likely to become frustrated and aggressive. In view of this I want to attempt to analyze the conflicts grounded so far in the following compartments: psychological, resource and value based conflicts:

Psychological based conflicts:

- Provocative preaching;
- Colonial historical influence;
- Historical influence;
- Media insensitivity in northern Nigeria;
- Middle eastern conflicts;
- Inadequate religious education;
- Loud call to prayers in residential areas;
- Indiscriminate erection of places of worship;
- Misinterpretation of the Christian text even by political leaders such as President Gadaffi during his recent visit to Uganda when he said among other things that the Christian Bible of today is not the true Bible. and
- Official status of members of religious bodies in Nigeria.

Resource based conflicts:

- Colonial influence and the impact of indirect rule;
- Political imbalance in appointments to key government offices;
- Poverty and corruption;
- Economic dominance in northern Nigeria including mobility and rivalry with the Igbo;
- Constitutional defects;
- Health issues, such as, child immunization that divided the community;
- Land disputes; and
- Government funding of religious activities in multi-faith states.

Value based conflicts:

- Defects and ambiguity in the Nigerian constitution as regards laws;
- Complex issues and claims of ownership of the truth;
- Self isolation in social and cultural activities;
- Lack of respect for the belief systems of non-Muslims;
- One way marriage system that allows Muslims to marry Christian girls while Christians cannot marry Muslim girls;
- Natural happenings, like the eclipse of the moon;

- Classifying all Christians as stooges of the west; and
- Land disputes: including non allocation of land for religious places of worship.

Christian Approach to Resolving Conflict

Reconciliation in a society deals with peace and is a part of the faith of the new confession. It says that the Church 'is called…to commend to the nations as practical politics…'. In international relations and the conflicts the world is faced with, therefore, the Church now has confessional merit to speak to the nations and offer guidance to the governments of the world. This, too, is found in the premise of God's reconciliation in Jesus Christ.

My mutual reconciliation came as a result of my strong biblical conviction in Colossians 1:21-22. Other scriptural references on reconciliation include 2 Corinthians 5:20; Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 18:19; and Genesis 33:4. Reconciliation is a change from enmity to friendship, it emanate from genuine forgiveness and change of attitude in both parties who have been in enmity. It is a cessation of hostility and wickedness to an expression of full confidence and love; it is a change in the disposition of people in dispute towards one another, it enhances truthfulness and friendship. Normally reconciliation is aimed at restoring relationship and winning back loyalty and love. The Holy Bible is clear about reconciliation. From my understanding, reconciliation is both vertical and lateral in nature. It is cardinal to God's acceptance of our worship and that is why the Holy Bible says that if you have a sacrifice to offer and have something against your brother/sister, one should leave his/her sacrifice at the altar, to first go back to reconcile before coming to offer the sacrifice.

Here are some foundational pillars to peace building as noted in Mathew 18:15-17. The module seeks to address conflict issues, and works from part to the whole to resolve them:

- Context of the conflict: As Christians we must analyze the conflict, the factors that contribute to the dispute, the spiritual as well as external factors. It is important to ask who the human influences are, their positions, interests and needs;
- Dialogue in line with Isaiah 1:18, approach one another for reasoning in love using soft words which turn away anger;
- Seek forgiveness: offer forgiveness from the bowel of your heart; you

know this is conditional to receiving God's forgiveness. Luke 17:1-4, Mark 11:25-26;

- ◆ Develop a divine Christian listening skill: ponder and reflect on what you hear, seek God's reading for the context before you respond to encoded messages James 1:19-21;

- ◆ Hinge on God's love: let the love of God guide your everyday thoughts and actions and relate with your love for God, 2 Corinthians 5:14-19. Reconciliation is key to our relationship with God and his love;

- ◆ Mediation is very important to reconciliation. The process is very slow and energy sapping but is most sustainable at the end because it leads to joint problem solving. The hybrid of arbitration and mediation that is used today in the church in most cases comes from intimidation. 1 John 2:1 wants us to be advocates for each other like Christ is for all humanity;

- ◆ We are called to be peacemakers. This beatitude with a promise of God, rewards anyone who partakes in this ministry with an elevation of status from servant hood to son ship. This pillar is requesting us to watch out for early warning signs of crises and act proactively. Watch, warn and prevent. Mathew 5:9; and

- ◆ Peace education: we must teach people to avoid behaviours and attitudes that can lead to conflict from our homes and with our children. Learn to say good things about others before children. Peace extended is reciprocal. Colossian 3:8-14. One of the two great commandments is love your neighbour, as yourself. Mark 12:30-31.

