



Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa
Programme des Relations Islamo-Chrétiennes en Afrique



MID-YEAR REPORT

JANUARY-JUNE 2015



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

As many are aware, PROCMURA operates in a rather different financial year system from what we know of most (if not all) of our partners in Europe and North America and indeed from other Africa continental Christian organisations who we relate with. Our financial year begins on 1st October each year, and ends on 30 September the following year. This means that our half year report should actually be from October to March each year. This is not the case, however, since we have always made it a point to ensure that our annual activities report goes on up to the end of December each year. This provides us the liberty to present a mid-year report that runs from January to June each year.

We would like to begin this report by acknowledging that in spite of the growing complexity of Christian-Muslim relations that appear to be unrelenting, “thus far the Lord has been our Ebenezer” – our help. He has watched over our going out and our coming in (Psalm 121:7) - indeed our total wellbeing. This report provides highlights of the life and work of PROCMURA during the first six months of the year.

2.0 CENTRAL OFFICE MATTERS

Having moved into our new offices later in 2014, we are able to say we have settled in well. The new office environment provides a new impetus for working as nit and close working family as most of the staff are only separated by transparent glasses. We remain grateful for the opportunity to work from one floor and within proximity of one another.

2.1 STAFF ISSUES

a. General Adviser's Position

As all who have been following PROCMURAs life and work are aware, the tenure of office of Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah, General Adviser of the organisation comes to an end soon and he will leave office later next year. A search committee has been constituted by the Executive Committee to begin a process of identifying a suitable candidate to replace him. Advertisement for the position is being worked out and shall be sent out soon.

b. Confirmation of Appointment of the Programme Officer

The Programme Officer of PROCMURA, the Rev. Lesmore Ezekiel Gibson after having served the mandatory period of probation has been confirmed as the substantive Programme Officer of the organisation. We are delighted and grateful to the Executive Committee for the confirmation and look forward to his full integration into the PROCMURA family of work. We have no doubt that he will add value to what PROCMURA already does and even more.

c. Learning from Others

As part of its strategy to ensure that PROCMURA not only cooperate and collaborate with those whose goals and objectives are in part or in whole that of PROCMURA's, but also to learn from them, the organization accepted an invitation to the Programme Officer, Rev. Lesmore Gibson Ezekiel to attend and participate in a training course which had the theme: “Education and Security: The Challenge of Religious Diversity”.

The five days course took place at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, from 15th to 20th June 2015. It was a collaborative initiative between the Tony Blair Faith Foundation (TBFF) and the Faculty of Religious Studies of McGill University. During the course, participants had the opportunity to engage with experts and relevant government departments on how to garner global synergies to confront global security threats in humane ways. Rev. Ezekiel expressed his gratitude to PROCMURA, TBFF and McGill for the opportunity granted him to participate in the course and made a passionate appeal to State and Non-State actors to

entrench values that will promote a “Just World”, where human rights are respected and protected, human dignity safeguarded, diversity cherished, and freedom expressed with responsibility.”

In line with the same objectives of learning from others, PROCMURA intends to send the Team Leader, Finance and Administration Ms. Joy Wandabwa to participate in a leadership conference which has a focus on Sustainable Leadership in the context of Pluralism and Peacebuilding. The conference is being organised by the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem and takes place from 17-28 November, 2015. PROCMURA has also enlisted its Area Adviser for Nigeria West, Rev. Dr. Fola Lateju to participate in the same conference. It will be recalled that the Regional Coordinator of PROCMURA for Anglophone West Africa Canon Joshua Mallam was the person who participated in a similar conference in 2014.

d. Staff Evaluation

As part of our commitment to assess ourselves and to motivate staff to put in their best, an evaluation of performance was carried out and some members of staff job descriptions realigned. There is also the possibility of staff changes when further discussions are carried out with staff that may be directly affected by such changes.

3.0 PROGRAMME FOCUS

PROCMURA’s programmes are divided into two clusters. The first is its Core Business that operates with a budget that focuses on Core Programmes and the second is its Projects Focus that operates with budgets on Designated Programmes and Projects. The Core Programmes target only the Christian Community and the Designated Programmes target Christian and Muslim communities working together on particular issues of mutual concern to them and the wider society.

