



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



MAROUA REPORT



**FRANCOPHONE WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL
CONFERENCE FOR CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM RELIGIOUS
LEADERS ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT**

Maroua, Cameroon
6th - 10th January 2013

Francophone West and Central Africa Regional Conference for Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders on Peace and Development



Hôtel Le Sahel
Maroua, Cameroon
6th - 10th January 2013

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List of Abbreviations

AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CLBC	Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon
CPCC	Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon
CWS	Church World Service
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FECCIWA	Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa
PROCMURA	Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa
UN	United Nations

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Acknowledgement

The journey PROCURA took several years ago to bring Christian and Muslim religious leaders together to work towards peace and development of the continent, has been accelerated through the goodwill and commitment of our Partners who continue to walk along with us in this journey.

The Maroua conference was made possible through Mission Afrika, one of our Partners from Denmark who (as was also the case with the Addis Ababa Conference of 2012) served as the go-between us and the Danish Mission Council Development Department (DMCDD) to raise funds from the latter for the conference. From the institutional perspective therefore, we are indebted to Mission Afrika and DMCDD without whose financial support the conference would have remained only a dream. On the individual level, we would want to acknowledge the Mission Afrika Partner Coordinator for Christian-Muslim relations, Rev. Arngeir Langås for working with us in the project proposal writing, planning and implementation of what we sometimes call 'The Maroua Project.'

We would also like to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the President of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon and the Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon, Rev. Robert Goyek and member of the Crescent Moon Observatory, Sheikh El Hadj Hamadou Banoufé who teamed up to host the conference.

We would also like to thank the government of the Republic of Cameroon for providing visas for all participants to travel and being present at the opening ceremony to provide words of encouragement to the participants and declare their commitment to work with the Christian and Muslim religious leaders for peace and development.

For all those who made presentations as individuals or on behalf of the different countries, we would like to assure you that we valued your contributions very much as they helped to enrich the proceedings of the conference.

In all that we do, our greatest thanks go to God who enables us to do that which we would otherwise not have been able to do.

Ms. Joy Wandabwa
Team Leader - Finance and Administration



Introduction

The Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) organised a conference on the theme “Francophone West and Central Regional Initiative for Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders for Peace and Development”. The conference was held at Hôtel Le Sahel in Maroua, Cameroon, from 6th to 10th January 2013 and hosted by the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon. Participants at the conference were drawn from twelve (12) countries, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo and the host country, Cameroon.

This was historic since it was the first time in the history of Christian-Muslim relations that Christian and Muslim religious leaders from the Francophone Central and West Africa, came together to work towards peace and development. The conference was also timely in the sense that countries such as the Republic of Benin, Niger, Chad and Cameroon share borders with Nigeria where *Boko Haram* activities is creating anxiety in the region.

Apart from the reality of the Nigeria situation, the conference was called at a time when Mali was under severe strain following the invasion of the northern part of the country where the ethnic Tuareg with political, cultural and ideological agendas, are fighting what they believe to be a liberation war, while the *Ansar al-Din* (the helpers or defenders of the faith) joined the fray with an exclusive religious ideology that are principally anti-Sufi Islam. The fact that Mali share borders with Niger, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire made the presence of the countries (except Côte d'Ivoire which could not make it to the meeting) very important indeed.

In the same vein, it is important to say that the presence of the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo needs no elaboration as the two countries then as now, continue to seek peace which appears to elude them from time to time.

The capacity building sessions entailed constructing bridges and breaking the ice, by creating the much needed conducive environment for the Christian and Muslim religious leaders to interact freely and share their aspirations and anxieties amidst the disturbing conflict situations within their countries or neighbourhoods.

The papers presented in the conference contributed to frank and open discussions and gave credence to that atmosphere uniquely accorded by PROCMURA. As contributions from the floor clearly indicated, more of such exposure is required to get Christian and Muslim leaders in Africa to work and plan to make their invaluable contribution to peace and development in the continent.

The proceedings of the conference that follows, give us a hint of the challenges that exist in the countries that participated and the regions from which they come. It also provides the ray of hope. As one person put it, the fact that PROCMURA has provided the forum for Christian and Muslim leaders to sit, discuss, listen, learn and even pray according to their various religious traditions and exhort one another towards a common course: A course for peace and development is unprecedented.

Johnson Mbillah

1.0 DAY 1

1.1 Opening Ceremony



Sheikh El Hadj Hamadou Banoufé

The opening ceremony of the conference was graced by several dignitaries from the Government of the Republic of Cameroon and Christian and Muslim religious leaders of the country.

The ceremony began with prayers by a Sheikh El Hadj Hamadou Banoufé, member of the Crescent

Moon Observatory of Cameroon, followed by Rev. Robert Goyek, President of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon (CLBC) who is also the President of the Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon (CPCC).



Rev. Robert Goyek

1.2 Dignitaries Address the Conference

As it is the custom in PROCMURA conferences of this nature, dignitaries and special invited guests were given the opportunity to address the conference and to bring to the fore their understanding of its nature and importance. Rev. Robert Goyek and Sheikh Hamadou Banoufé co-chaired the function and invited dignitaries to address the conference.

1.2.1 Welcome Address by the Government Delegate to the Maroua Urban Community, Mr. Robert Bakary



Robert Bakary

Mr. Robert Bakary, the Government Delegate to the Maroua Urban Community warmly welcomed the Christian and Muslim religious leaders from the Central and West Africa sub regions. He also welcomed the General Adviser and his team from Nairobi and partners from Mission Afrika who were present at the conference.

He expressed his delight that Maroua was chosen to host the pioneering “Francophone West and Central African Regional Conference for Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders for Peace and Development”, saying that they were highly honoured to be the first city in Cameroon to host such a conference. “The choice of Maroua is not by accident but by providence since the city is exemplified by peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians. A continued building of relations between leaders of these

two major religions will demonstrate that the Christian and Muslim faiths can provide opportunity for spiritual and material development of the two communities and society at large” he reiterated.

On the relevance of the conference for Central and West Africa, the Government Delegate pointed out that the focus of the conference and its timing “is critical since it comes at a time that conflicts in some parts of the region and even around the world appear to have a religious component”. He cited the rebel activities in Mali and Boko Haram activities in Nigeria as examples.