Some Strategies of Managing Conflicts

- ◆ The Kaduna Peace Declaration: The Kaduna Peace Declaration of religious leaders brought together prominent religious leaders who deliberated to bring out a working document. Isaiah 1:18;

- ◆ The Moving Spirit Model: Its goal is to identify highly respected religious leaders for training as peace advocates/mediators. Matthew 5:9;

- ◆ The Elites Leadership Model: by R. Scot Apple. This entails identifying highly placed religiously motivated celebrities to engage combatants toward a peace agreement. Acts 6:3-6;

- ◆ The Common Ground Theology Model: entails identifying scriptural similarities to ameliorate hostility that might be engendered by theological differences;

- The Interfaith Cooperation Model: where faith-based Community Based Organizations (CBOs)/Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the community are encouraged to carry out joint development projects in their various communities. For example, the Christian Association of Nigeria and the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs in Nigeria engage in joint projects;

- The Turning Point Model: The turning point model is a process of drawing lesson from victims and perpetrators of the violence who witnessed a true transformation. Acts 9:15,19-21;

- Interfaith Prayer: This is the joint prayer session embarked upon by different faiths in their places of worship to achieve a common goal as it calls for prayers for peace to prevail especially when faced with natural environment problems;

- The Peace Club Model: Here students of high schools are given capacity on peace building so as to replicate the personality of building trust and serve as peace ambassadors in their schools and in sharing of best practices for coexistence and respect for humanity;

- Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism Model: Entails developing an analytical capacity and expertise within various communities so as to serve in early warning, conflict prevention and conflict management in their communities, local government areas and at the state level; and

- The Forgiveness Model: The film, *The Imam and the Pastor: From Vengeance to Forgiveness*, is a representation of the change to establish peace between two enemies by letting go the pain and paving way for peace to reign and establishing a model of reconciliation that is shown during trainings and workshops on peace building.

Below are some of my convictions of what will help to restore confidence between Christians and Muslims: Equal Justice: I want a future where a Christian can be allowed to practice his faith in Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan, in Saudi Arabia and South Africa; when a Muslim is free to live and practice his/her faith in Rome, America, the United Kingdom (UK) and in Germany with no molestation; where a Muslim can be free to go in and out of Israel and a Jew will be accepted in the Arab world; a future where Palestinians will freely live side by side with the State of Israel; where values are respected, accepted and nourished; and where world leaders will make pronouncement with great sensitivity to the diverse values in the world. This is what I am longing to see.

Christian Education: The Christian religion teaches that man was made in the image and likeness of God. The Christian education curriculum needs to go beyond this to clearly state that ALL men, irrespective of race, tribe, creed or colour are made in God's likeness and are entitled to dignity and rights. The Christian religious education curriculum should begin to focus on the elimination of ignorance about other faiths from basic primary level. It is amazing the level of ignorance that exists between Christian denominations; leave alone the Muslim or Buddhist religion. This ignorance breeds fear and the antidote to ignorance is knowledge. Knowledge can be acquired through education.

Also there is a compelling need to de-emphasis dichotomies in Christian religious education, with particular reference to the 'we' and 'them' syndrome mentioned earlier. Early teaching of respect for other religions and instructions on how to approach other religions and their adherents with love, respect and with a sense of humility, rather than the scornful disdain and superiority mentality will also enhance and facilitate peace.

The peddling of ideas and concepts, for instance, the idea of 'religious tolerance' should be completely discouraged, especially by the media. The idea of tolerance implies something that is bad. The definition of tolerance in the Longman Dictionary talks of 'a situation that is tolerable is not very good, but you are able to accept it'. Firstly, it is judgmental and secondly, it is only a matter of time before the tolerance limit is exceeded and peace is disrupted. Concepts like religious accommodation would be more appropriate to achieve our objectives of peace in ecology of religion-using the word ecology in the etymological sense.

These are also some issues that will ensure respect amongst religious adherents of Islam and Christianity:

- It is a mandate for Christians to live in peace with everybody (Hebrews 12:14);
- Social cultural activities;
- Respect for our religious belief systems;
- Acceptance of differences but not tolerance or compromise of values;
- Transparency with non Christians;
- Empathizing and even sometimes sympathizing with the other;
- Avoiding demonization and derogatory statements;
- Conduct needs analysis/assessment to balance power relationships (For example, the Nassarawa State experience); and

- Engage Muslims in honest dialogue not the usual polite dialogue.

How Reconciliation Can Be Achieved

Reconciliation matters because the consequences of not reconciling can be enormous. In Fen Osler Hampson's terms, too many peace agreements are 'orphaned', that is, the parties reach an agreement that stops the fighting but does little to take the parties towards what Kenneth Boulding calls stable peace which can only occur when the issues that gave rise to the conflict in the first place are addressed to the satisfaction of all.

Even though reconciliation mostly involves people talking to each other, it is not easy to achieve. Rather it is among the most difficult things people are ever called on to do emotionally. Victims have to forgive oppressors. The perpetrators of crimes against humanity have to admit their guilt and, with it, their arrogance.

What Individuals Can Do: At the most basic level, reconciliation is all about individuals. It cannot be forced on people. They have to decide on their own whether to forgive and reconcile with their one-time adversaries.