3.1 Core Programmes

3.1.1 Awareness Raising and Capacity Building/Enhancement

a. CHURCH LEADERS

In its quest to reach out to the leadership and would-be leadership of the churches on the growing need for most, if not all of them, to understand the basics of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations, PROCMURA listened to, and responded positively to Church denominations that required training for their clergy. This move helped to expand PROCMURA’s activities beyond the existing structures of the Area Committees, thus making PROCMURA and its activities more patronised and having a wider outreach. This mid-year report therefore captures denominational as well as Area Committees programmes focuses.

i. Cameroon: Presbyterian Theologians and Pastors Seminar.



At a PROCMURA National Conference that was held in Kribi, on 16th and 17th May 2013 to reintroduce PROCMURA to the leadership of the churches in Cameroon, a number of church leaders present, pledged to replicate the content and lessons learnt from the conference in their church denominations. The first church to live up to this pledge was the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. It committed itself to get its theologians and pastors immersed in the subject of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations. As a result of that commitment the church's Continuing Education Initiative coined "Areopagus" organised a workshop in Makon, Bamenda from 13-16 January 2015 on Christian-Muslim relations of which PROCMURA co-funded. In all, fifty nine (59) theologians and pastors participated.

The General Adviser who was expected to be the principal resource person at the workshop encountered visa problems and had to return to Nairobi having arrived at the airport in Yaoundé. He however provided material for Rev. Emmanuel B. Masok, President of the Areopagus Forum, who participated in the Kribi conference to make the presentations on his behalf.

Reports received from the conference suggest that the four-day programme provided a viable platform for the participants to deepen their knowledge in Christian constructive engagement with Muslims in witness and for peace in the society and peaceful coexistence between members of the two communities. Evaluation reports received at the PROCMURA Central Office indicates that the programme was adjudged successful by all the participants.

ii. Kenya: Reaching out to the Orthodox Church.



The Orthodox Church Seminary of Africa has been warming up to PROCMURA with the objective of getting the future leadership of the church to understand the intricacies of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations as they prepare for the ministry. As a result of that PROCMURA organised an Educational Seminar for faculty members, administrative staff and forty six (46) students on 11th February 2015 at the PROCMURA meeting and conference room. The Students of the seminary that participated in the programme were from Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi, Malawi and Madagascar.

The faculty and students were taken through the principles that guide PROCMURA's operations; its theology and understanding of interfaith relations with specific focus on Christian-Muslim relations; complexities of Christian-Muslim relations in Africa, and the commitment of PROCMURA to work with Christian and Muslim communities in order to ensure that the African spirituality of live and let live is lived while respecting our religious differences.

One of the highlights of the one-day seminar was the exposition of His Eminence, Archbishop Dr. Makarios of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa Archdiocese of Kenya on the Church's interaction with Muslims in history and in the contemporary situation.

The immediate outcome of the seminar which both faculty and students described as insightful and stimulating was the request that PROCMURA:

- Comes up with a plan that will make such a seminar an annual academic activity for the seminarians of the Orthodox Church.
- Assist the seminary to get a member of their faculty trained in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations so as to enable the subject to be taught at the seminary.

At the time of writing this report, we are pleased to acknowledge that an appeal sent out to partners has received positive results. EMW through St Paul's University has committed itself to provide funds for such training. The General Adviser has held discussions with Prof. Esther Mombo of St Paul's University and the leadership of the orthodox seminary. As a result of the discussions a faculty member has been identified to begin the master's programme in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations at St Paul's University in August 2015.

b. WOMEN LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCHES

i. Kenya: PCEA Woman's Guild National Leaders Conference Taking through the Dynamics of Christian-Muslim relations.



Growing extremism and radicalisation in Kenya precipitated by the activities of Al-Shabaab made Christian-Muslim relations a prime subject for discussion at the Presbyterian Church of East Africa Woman's Guild national leadership conference in Mombasa (23-27 February 2015).