He urged participants to carefully consider points of convergence between Christians and Muslims that would help strengthen collaboration towards common goals for development; goals that would promote the physical and spiritual development of the Muslim and Christian communities. Mr. Bakary noted that the importance of peace between religions in Cameroon is clearly illustrated by the implementation of the Policy of Peaceful Coexistence in Cameroon by His Excellency Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon.

1.2.2 Address by the President of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon and the Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon, Rev. Robert Goyek.



Rev. Robert Goyek

After recognising the dignitaries present in their own right and capacities, the President of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon and of the Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon said that it was a great honour for him to be part of the historic conference in Cameroon. He informed participants that he has had the opportunity to participate in several conferences of similar nature across the African continent and elsewhere. None of such conferences took place in Cameroon.

According to the Rev. Goyek, his experience was the positive results of such conferences organised by PROCMURA and others, he yearned for a day that Cameroon would host such a conference and learn from what goes around them. He had made several contacts with the General Adviser of PROCMURA, Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah and eventually Sheikh El Hadj Hamadou Banoufé and himself were invited by PROCMURA to a similar conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2012.

“It was at this conference that we held discussions with the General Adviser of PROCMURA and the General Secretary of Mission Afrika, Rev. Kristian Skovmose about the possibility of organising such a conference in Cameroon and here we are now, finally, thanks to the Almighty God to whom we give thanks” he said.

He expressed their gratitude to Partners namely; PROCMURA (Central Office, Kenya) and Mission Afrika (Denmark) for working tirelessly to ensure that their dream comes true. Special thanks were given to Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah and Rev. Arngeir Langås of Danmission for their personal involvement in the successful planning and organisation of the religious leaders’ conference.

The Rev. Goyek acknowledged His Excellency Paul Biya, President of the Republic of

Cameroon whose invaluable support made the meeting a success. He requested the personal representative of the President to convey their heartfelt sincere gratitude to him. He also expressed his profound gratitude to the Governor of the Region of the Far-North, the security services and law enforcement agencies for doing their best to ensure that participants arrive at the conference safely and in high spirit.

On the situation in Cameroon, the Rev. Goyek informed participants that Cameroon is a stable country where the culture of peace prevails, within the government and among its peoples. Christian and Muslim Leaders of Cameroon, he emphasised firmly that religion is a vector of peace and development because men and women in Cameroon are spiritual beings who work towards sustainable development of their country. In his opinion, he could not imagine sustainable development without peace. “Are we not persuaded that religion is an effective tool in the promotion of respect for human life, and that it is the pivotal message of religion?” He queried rhetorically.

Expanding his views further, he said that conflicts are inherent in life and that it is impossible to live without conflict of one kind or the other as individuals, families, societies but we can still cooperate to prevent and mitigate conflicts that are likely to lead to violence and resolve them as quickly as possible. Conflicts can arise from several sources: political, economic, cultural, social etc. Misguided interest always leads to conflict and can quickly turn into violent conflicts that cause loss of lives and destruction of property, hence slowing down the development of a people or a country. This is what we have to work on if we have to promote the development agenda.

He emphasised that it is the duty of religious and traditional leaders to support governments’ efforts to prevent or resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner. This, he said would be done based on faith in God, the source of justice, peace and holistic development. “The God we call on daily as Christians and Muslims in our Churches, Mosques and Temples is the God of life who grants us peace. To this extent, as Christians and Muslims we should in all places and in all circumstances promote peace and protect the lives as well as work towards physical development of society. That is what the goals of the Maroua conference seek to promote”. He said.

The Rev. Goyek concluded his address by quoting the book of Mathew 5:9, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God”. He implored participants to seize the opportunity the conference offers, to come up with practical resolutions that would be implemented both at the country and regional levels for the preservation and consolidation of peace for development.

1.2.3 Address by the Grand Imam of Maroua Lamidat, Mamoudou Mal Bakari

The Imam of Maroua, Lamidat Mamoudou Mal Bakari in his address which was read by the representative of the Muslim Community and Secretary General of the Maroua Lamidat, Bahar Mahamad, began his address by welcoming all participants to the city of Maroua. He praised PROCMURA for its commitment to promote mutual respect, tolerance and the spirit of goodwill between Christians and Muslims all over Africa. He said that it was an ideal opportunity for all participants to exchange ideas, build shared values of



Mamoudou Mal Bakari

dialogue and cooperation for peace and development between two religions with the largest following in the world.

He noted that, it was one of these values as entailed in 'our vision' (as Muslims and Christians) that impel us to work towards the promotion of the dignity of every single human being. Seeking resonance from the Holy Scripture, he said "Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: 'Verily, We have raised the dignity of man' and in another verse, Allah says: "We have given men the ability to tame the oceans and space. We have filled their wonders and supremacy over the other creatures."

To elaborate further, he said that the pursuit of human dignity and the preservation of his or her integrity are virtues taught by all monotheistic religions. Thus, the invoking of this divine principle is a sacred mission that requires constant efforts by all to promote common human values in relation to the spiritual, physical, moral and material well-being of the individual and the wider society of men and women.

Challenging the audience, he pointed out that in the quest to promote peace and development we must support the many initiatives between Muslims and Christians that are ongoing in different parts of the world and adopt positive attitudes so that the 21st Century is no longer perceived as a century of the clash of civilizations or clash of cultures. He concluded his address by welcoming the guests on behalf of the Muslim Community and prayed Allah The Most Gracious to bestow the blessing of peace and Peaceful coexistence between peoples and nations.

1.2.4 Address by the Vicar General of the Diocese of Maroua-Mokolo and Representative of the Catholic Bishop, Father Henri Djoyang

After observing all protocol, Father Henri Djoyang, the Vicar General who represented the Diocesan Bishop apologized on behalf of Bishop Philip Stevens who was not present because he had to attend a seminar of the Episcopal Conference in Sangmelima.

He welcomed the excellent initiative of PROCMURA on the platform of interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

He observed that through dialogue religious people learn about the right to differ and respect differences and how to continue to listen to each other so as to promote mutual understanding. He challenged participants by saying "Let us, together, hand in hand, work for sustainable dialogue of life so as to promote life! Let us, together, hand in hand, work for social dialogue for the good of humanity beloved of God, the One in whom we believe" and concluded by wishing all a successful regional conference.