Role of Government: By its very nature, reconciliation is a 'bottom up' process and thus cannot be imposed by the state or any other institution. However, governments should constitute an office that will be responsible in the promotion of justice and reconciliation. A truth, justice and reconciliation commission is ideal when ethnic-religious groups seek to address issues bothering them with sincerity as it provides them with the platform and opportunity to come together and get to grips with their past and address the hate they have had for one another.

Conclusion/Recommendation

Religion is a tool for positive change and should be used as such. Shying away from this challenge makes it a veritable tool for conflict generation or escalation. There have been several interfaith initiatives on development and peace building issues in the last two decades. Unfortunately, these are yet to lead to the emergence of an effective framework for action with respect to conflict prevention, mitigation and resolution. However, there is increasing awareness on the need for an initiative that will mainstream faith-based approach to peace building in our various communities. The Interfaith Mediation Centre has held consultations with different communities, NGOs, CBOs, government institutions, religious groups and other stakeholders so as to facilitate the search for the best alternative of bringing about concessions in conflict situations.

Apart from the challenge of mainstreaming faith-based peace building and understanding for every continent, there is the challenge of documenting the experience of practitioners. There already exists a significant body of knowledge on faith-based peace building initiatives going on in the world today. The problem, however, is that the bulk of it is either yet to be captured or has been captured and documented by others. These are some of the concerns we are working on. We seek to re-awaken the spiritual consciousness of inclusiveness among humanity.

Everyone has the right to live in peace. Everyone of us, beginning with people of faith, has to undergo the spiritual conversion towards non-violence; renounce violence; denounce war, nuclear weapons, and poverty; and practice creative non-violence for a global transformation into a new world of peace with justice. If we dare take up the challenge of non-violence, we will discover the opportunities of what it means to be human. We will receive the blessing of the creator, the maker of every living entity.

Thank you.

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2.8 Annex VIII: Programme of the Conference on Religion and Conflict Prevention, Peace Building and Reconciliation in Eastern Africa

Day One: Tuesday 2ⁿᵈ September 2008

0700-0815	Breakfast
0815-0830	Prayers to begin the day
0830-1000	Welcome of Participants: Rt. Rev. Donald Mtetemela, Chairperson, Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT)
	- Introductions
	- Setting out expectations of the conference Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah, General Adviser of PROCMURA
1000-1030	Tea Break
1030-1100	Preparations to receive guests for the opening ceremony
1100-1230	Opening Ceremony
	Prayers:
	- Rev. Iteffa Gobena, President, Ethiopia Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.
	- Sheikh Ally Mzee, General Secretary, Supreme Council of Muslims in Tanzania.
	Introduction of the Chairperson by Rev. Angèle Dogbe, PROCMURA Women and Education Programme Coordinator
	Opening Remarks of PROCMURA Chairperson, Bishop Josiah Idowu Fearon
	Introduction of the Guest of Honour by Bishop Alex G. Malasusa, Chairperson, PROCMURA Tanzania Area Committee
	Brief presentation of PROCMURA by Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah, PROCMURA General Adviser
	Official Opening Address by Hon. Samuel J. Sitta (MP), Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania
	PROCMURA Chairperson's closing remarks
	Vote of Thanks by Ms. Joy Wandabwa, PROCMURA Team Leader, Finance and Administration
1300-1415	Lunch
1430-1530	Keynote Address Outlining Conference Focus by Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah, PROCMURA General Adviser
1530-1615	Questions for Clarity
1615-1645	Tea Break
1645-1800	Plenary discussions on the presentations of the day
1800	Supper and Rest

Day Two: Wednesday 3ʳᵈ September 2008

0700-0815	Breakfast
0815-0830	Prayers to begin the day
0830-1030	Paper Presentations: Transforming Armed Conflict in East Africa: The Role of Faith Communities By Pastor Fred Nyabera, Executive Director, FECCLAHA
1030-1100	Tea Break
1100-1230	Address by H.E. Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Former Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)
1300-1415	Lunch
1430-1600	General Group Discussions
1600-1630	Tea Break
1630-1830	Plenary: Group Reports
1830	Supper and Rest

Day Three: Thursday 4ᵗʰ September 2008

0700-0815	Breakfast
0815-0830	Prayers to begin the day
0830-1030	Presentations of the practical reality of Christian and Muslim conflict: Imam Dr. Nurayn Ashafa Muhammad and Pastor Dr. Wuye James Movel, Interfaith Mediation Centre, Kaduna, Nigeria
	- Video Clip: The Pastor and the Imam
	- Open discussion on the presentation and video clip
1030-1100	Tea Break
1100-1230	Country Group Discussions
1300-1415	Lunch
1430-1600	Plenary: Group Reports
1600-1630	Tea Break
1630-1830	- Action Plan
	- Statement of Commitment
	- Communiqué
	- Evaluation
1830	Supper and Rest

Day Four: Friday, 5ᵗʰ September 2008

0700-0815	Breakfast
0815	Departure

2.9 Annex IX: List of Participants

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