The General Adviser and the Programme Assistant Florence Iminza facilitated the sessions with a focus on the role of women in Christian constructive relations with Muslims in witness and for peace in society and peaceful co-existence between the two communities. The women leaders were also taken through the disturbing phenomenon of radicalization, violent extremism and religious intolerance in the East Africa sub-region and other parts of Africa and how women have important roles to play in promoting tolerance, peace and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims.

The immediate past Moderator of PCEA, Most Rev. David Riitho Gathanju sat through the sessions. He commended the work of PROCMURA and prayed God for grace upon the PROCMURA team to continue the good work. The women leaders on their part, pledged to ensure that the lessons learnt are shared with other women at different levels of the church. They also pledged to invite PROCMURA to their regional programmes to share such valuable insight in Christian-Muslim relations.

ii. Togo: Enhancing the capacity of Christian women in the growing dynamics of Christian-Muslim Relations



An intensive capacity enhancement workshop was organised for 20 Christian Women leaders drawn from 7 churches of the Republic of Togo on 8th and 9th June 2015. The workshop was held at Lauriers de l'agora Senghor a Catholic Centre in Lomé. The seminar was aimed at taking the women through the growing dynamics of Christian-Muslim relations in the West Africa sub-region and what the women need to do to continue to constructively relate with their Muslim counterparts. The seminar was facilitated by the General Adviser, and Rev. Dr. Désiré Adraké, the Area Adviser of PROCMURA for Togo.

A critical assessment of Christian-Muslim relations in Togo and the West Africa sub-region, aimed at strengthening women's role on Christian constructive engagement with Muslims in witness and for peaceful co-existence was outlined and extensively discussed. A major concern for the women was the growing radicalisation in Nigeria and neighbouring countries and what that means for intra-Muslim and inter-Christian and Muslim relations in the sub-region. The General Adviser took the women through the philosophy of the different radical groups in the West Africa Sub-region and informed the women that PROCMURA was embarking on series of workshops and conference for Christian and Muslim religious leaders on the subject. He hoped that such meetings will help to provide grounds for proactive measures to tackle radicalisation and violent extremism.

In a separate development the PROCMURA Team Leader, Finance and Administration, Joy Wandabwa was also in Togo at the same time to parallel meetings with the Area Committee. The meetings were aimed at working out the logistics for a PROCMURA Christian and Muslim religious leader's regional consultation that Togo is to host in August 2015. The focus of that of that consultation is on peace and development.

c. YOUTH

In Christian-Muslim relations PROCMURA like many other organizations believe that the future belongs to the youth. PROCMURA's strategic focus, however, states clearly that the development of the youth for tomorrow's world begins in today's world. It is this believe that informs PROCMURA's focus on equipping the youth on the complexity of Christian-Muslim relations with the understanding that they will grow to continue what PROCMURA has been doing in an innovative manner, commensurate with the challenges of the times. The plan of PROCMURA for the year is to focus on Togo, Uganda, and Cameroon.

i. Togo: Equipping Christian youth leaders to be abreast with Emerging issues in Christian-Muslim relations.



As part of its commitment to equip Christian youth leaders to be abreast with emerging issues in Christian-Muslim relations, PROCMURA organised a seminar for 25 Christian youth leaders drawn from 7 churches. The objective of the seminar was to take the youth through what PROCMURA is and stands for, and discuss contemporary issues in Christian-Muslim relations.

The General Adviser took the youth through the mission and vision of PROCMURA, and outlined growing radicalisation and violent extremism among youth in the region. He entreated the Christian youth to be vigilant and not allow themselves to be influenced by the violent radical groups. He outlined the importance of Christian youth working alongside well-meaning Muslim youth to promote peace and positive religious tolerance that will enable them to accept and respect differences. The General Adviser emphasised that peace, tolerance, mutual respect in spite of religious differences are prerequisites for the spiritual and material development of society.