Father Henri Djoyang

1.2.5 Address by the Vice Chairperson of PROCMURA, Rev. Rose-Marie Ibyishaka



Rev. Rose-Marie Ibyishaka

In her address, Rev. Rose-Marie Ibyishaka, Vice Chairperson of PROCMURA said that she felt very honoured to be in Maroua for such an important conference which has the theme “Francophone West and Central Africa Regional Conference for Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders for Peace and Development.”

She welcomed the participants on behalf of the General Council and the Executive Committee of PROCMURA, and thanked them for making time from their busy schedules to participate in the conference. She underscored the initiative of the Christian and Muslim religious leaders who are aware that Christianity and Islam have the largest membership in the continent to meet and deliberate on important topics of peace and development.

The vice chairperson of PROCMURA emphasised the significance of Christians and Muslims working together and collaborating for peace and the development of the continent and reiterated that there can be no lasting peace and real development in Africa if Muslims and Christians do not agree and are not at peace with themselves and with each other. She opined that, it is important that the contribution of religious leaders be complemented by governments and civil societies to achieve the noble goal of peace and sustainable development.

On this count, she thanked the Governor of the Region of Far-North, Mr. Augustine Awa Fonka who in spite of his busy schedule and numerous functions made time to be at the opening ceremony.

“This demonstrates the commitment of the government of Cameroon to accompany religious leaders in this noble and important goal of promoting peace and development which Africa needs most. “Your presence, your Excellency does not only show your commitment to the course of peace and development but also the importance of religious leaders as partners with government to promote the peace and development agenda of Africa” she said.

1.2.6 Address by the Representative of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), Rev. Dr. Simon Kossi Dossou

The Rev. Dr. Simon Dossou, Director of the AACC Continental Peace and Advocacy Programme conveyed greetings of the General Secretary of AACC Rev. Dr. André Karamaga, the Executive Committee and all Member Churches of the AACC to the conference.

He reaffirmed the well-knit partnership and relations the AACC has with PROCMURA and praised the peace initiative which PROCMURA carries out in Africa.

He informed participants of the upcoming fiftieth anniversary of the AACC to be held in Kampala, Uganda where issues



Rev. Dr. Simon Dossou

of peace in the African continent and the promotion of African dignity will constitute important elements in the General Assembly. He wished the participants a successful conference.

1.2.7 Address by Rev. Arngeir Langås from Mission Afrika



Rev. Arngeir Langås

Addressing the conference, Rev. Arngeir Langås expressed how honoured he felt to be representing Mission Afrika at the conference. He said that Mission Afrika was proud to be Partners of the Lutheran Brethren’s Church of Cameroon (EFLC) since 1997 and with PROCMURA for over four decades. He said that Christian and Muslim cooperation for peace and development has been a preoccupation of PROCMURA for the past few years and that Mission Afrika and the Danish Mission Council Development Department (DMCDD) was very supportive of this initiative. He prayed that the conference will be successful and have the desired effect as intended.

In conclusion, the Rev. Langås emphasised that cooperation between Christians and Muslims for peace and development in Africa was a set goal he believed PROCMURA would want to spread throughout the continent and hoped that participants would carry this message of peace and development to their constituencies so that its impact would be felt not only in Maroua but in the countries represented in the conference.

1.2.8 Address by the General Adviser of PROCMURA, Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah



Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah making his address

The General Adviser of PROCMURA, Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah began his address by providing a brief background on the formation of PROCMURA in 1959 and how it has sailed through wind and rain to arrive where it is today. He candidly informed participants

that PROCMURA is a movement that seeks to (among other things) promote Christian and Muslim constructive engagement for peace and peaceful co-existence towards holistic development of the human family and the environment.

He said that his role as depicted in the title to his name is to provide advice to Christians and Muslims which is imperative in the promotion of the spiritual and physical well-being of Christians, Muslims, and the wider society of Africa to work towards *Shalom/Salaam* – words that depict the total well-being of humankind.

Turning his attention to the twin words of “Peace” and “Development” that constitute the focus of the conference, the General Adviser made it clear to participants that the world within and outside Africa are aware that Africa is a religious continent and its people are religious people. He said that it is also well known that this religious continent has Muslims and Christians as the majority.

The question that PROCMURA is always asked is:

“If Muslims and Christians form the majority of the African religious landscape and Islam and Christianity are two religions that claim to have peace and goodwill embodied in their teachings as they speak about Salaam and Shalom, then, why is there no peace in the African continent?”

The above general question, said the General Adviser, has of recent times taken a new twist as religion began to be misused to foment conflicts and thus stimulate questions of the following kind:

“Why are there conflicts in Nigeria that appear to ride on religion? Why is the emerging conflict in the Central African Republic assuming religious undertones? Why are rebel attacks in Mali targeting religio-cultural artefacts in Timbuktu and surrounding areas?”

These questions are wake up calls for Christian and Muslim religious leaders to be proactive in conflict prevention, peace and reconciliation and to ensure that they provide education that would enable Christians and Muslims to peacefully co-exist. Turning his attention to development, he emphasised that both the Christian and Muslim faiths recognise that in the creative order of God, humankind are entrusted to be care takers of God’s creation and develop it for their benefit but only as viceroys, vicegerents or stewards and not its owners.

Dr. Mbillah re-emphasised that peace and development are twins. “Where there is no peace there can be no development and where there is no development that will help to satisfy basic human needs there can be no peace.” He appreciated the dignitaries present and urged the Christian and Muslim leaders of Cameroon who neighbour the northern part of Nigeria to work hard in ensuring that the deteriorating relations between Christians and Muslims in that part of Nigeria do not spill over into their country.

He expressed his deep appreciation to the Governor of the Region of Far-North, Mr. Augustine Awa Fonka for taking time off from his busy schedule to come and open the conference.

1.2.9 Address by the Personal Representative of the Head of State, Mr. Augustine AWA FONKA



Mr. Augustine Awa Fonka

The Governor of the Region of Far-North, Mr. Augustine Awa Fonka in the opening sentence of his address acknowledged the honour to represent the Head of State, His Excellency Paul Biya at the conference. He also expressed his gratitude to the organisers for asking him to be the Guest of Honour at the opening ceremony.

With these remarks, the governor welcomed participants who had travelled far and wide to be at the conference and appreciated the choice of Maroua as the venue for the conference, reiterating that the city was a beacon of peace. He thanked PROCMURA and Mission Afrika for working tirelessly to ensure that so many religious leaders came for the conference and also for the financial means that made the conference possible.

“Cameroon”, said the governor “is by its constitutional provision a Secular State which the 1990 Act makes provision to promote civil liberties, freedom of association, freedom of religion, and freedom of opinion.” This, he said “is the reason why there are more than 200 religious associations that coexist peacefully in the country.”

The Governor decried fanaticism from both sides (Christian and Muslim) in spite of the fact that God Almighty, the Creator of the Universe is and remains the same for all faiths, even if some call him “God” because they are English, others “*Dieu*” because they are French and others “Allah” because they are Muslims. He remains the same regardless of the language used to call Him.

Mr. Awa Fonka urged the participants to respect life, love their neighbours and preach the love of the neighbour and respect of the Creator of the universe and humankind. He wondered why in the name of God, people should slaughter each other and conceded that he cannot find an answer.

The governor lamented on situations where religious practices are spirited to divide humanity and lead us into religious wars, adding that if all do not adopt the model promoted by PROCMURA and work for peace and peaceful co-existence the consequences of a religious war could exceed the Hiroshima bomb of the Second World War.

He said that as one of the aims and objectives of the conference is to establish an ideal framework for Christian and Muslim cooperation towards integration and development of the African continent there was need for religious leaders to join hands with the political elite, and civil society to continue to advocate for justice, peace, security and development on the continent.

‘There will be no real development for Africa if Christians and Muslims are not active participants in development programmes. The government of Cameroon and I believe other governments of Africa commend conferences of this nature.’

In his conclusion, he pointed out the need to take care of the needs of the religious leaders so that their mission is not compromised. He implored the participants to make maximum use of the time and space accorded by the conference. The participants were

invited to tour around the Far-North Region for its legendary and hospitality. “Security for participants was guaranteed” he said.

The governor finally evoked the long life for PROCMURA, Africa, Cameroon and its leader, His Excellency Paul Biya. With these words, he declared the conference officially opened.

1.2.10 Vote of Thanks



Hadja Mariama Sow

Giving a vote of thanks, Hadja Mariama Sow, the participants’ spokesperson from the Republic of Guinea thanked all the leaders who came to grace the opening of the conference. She urged the Governor to continue to involve youth and women in the drive to promote peace and development in the country.

Hadja Mariama Sow recognised the role of the eminences; Imams’, Priests’ and Pastors’ in preaching virtues that ensure progress, tolerance, mutual support and love of the neighbour.

She urged them to continue to preach on peace and peaceful co-existence as PROCMURA advocates adding that ‘there is no way to peace, but peace is the way.’

In conclusion, she asked the Governor to convey to His Excellency President Paul Biya, sincere greetings and best wishes for the New Year 2013 and prayed the almighty Allah to imbue the people of Cameroon with His grace and mercy.



Rev. Robert Goyek (left) and Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah (right) interviewed by local media CRTV

1.3 Conference Rationale by the General Adviser of PROCMURA, Rev. Dr. Johnson A. Mbillah

In his introductory remarks Dr. Johnson Mbillah said that PROCMURA decided to invite Christian and Muslim religious leaders from Central and West Africa who share a common language (French) and a largely common geographical feature (Sahel), to provide them with the opportunity to work on how to promote peace in the society, and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims towards development.



The choice of Cameroon and of the northern town of Maroua, he said, was as a result of constant request by the Rev. Robert Goyek for several years, that PROCMURA organise a conference of this nature in Maroua. Rev. Goyek's commitment encouraged PROCMURA to invite him and Sheikh El Hadj Hamadou Banoufé to a PROCMURA Christian and Muslim religious conference on peace and development which was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 2012. It was at this conference that discussions were held on the possibility of organising such a conference, the fruits of which are being experiencing today.

The choice of countries which depicted a mix variety of wealth of experiences some of which may be unique and peculiar to any given country, would stimulate sharing across the regions and the different countries represented and help produce a broader impact on participants across the religious divide. The General Adviser lamented that contacts with Cote d'ivoire where PROCMURA had been very active for many years now had not led to their participation, perhaps because of the unstable political situation in the country at that point in time.

After these remarks the General Adviser then proceeded to ask that the concept paper be directly read in French to avoid the simultaneous interpretation of the document which would eat into the time. For details of the concept paper [See Appendix III. Maroua Conference, Concept paper]

1.3.1 Interaction:

The following questions were raised in plenary:

A participant wanted to know the role PROCMURA played when South Sudan seceded from the larger Sudan.

The General Adviser explained that before the Referendum for self-determination PROCMURA held series of consultations, conferences and meetings with Christian and Muslim leaders to ensure that the two communities work towards the peace of the land.

He said that this had to be done because of fears that ethnic and religious tensions could spill over into violent confrontations. When South Sudan voted for independence, PROCMURA was again there to organise similar gatherings for the two communities to work towards peace in society and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims. There appeared to be mutual suspicion between the two communities.

2.0 DAY 2

PRESENTATIONS

2.1 Country Focus

The second day of the conference was started with prayers by a Muslim Imam and a Christian Pastor. The day's activities began with country delegates making presentations on the situation of Christian and Muslim relations in their countries. The objective was to inform and to enable participants understand what relations in each country is like.

The presentations were made in the following order:

2.1.1 Cameroon

Sheikh El Hadj Hamadou Banoufé &
Rev. Robert Goyek



Cameroon, the host country opened the floor for country presentations led by Sheikh El Hadj Hamadou Banoufé and Rev. Robert Goyek. The duo serialised the diverse ethno-cultural composition of the country. Participants were made aware that the Republic of Cameroon is a secular State and that Islam and Christianity are the dominant trans-cultural religions.

It was thus inevitable to avoid discussing relationship between Christians and Muslims which according to them requires utmost attention, in order to promote peace and social development. Their presentation focused on the promotion of good relations between Christians and Muslims, challenges which both communities face in the preservation of these relationships.