On the PROCMURA guidelines on Christian witness in an interfaith environment of Christians and Muslims that respects the spirit of good neighbourliness, the General Adviser having taken the youth through the guidelines made them to understand that Christian witness is what it means to be Christian. He elaborated that such witness must be carried out in a manner that respects and not violates the spirit of good neighbourliness. It is about Christ and not about self. It is about how good the Christian faith is and not about how bad the Islamic faith is.

The Rev. Dr. Désiré ADRAKE, Area Adviser of PROCMURA for Togo took the youth through the principles of interfaith marriages between Christians and Muslims and its attendant challenges.

It was resolved that a separate meeting needs to be organised by the Area Committee to restructure the youth leadership of PROCMURA in Togo. Tentative dates were set for such a meeting to take place, and its outcome communicated to the Central Office.

3.1.2 Literature and Communication

Through the support of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg, we have been able to mobilise Area Advisers and African Christian Islamicists to produce articles for publication on the PROCMURA Occasional Papers series “From the Cross to the Crescent”. A workshop for the West Africa Group of writers will be convened later in the year to finalise the articles for publication. We are delighted that the occasional paper which has proved educational in the past is able to be published again.

In a separate development we have produced hard copies of our Strategic Plan in both English and French for our constituencies, partners and donors who would want to keep abreast with the journey that we wish to undertake in the years to come. We have, also produced a peace programme report in Swahili to promote our work in the Swahili speaking countries of East Africa, especially Tanzania.

The PROCMURA quarterly newsletter of January – March 2015 came out on schedule. The publication of the April – June newsletter has, however, been put on hold as we came to realise that it would be a duplication of information since our mid-year report also comes out at the end of June. We have, bridged the gap by providing our readers with occasional news briefings.

In the reporting period we have beefed up our communication by producing promotional material in the form of new brochures with updated information on our Mission, Vision and Core Values as well as produce role up banners that promote who we are and what we do.

3.1.3 Personnel Development

PROCMURA continues to embark on the creation of resource pools around the continent to boost its personnel development thrust and to assist the churches in their quest to have persons with specialities in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations to assist them in their bid to embark on Christian constructive relations with Muslims in the different countries.

In the reporting period the following students have made progress in their masters' studies in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations (ICMR) at St. Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya.



i. **Rev. Margarate Salli Ndombo**, Presbyterian Church of Cameroon.

She successfully completed her course work and was adjudged the best student in class. She has submitted her dissertation for marking and if all goes on well, she will graduate in October 2015



ii. **Rev. John Shettima**, Methodist Church in Nigeria

He successfully completed his course work and has also submitted his dissertation for marking. We also expect him to graduate in October 2015



iii. **Rev. Robert Yodam Pangani**, The Moravian Church in Tanzania.

He has successfully completed his course work and is back in Tanzania for research/field work for a period of six months. He will return to St Paul's University at the end of the year to do the writing of his dissertation.



iv. Rev. Isa Bowman Dalatu, The Church of the Brethren in Nigeria (EYN).

He successfully completed his course work and is carrying out his research in the northern part of Nigeria. He will return at the end of the year to do the writing up of his dissertation.



v. Rev. Ukoha Ngwobia Ukoha, Presbyterian Church of Nigeria.

He has as well successfully completed his course work and currently doing his research at eastern Nigeria. He will return at the end of the year to do the final writing up of his dissertation.

Apart from the master's students, PROCMURA also sponsors two Ph.D students. They are:



vi. Rev. James Bol Obwonyo, Presbyterian Church of South Sudan

He is pursuing a PhD programme at the University Of KwaZulu-Natal South Africa. He is in his second year research programme. His studies progresses on well



vii. Margaret Makafui Tayviah, Methodist Church, Ghana.

She is pursuing a PhD in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology under the supervision of Bishop Nathan Samwini, Area Adviser of PROCMURA for Ghana and until recently, lecturer at that university. She is in second year of studies.