They highlighted on the culture of tolerance and peace which is the norm rather than the exception in Cameroon and explained that this phenomenon is inherited from Cameroonian traditional societies and thus act as a guiding social norm that all religions adhere to.

Secondly, the level of openness and education among the population has led to mutual acceptance and tolerance of the variety of cultures that exist in the country. In Cameroon, every one settles in the area of their choice freely and has the same rights of ownership of land. The will of all Cameroonians to live together peacefully and the support this determination receives from government religious leaders and the wider civil society, provide good conditions for peaceful coexistence and a commitment to development.

Having said these, the presenters acknowledged, if the situation has to be preserved the two communities of Christians and Muslims have to work hard on it, as neighbouring countries such as Nigeria face several challenges on the religious front.

[See Appendix II. Vote of Thanks]

2.1.2 Central African Republic

Dr. Boris Modeste Yakoubou



The Central African Republic presentation was to be made by Imam Oumar Kobine, the President of the Islamic Community of the Republic and Dr. Boris Modeste Yakoubou, General Secretary of the Faith, Culture and Education Network.

Unfortunately, however, the conference took place at a time that the Central African Republic was going through political turmoil as the *séléka* rebel group and the then government of François Bozizé were meeting in Libreville, Gabon in search for a truce. Imam Oumar Kobine was among religious leaders invited in the peace negotiations and could not therefore attend the conference. Dr. Boris Modeste Yakoubou conveyed Imam Kobine's apologies to PROCURA for his inability to participate in the regional conference.

In Dr. Yakoubou's presentation, he recounted the seemingly amicable relations between Christians and Muslims despite the fact that the country had experienced several *coup d'états* during previous regimes. He made it clear that the Central African Republic is a secular State, and has allowed many faiths to settle in the country. The two main religions of which are Christianity and Islam.

He expressed his fears that the prevailing political crisis at the time would spill over and take a religious dimension as rumours had it that the *Séléka* rebels who are mainly Muslims from neighbouring countries of Sudan and Chad were seeking to establish an Islamic State and impose a leader as president of the Republic. Such revelations prompted a slight change in the proceedings as participants sought to address the situation in the Central African Republic.

After exhaustive discussions the religious leaders decided to issue a statement calling for peace and to send that statement to the negotiation for peace team that were meeting

in Libreville, Gabon at the time.

For this statement [*See Appendix VII. Religious Leaders Call for Peace in the Central African Republic*]

Concluding his presentation, Dr. Yakoubou said that in spite of the apparent uncertainty of what the situation was going to be like, he was optimistic that a common stance against certain socio-political problems inspired by the philosophy of “Zo Kwe Zo “ and the motto of the Central African Republic which is “Unity Dignity-Work” and the Church of Central Africa initiative of “Oiko Mene” (same blood) will eventually win the day. For details of Dr. Yakoubou’s presentation [*See Appendix IV. Contribution of the Central African Republic*]

2.1.3 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Marie-Louise Nsongo Mpya



The only delegate from the DRC at the meeting, Mrs. Marie-Louise Nsongo Mpya began her presentation by apologising on behalf of the designated delegates, Imam Abdallah Mangala and Rev. Dr. Molo Kakulé who could not travel to the conference due to circumstances beyond their control. She made it clear that the constitution of the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Articles 1 and 37 describes it as a secular State and that it recognises that every citizen has the freedom of expression of their faith.

In spite of the political turmoil in DRC said Mrs. Marie-Louise Nsongo Mpya all religious groups continue to co-exist peaceful. This has been the trend for many years and she prayed that it would continue to be so.

[*See Appendix IV. Contribution of the Democratic Republic of Congo*]

2.1.4 Senegal

Pastor Joseph Diouf, Sheikh Saliou Mbacké & Seynabou Cissé



The presentation on Senegal was jointly made by Pastor Joseph Diouf, Area Adviser of PROCMURA for Senegal who is also the PROCMURA Regional Coordinator for Francophone West Africa region, Sheikh Saliou Mbacké of the Interfaith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA), and Mrs. Seynabou Cissé of Casamance. Senegal is the perfect example of a society that upholds peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims. Having 90% of its populace as Muslims, 5% Christian and the rest being adherents of traditional religions, the story of the land of Téranga (hospitality) is what the whole of Africa if not the world needs to emulate.

Sheikh Saliou Mbacké in his contribution said that, peaceful coexistence between

Christians and Muslims in Senegal is somehow biological, since Senghor the first president of Senegal was Catholic, the second president Abdou Diouf was a Muslim married to a Catholic woman.

Pastor Diouf on his part emphasised that, the celebration of festivals is a factor that promotes relations between different faith communities as Christians and Muslim share food and fellowship together as one family in spite of their different religious backgrounds and doctrines. Everyone is aware that they have to come closer to God in their respective religions and pray that God unites them in spite of their religious differences.

In some instances Muslim families give their children Christian names and vice versa in admiration and respect for a friend, colleague or acquaintance and indeed in respect of the Christian faith, and the Muslim faith.

In spite of this commendable situation, the presenters lamented that in recent times there has been tensions in the Dakar area where extremists tend to stimulate violence and are brought to order immediately. They said that the situation calls for concerted efforts to face such challenges so as to preserve peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims.

[See Appendix IV. Contribution of Senegal]



2.1.5 Niger

Pastor Labo Soumaila & Ms. Fatouma Alzouma



Represented by Pastor Labo Soumaila and Ms. Fatouma Alzouma, participants were informed that Niger has a history of good relations between the majority Muslim population and the minority Christian population. In 2008, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Niamey Mgr. Michel Cartatéguy was quoted in the press as saying that Niger is one of the “best examples” of cohabitation and cooperation between Christians and Muslims.

The present situation is fluid as Nigeria their immediate neighbour is facing several challenges and there are signs of a spilt over into Niger as extremist elements are beginning to emerge.

[See Appendix IV. Contribution of Niger]

2.1.6 Guinea

Fr. François Tounkara and Hadja Mariama Sow



Father François Tounkara and Hadja Mariama Sow from the Republic of Guinea-Conakry began their presentation by personally thanking Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah, the General Adviser of PROCMURA for the honour done them by inviting them to participate in such an important conference. He indicated in his presentation that religious leaders in Mali have always engaged the political class in the promotion of peaceful coexistence between all faith communities in the country.

Father Tounkara hoped that in spite of the political challenges in the country Muslim and Christian leaders will continue to work towards the promotion of peace in the country so that development which is very much needed in the country will take off without disruption. *[See Appendix IV. Contribution of Guinea]*



2.1.7 Mali

Rev. Thaddée Diarra & Rachel Tenin Doumbia



The Mali situation was presented by Rev. Thaddée Diarra and Mrs. Rachel Tenin Doumbia. They began their presentation by officially informing the participants that Koné Salimata *dite* Sylvie who was expected to be part of the meeting accidentally twisted her ankle at the airport in Casablanca and was admitted in hospital there for an operation to be carried out. As a result of the accident Imam Niankado Seydou who was travelling with them offered to stay behind to take care of her.

On the situation in Mali, Rev. Thaddée Diarra lamented that the country was confronted with extremism especially in the north as Islamists sought to overthrow the government. He said that the extremist are confronting traditional Islam itself as they had begun to destroy Sufi Islamic artefacts.

From the Muslim perspective Imam Seydou Niankado in his presentation which was read on his behalf as he remained in Casablanca, he lamented that because the African continent continues to experience turmoil, misunderstandings, rejection or conflict, latent or open, it creates a situation of uneasy coexistence.

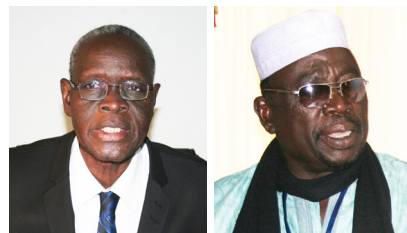
“As we in Mali appear to be prisoners of hope, we pray to you Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, to guide us in the way of eternal peace”, he concluded.

[See Appendix IV. Contribution of Mali]



2.1.8 Burkina Faso

Rev. Flavien Tapsoba & El Hadj Baba Sidiki Kontogomdé



Presented by Rev. Flavien Tapsoba Executive Committee member of PROCMURA and assisted by El Hadj Baba Sidiki Kontogomdé, the latter informed participants that Rev. Flavien Tapsoba is the former president of the National Electoral Commission of Burkina Faso who did his job to the admiration of all and recognised as such by the President of the Republic.

The Rev. Tapsoba in making the presentation first and foremost acknowledged the existing excellent relations between Christians (Catholics and Evangelicals) and Muslims in Burkina Faso. Pastor Tapsoba highlighted that, religious leaders alongside other leaders of civil society and the State often search for solutions to the country's problems.

In spite of the good relations, he went out to highlight the challenges that both communities (Muslims and Christians) face in preserving these relationships as fanaticism, fundamentalism and sectarianism is gradually emerging among both the Christian and Muslim communities which require some effort to contain it.

He called on the participants to be aware, God wants even the wicked to live and change not to be destroyed and that should be our goal – how to change minds.

[See Appendix IV. Contribution of Burkina Faso]



2.1.9 Benin

Sheikh Abdul Raimi Aminou Anifowoché



Sheikh Abdul Raimi Aminou Anifowoché who made the presentation on behalf of the Benin delegation prayed Allah to assist all who work for peace. Sheikh Aminou said that it is not uncommon in Benin to find families where some are Christians, others Muslims and others practitioners of traditional religion. This has helped a lot to promote tolerance and peaceful co-existence among people of different religions.

He praised the PROCMURA initiative on reaching out to religious leaders and bringing them to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 2012 saying that the successful meeting can be noted with great admiration since it eventually gave birth to the present conference that has brought together the French Speaking countries of Central and West Africa.

In his assessment of the state of relations between Muslims and Christians in Benin he quipped that Benin is a very religious country but the “money” factor has become bigger than a weapon of mass destruction.

In his conclusion, he said that intra-Muslim and intra-Christian engagement for peace goes on among different religious groups to work for peace and this has made it easier for Christians and Muslims to meet in different forums to work for peace in the country. These developments help to promote Christian-Muslim good relations.

[See Appendix IV. Contribution of Benin]



2.1.10 Chad

Pastor Philippe Kahaissou & Ben Gadjiwere



The Republic of Chad was represented by Pastor Philippe Kahaissou and Ben Gadjiwere. They informed participants that the President of the Republic of Niger initiated a National Day of peace and peaceful co-existence among Chadians and that the day is celebrated annually on 28th November.

On that day, Muslims and Christians join hands, hearts and minds, to pray for peace in the land. This initiative, said the participants, “Has helped to foster peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims”.

They noted that Chad has faced numerous challenges such as war and suspicion between Christians and Muslim over the years and through the Chadian government initiative to promote peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims through interfaith seminars, pastors, priests and Imams preach peace in Churches and Mosques.

[See Appendix IV. Contribution of Chad]

2.2 Questions and Answers Period:

After these presentations the floor was opened for participants to feel free to raise questions to the General Adviser or presenters of the country briefings.

A participant raised a question on the Oneness of God which Christians and Muslims understand differently and whether that was cause for division. The General Adviser responded that PROCMURA’s philosophy is that Christians and Muslims must be authentic in what they profess and not bend their understanding of God to please the other. On the specific issue of God the General Adviser said that Oneness of God is not contested by any of the two religions.

It is what we mean by oneness that is contested. He gave a simple analogy of the differences by saying that in Islam God is one and only, alone and lonely (*Tawhīd*) while in Christianity, God is one and only alone but not lonely (Triune). The deep theological and philosophical discussions of these concepts have to be left for the Christian and Muslim theological specialists.

On the question on PROCMURA’s activities in Senegal and whether Christians and Muslims embark on proselytism, Pastor Joseph Diouf explained that there is no proselytising of the other.

On the question of the causes of the prevailing problems in Mali, the Malian delegate said that these problems were as a result of the Libyan crisis which led to Islamists elements moving into Mali and creating so much destruction in the country. All what the Malian people need is the end of the crisis.

Prayer: Prayers were said for the upcoming elections in Guinea due to take place in 12th May 2013, and for the situation in Mali being mindful that the situation there could spill over into northern Burkina Faso. An Imam and a pastor prayed.