3.1.4 Reinvigoration of Area Committees

As part of its strategic direction to ensure that all its Area Committees are vibrant and live up to the challenges that relations between Christians and Muslims face in Africa as a result of radicalisation and growing extremism to which religion has (in many ways) been implicated, PROCMURA came up with a road map to reinvigorate its Area Committees. Countries targeted for reinvigoration in the 2014/15 financial year are Ethiopia, Ghana, Togo Uganda and the Republic of Benin.

i. Ethiopia: On the 6th and 7th of February, the General Adviser visited Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to hold discussions with the President of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church, Mekane Yesus Rev. Dr. Wakseyoum Idosa and his senior staff about reconstituting the Area Committee of Ethiopia to make it broader and inclusive.

The discussions were very fruitful. It was agreed that in order to broaden the outlook of the Area

Committee, a national Christian religious leaders conference needs to be held later in the year for the General Adviser and his team to take participants through what PROCMURA is and stands for, and thereby reconstitute the Area Committee. It is hoped that the proposed conference will take place in October and reconstituting the committee carried out immediately thereafter.

ii. Ghana: The General Adviser, Johnson Mbillah and the Team Leader, Finance and Administration on their way to Lomé, made a stopover in Accra to meet with the General Secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana Rev. Dr. Opuni Frimpong and the Area Adviser, Bishop Nathan Samwini, on emerging issues of Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana and the West Africa sub-region.



The General Adviser briefed the General Secretary and his staff on growing radicalism in the West Africa sub-region as may be seen in the activities of Boko Haram in North eastern Nigeria, Northern Cameroon, Chad and Niger, and the Ansar al-din and other groups in the greater Sahel region, especially Mali. He hoped that the ongoing controversy in Ghana on whether or not Muslim girls can wear the hijab in public and schools will be resolved amicably.

On his part the General Secretary briefed the GA and the team leader, on the Council contribution to reducing tension caused by the hijab controversy. He assured the General Adviser that the council was working closely with the Ghana Peace Council to resolve the hijab issue amicably.

Discussions then turned to reconstituting the Area Committee where Bishop Samwini will play a different role since his busy schedule as Bishop of northern Ghana will make it virtually impossible for him to serve as Area Adviser of the country. It was agreed during the meeting that the Area Committee will be reconstituted before the end of the year to reflect the current reality of the current Area Adviser so that a new Area Adviser will be appointed.

3.1.5 Networking and Collaboration

i. PROCMURA Interact with Peace for Life Working Group

In recognition of PROCMURA's pioneering role in promoting peace within and among religions with a speciality in Christian and Muslim constructive engagements for peace, Peace for Life (PFL) requested PROCMURA to host its working group and programme team meeting from 8th to 10th April, 2015. PROCMURA warmly accepted the request and hosted the group at its new Central Office building. In formal interaction with the group, the two organisations reiterated the need for all peoples of faith to stand firmly in rejecting all kinds of structural and systemic injustices that create conditions of dissatisfaction and discontentment in citizens. Taking place at a time that Kenya was mourning the Garissa University massacre, where 148 innocent lives of students were taken by the militant group Al-Shabaab, PFL issued a



statement condemning the killings and calling on Kenyans to remain united.

The Moderator of PFL, Prof Yong-Bork Kim of South Korea and the General Secretary, Ms Omega Bula expressed their appreciation to PROCMURA for accepting to host them in the first place and for the warm welcome and contributions that they made towards the success of the meeting, and the sharing of ideas on peace. The two organizations pledged to explore ways and means by which they can work together to promote a culture of peace in Africa and different parts of the world where PFL is active. The members of the PFL team came from six different countries, namely; Kenya, Zambia, Philippines, South Korea, Tanzania and India.

ii. PROCMURA reflects with the Lutheran Communion on interfaith relations

The Lutheran Communion in Africa (LUCA), which is the Africa regional expression of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) held its Africa leadership consultation and 60th anniversary celebration of its formation in Africa from 19th to 25th May 2015 at Moshi, Tanzania. The event had the theme: “Marangu to Wittenberg: Being a Reforming Church in a Changing African Context” with a focus on the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation which will be celebrated in 2017.