Participants during closing prayers

3.0 DAY 3

LECTURE PRESENTATIONS

Various lectures were presented on different topics that elucidated the complex situation of Christian-Muslim relations in Africa touching on the role of religion for peace and development and challenges and opportunities of cooperation for peace and development.

3.1 The Role of Religion for Peace and Development: By Issaka Tahirou Sy



Mr. Issaka Maman Tahirou SY, a Peace Consultant working in the Sahel region, articulated this very much appreciated topic with much confidence and clarity. He said that peace is not a one off thing but a dynamic that can change and needs to be constantly worked on to maintain it. He said that provided the greatest atmosphere for sustainable development to take place and to that extent peace is indispensable for development. As a matter of emphasis he said that:

Peace promotes harmony in the lives of citizens and the community and allows effective participation in the development process;

Peace as respect and protection of human rights, promote access to resources and basic conditions for life. He went ahead to derive quotations from the United Nations Charter on Peace.

[See Appendix IV. The Role of Religion in Peace and Development]

3.2 Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities of Cooperation for Peace and Development: By Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah

In his presentation, the Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah informed participants that PROCMURA's task is to strongly advocate for peace in society and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in the African continent.

He said that the focus on Christians stems from the fact that Africa is a religious continent with majority of religious peoples being Christians and Muslims. During his PowerPoint presentation, a gallery of PROCMURA activity across Africa was relayed to participants. The General Adviser called for genuineness and honesty among Muslims and Christians arguing that those are values that create confidence and help promote sustainable peace for development.

He reminded participants that PROCMURA's aim is not to water down any body's faith but to encourage collaboration among the two faith communities. He warned against the notion of putting Islam and Christianity together to create an "an omelette of religion"

emphasising that PROCMURA's vision advocates for understanding (not forgetting) our differences in order to live in harmony.

Dr. Mbillah cautioned Christian and Muslim leaders against condemnatory sermons of one another's religion adding that religion can be an emotive issue and when one's religion is denigrated it can easily stimulate violent confrontations. Finally he urged participants to have intra-Muslim and intra-Christian discussions on how to constructively relate across the religious divide to promote peace for development.

[See Appendix III. Conference Rationale]

3.3. Questions & Answers

During the questions & answers sessions, one participant touched on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but Rev. Dr. Mbillah interjected quickly by making it clear to participants that PROCMURA's work was beyond such dimension saying that its primary and priority work "is to first consider the issues that concern Africa and Africans."

One speaker commented that the best way to have sustainable peace is for religious teachers and Christian and Muslim parents to educate their children to be peaceful and avoid violence and discrimination.

After the rich and insightful presentations, a Message of Peace for the Central African Republic and the Final Draft Communiqué were read by Sheikh Saliou Mbacké and Rev. Dr. Komi Djinyéfa Adraké.



Rev. Dr. Komi Djinyéfa Adraké (second left) reading the draft Communiqué

4.0 DAY 4

GROUP WORK BY COUNTRIES, LESSONS LEARNT AND PROSPECTIVE ACTIONS

Participants were distributed into groups by country whereby each country having specific context, gave different answers to the same questions. The groups later reported their findings to the gathering.

These groups outlined lessons learnt from the conference as well as the way forward. The following are the questions and answers that the various group discussions came up with.

1. Discuss the value of this conference and lessons learnt.
2. What actions or initiatives would you take in your country that will have real impact on lessons learned from this conference?

1) CAMEROON DELEGATES' REPORT

The group consisted of thirty (30) participants from Cameroon who worked in the spirit of friendliness and fellowship. Sheikhs El Hadj Banoufé and Zounedou were appointed president and secretary respectively.

The discussions focused on the value of the PROCMURA programme, lessons and perspectives that they drew from it and initiatives that would have multiplier effect in Cameroon.

I- Value of the programme, lessons and perspectives

Participants appreciated the PROCMURA initiative in Cameroon and expressed their satisfaction in the sense that:

- It encourages stakeholders and highlights the importance of peace as a virtue shared by all;
- It promotes the recognition of religious differences and lays the foundation for mutual understanding;
- It is necessary and essential for communities to live together;
- It is in line with religious teachings (for Muslims and Christians);
- It is rich, but must be adapted to the contextual realities in Cameroon;
- It helps in religious nourishment in addition to the social and economic development of people;
- It is a unifying factor for the faithful who walk together to better understand one another;
- It encourages awareness of the participants' commitment to the Christian-Muslim relations cause;
- It enlightens people hitherto unaware of the urgency that building peace for development is a duty for all;
- It is a framework for the promotion of religious authenticity;
- It facilitates the actions of local stakeholders on the initiatives they have developed at their level;
- It challenges believers who do not know enough about their religion.

II- How to ensure that the initiative have a multiplier effect.

There need to be awareness raising the short to medium term. We commit to do this the following activities:

- Replication of the seminar focus and outcome in the various religious communities;
- Taking individual commitment to develop local initiatives to promote good Muslim-Christian relations;
- Organisation of a national workshop in Maroua for Christian and Muslim religious leaders;
- Establishment of a framework by which Christian and Muslim religious leaders; inspired by the principles of PROCMURA can spread such principles to become the norm in Cameroonian society.

2) CHAD DELEGATES' REPORT

I. The value, lessons and perspectives:

The programme is beneficial because it helps in bringing together the Christian and Muslim religious leaders in a culture of peace and peaceful coexistence, keeping their religious identities intact. It also allows the acceptance of one another for the country's development because there can be no development without peace.

II. Initiatives:

- Lobbying within local authorities and the government to support such initiatives morally, financially and materially.
- Organisation of the day of prayer to urge for interreligious peaceful coexistence, peace and development;
- Educating the faithful in churches and mosques on the merits of peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims;
- Requesting PROCMURA to organise together with the religious leaders of Chad, a seminar on peaceful coexistence involving Christians and Muslims.

3) CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AND DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO DELEGATES' JOINT REPORT

The programme on Christian-Muslim relations has great value, having great regard to the place of religion in the construction and consolidation of peace in our countries. Leaders of religions should be united, and need to develop a relationship of brotherhood. This makes them proactive and allows them to take full responsibility in the world.