In recognition of the expertise that PROCMURA wields when it comes to Christian-Muslim relations in Africa, the General Adviser, Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah and the Programme Officer, Rev Lesmore Gibson Ezekiel were invited as ecumenical guests and resource persons. The General Adviser was asked to be one of the lead persons in panel discussion on the topic: “The Lutheran church in the context of ecumenical and interfaith encounters in the public space”. While, Rev. Ezekiel facilitated a workshop on “interfaith and intra-faith relations in Africa today and the role of the church.” He later also moderated a panel discussion that focused on “Lutheran identity and renewal of the church; church sustainability and good governance; and the role of partnership in the renewal of the church in Africa”. The event brought Lutheran church leaders from all over Africa.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Area Secretary for Africa, Rev. Dr. Elieshi Mungure appreciated PROCMURA for identifying and partnering with the Lutheran communion at different levels. Similarly, the Vice President of the Lutheran World Federation for Africa and the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Malasusa, who is also the Chairperson of PROCMURA Area Committee of Tanzania, expressed deep gratitude to PROCMURA Central Office for accepting to be a part of the event.

3.2 VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

a. The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of PROCMURA met at the PROCMURA Meeting and Conference room from 5th to 8th May 2015, to deliberate on important issues that will affect the life of the organization in the near future. The following is a summary of the important issues discussed at the meeting.

b. Appointment of Search Committee

As mentioned earlier on staff issues the Executive Committee after exhaustively discussing the modalities of appointing a new General Adviser of PROCMURA as the current General Adviser, Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah's term comes to an end, the Committee set up a road map of a process by which an appropriate successor will be identified and appointed. A search Committee was appointed to begin the process of advertising, short listing and interviewing prospective candidates for the position. The candidate so-selected will be presented to the General Council for appointment during its meeting in February 2016.

c. Review of Programmes and Budgets

The Executive Committee critically relooked at the budget and programmes focus of PROCMURA for the year, and agreed that it was reasonable and appropriate. It however, put forward a word of caution by urging the Central Office not to shy away from making any adjustments based on the funds that it is able to raise. It endorsed the principle of cutting one's coat according to one's cloth and not according to one's size, which it argued that this has helped PROCMURA to remain financially viable over the years.

d. Financial Sustainability

The Executive Committee commended the General Adviser and the Team Leader, Finance and Administration and indeed the whole staff of PROCMURA, for working tirelessly to ensure that the new office complex of PROCMURA is completed in structure and beauty. It however, lamented that the interest rate of nine percent (9%) on the loan credited from Oiko Credit will stifle any gains that will be made in the financial sustainability thrust. It urged the Central Office to explore ways and means by which the loan can be paid off if at all possible.

e. Recognitions

The Executive Committee recognised and saluted the chairperson of PROCMURA Most Rev. Dr. Josiah Atkins Idowu-Fearon on his appointment Secretary General of the Anglican Communion Worldwide. It recalled his leadership qualities that has enabled him to help PROCMURA to arrive at greater heights and prayed that God will continue to lead him and provide him with wisdom and insight in his new position.



Peace Ambassador Award

The chairperson thanked the Executive Committee for their prayer support and urged them to continue to pray with and for him as he seeks to serve God and humanity in this new role.

In another development the Executive Committee, congratulated the PROCMURA Chairperson for Burkina Faso, Pastor Flavien Tapsoba for being named "Peace Ambassador" by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) for his exemplary work on promoting peace in his native country and what UPF called 'Living For Others'.

The Executive Committee acknowledged that Pastor Tapsoba whose name in the Moshie language means (warrior) has lived up to his name by fighting for peace. They were grateful to God that one of their own in the Executive Committee of PROCMURA has been conferred that honour.

3.3 DESIGNATED PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

i. Diapraxis and Being in Solidarity with others

As part of its commitment to embark on tangible action (diapraxis) that involves practical ways of Christian and Muslims working together to attend to issues that require less talking and much doing, PROCMURA embarked on two projects – one in Liberia and the other in the northern part of Nigeria. It is these projects that we turn to report on.

ii. Liberia PROCMURA Area Committee Relentless Efforts to Combat Ebola and Provide Support for its victims.



Members of the PROCMURA-Liberia Area Committee with relief supplies for Ebola victims

The Area Committee of PROCMURA in Liberia Anti Ebola Task-Force for the second year running embarked on what they (along with other Liberians) call 'Evil Blinking, Over, Liberia, Again (EBOLA)'. With Financial support from Bread for the World, they accelerated their relentless efforts to combat the virus and provide support for its victims in January and February 2015. Led by its chairperson, Rev. Emmanuel F. Johnson, its secretary Mrs. Rebecca Tarpeh-Major and the Area Adviser, St. John York, the committee embarked on educating the general public through radio talk shows. The shows always concluded with a memory phrase that read: "Let us all join in Stopping the Spread of Ebola in Liberia, Protect ourselves, others, adhere to the Ministry of Health (MOH) preventive measures to stay alive".

In the affected areas and counties that bordered them, they distributed hygiene kits, electronic thermometers that help to identify the presence of the virus in a person, and relief items. Dr. Benjamin D. Lartey, PROCMURA Executive Committee Member for West Africa repeatedly called on Liberians/Residents "to stop religious and cultural practices that will expose people to the Ebola virus infection" while Mrs Rebecca Tarpeh-Major provided training on the use of the electronic thermometers. Commenting on the intervention of the PROCMURA Liberia Area Committee Task Force, the town Chief Imam Mohammed Jalieba stated: "Your presence, your gifts and the education you provided have revived our lost hopes."

iii. Visiting and Providing Support for Boko Haram victims - 27th to 30th April 2015



PROCMURA has over the years worked tirelessly with religious communities in Nigeria for peace and wellbeing of the country. Conferences and consultations were held in our bid to strengthen systems and networks that will safeguard peace and ensure that the two main religious groups of Christians and Muslims live and be at peace with one another. In its determination to embark on diapraxis, and its clarion call for specific support to embark on this invaluable intervention, the Methodist Church in Britain provided us with funds to embark on what was regarded as ‘a great and innovative experiment’.

Encouraged by this gesture, PROCMURA set in motion a planning committee headed by its Area Adviser for Nigeria North, the Venerable Joshua Mallam who is also the Regional Coordinator for Anglophone West Africa, and its newly trained Associate Area Adviser for Nigeria north, and the Very Rev. John Shettima. Preliminary visits to affected areas and visits to the internally displaced persons to arrange our visits were carried out by John Shettima. When all was set, the General Adviser, Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah and the Programme Officer, Rev. Lesmore Gibson Ezekiel to Kaduna for the final preparations and from 27th to 30th April 2015 embarked on visiting the victims in the camps and churches that served as refuge for some of the internally displaced.

The camps we visited included Zankwo in Kaduna State, Dikko in Niger State, Kuje-Pegi in FCT Abuja, and Loko in Nassarawa State. Notably, all the victims we met came from the three states most affected by Boko Haram terrorist, namely: Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. The displaced persons we met shared their painful stories of loss of families, and destructions of homes while others showed us their wounds when they narrowly escaped death. There were lamentations about the kidnapping of the Kibok school girls and many more who the Internally Displaced Persons(IDPs) narrated to us.

The General Adviser on behalf of PROCMURA presented relief items and monetary support to the victims and their households. He commended them for living in support of one another as Christians and Muslims sharing the same fate of Boko Haram violent extremism. He encouraged them to continue to support one another and assured them that PROCMURA will continue to accompany them at this difficult period of their lives. The team took turns to pray for the victims and their families.

4.0 CONCLUSION

We have in this mid-year report, chronicled what we have been able to do in the first half of 2015, and given hints of some of the core programmes we intend to carry out during the second half of the year. It is important for our readership to be informed that there also remain a number of peace programmes that will be carried out during the course of the year. Such programmes will be reported along others when the year draws to a close.

We encourage our readers to remember us in their prayers as the road of Christian-Muslim relations in Africa is never straight. There are bends and curves which we believe that God in His own mercy will see us through as we seek to serve Him and our fellow human beings.

Submitted

Johnson Mbillah
General Adviser