PROCMURA also assists religions in understanding and developing a complementary relationship therefore able to denounce abuses, reconcile conflicting parties and sensitise people.

We encourage PROCMURA to continue to organise such meetings, which offer forums to share and train Christian and Muslim leaders for a peaceful coexistence that guarantees sustainable development.

In terms of the lessons learnt, we believe that great care must be observed in Christian-Muslim encounters, particularly through our attitudes. We must be tolerant, respectful

for the other's religion. We must control our use of language, if we want to develop effective and successful solidarity and brotherhood.

Question 2:

First of all, we, the participants in this meeting, have a duty to replicate the results of this initiative in our respective countries as religious leaders.

Then, we expect PROCMURA to organise similar meetings for religious leaders to provide alternative spaces for meeting, sharing and exchanges in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Finally, we recommend that PROCMURA puts up a structure in the Central African Republic, as it exists in the countries in West Africa. This structure we believe shall complement the activities and initiatives underway or already completed in order to fully achieve the objectives of the programme.

4) MALI DELEGATES' REPORT

I. The values and lessons learnt from PROCMURA's programme

PROCMURA adds a great value to all the Christian and Muslim religious leaders without outside intervention. It promotes tolerance, acceptance and mutual respect.

PROCMURA does not proselytise, syncretise, compromise or encourage the ignorance of the fundamental differences between Islam and Christianity.

II. Before the meeting in Maroua;

We delegates from Mali notified participants at the conference that:

- We wrote to the Minister of Religious Affairs to inform him of our trip to Cameroon, from January 5, 2013 to January 12, 2013. (Directed by Pastor Thaddée Diarra).
- Requested for a hearing with him either on Thursday, January 3rd or Friday, January 4th, 2013 (conducted by Pastor Thaddée and Imam Niankado).

III. After the meeting in Maroua

Targets:

Religious leaders, Muslims and Christians, Pastors, Priests, Imams and *Ulemas*.

Communication:

1. An oral and written report will be sent to the Ministry of Religious Affairs.
2. An oral and written report will be made to senior religious leaders of Mali:
 - The President of the Supreme Islamic Council of Mali;
 - The President of the Episcopal Conference of Mali
 - The Managing Director of the Association of Churches and Protestant Evangelical Mission Groups in Mali (AGEMPEM)
 - The President of the Association Ansar Dine, Sherif Mohamed Haider
 - His Eminence Souffi Bilal
 - Organise workshops and training forum to identify needs and specific actions

- to ensure peace and development.
- Initiate dialogue centres for Muslim and Christian communities.
- How we use language in communication? We will use Bamanakan, French and other local languages.

5) SENEGAL DELEGATES' REPORT

A. Values:

We appreciate the meeting as follows:

- Learning from the presentations
- The interaction between true and faithful Muslim and Christian religious leaders, Shared values of the two religions,
- The experience of each other.
- Joint actions carried out in different countries in conflict.
- Education and information that is useful to both communities (Christian and Muslim) and prevent potential conflicts on the African continent and especially in our countries.

B. Measures:

At the end of the meeting we saw the need upon arrival in the country to:

- Make the call for peaceful coexistence
- Identify all structures and inter-religious institutions, civil society, NGOs, associations, movements of women and youth and the media to assist in the cause.
- Organise a national meeting for consultation and restitution of the Maroua resolutions and other meetings to set up a body (National Council for Interreligious Peace and Development in Senegal) that can work with existing organisations such as PROCMURA-Senegal with Pastor Joseph Diouf) and inter-faith meetings for Peace in Africa involving the Regional Coordinator of USOFORAL Sheikh Saliou Mbacké with Cissé Seynabou, the Department of Islamic Dialogue (CRSFPC), Christian Catholic Church of Senegal.

Conclusion:

The clarification by Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah on the idea of a “universal religion” and that PROCMURA does not intend to cook an omelette with all religions but nurture sharing framework for creating good relations between Muslims and Christians leaders working on Peace.

6) NIGER DELEGATES' REPORT

The programme is:

- Relevant
- Objective
- Required for a good and healthy coexistence between the Christian and Muslim religious leaders
- Important for the political stability of our country.
- It can be an important factor for establishing and consolidating and existing relationships
- The programme provides an opportunity to:
- Understand the core values that PROCMURA defends (not religious syncretism or compromise).
- To have contacts with other leaders.
- To have an overview of the realities that we live in as Christians and Muslims.
- To re-emphasise and highlight the evils that undermine good relations within our respective religions.

Measures and initiatives / prospects for greater impact:

- To write a report on our participation in the conference.
- Contact brother Boubacar Seydou Touré to share the vision with him. So as to involve him in the action.
- Request for hearing with the Minister and humanitarian actions.
- Sharing the vision with Christian and Muslim religious leaders at the national level.
- Request airtime on radio and national television broadcasts for bringing together Christian and Muslim leaders to the same table.
- The CDMA / AIDS (Alliance of Religious Muslims and Christians in the fight against AIDS) will be used to reach religious leaders.
- Request PROCMURA to assist us with its expertise and experience.

7) BENIN DELEGATES' REPORT

The value of the programme;

Practical

Realistic

In the future, will improve relations between Muslims and Christians

Lessons learnt from the programme:

- We can take advantage of the commitments
- We can find values that are in Islam and in Christianity to promote Christian-Muslim relations

Acquisition of concepts:

- Negative solidarity and positive solidarity
 - Negative tolerance and positive tolerance
 - Religions are sources of peace and not a source of conflict
- Knowledge of the four dimensions of change is:

- Personal change
- Relational change
- Structural change
- Cultural change

Question 2

Initiatives

Co-organisation of similar conferences with resource persons, union associations and Christian and Muslim women's associations, youth associations, and some political leaders to popularise the vision of PROCMURA to better establish the importance of Muslim-Christian relations for peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims. These conferences will be held in the south, middle and north of Benin in the cities of Porto-Novo, Cotonou, Abomey and Parakou Djougou.

Co-organisation of Radio and TV programmes;

1. Radio Maranatha in Cotonou
2. Radio Allelouya Porto-Novo
3. The voice of Islam in Cotonou
4. Radio Attakè Porto-Novo

Resumption of the programme "Religion Crossroads" by Rev. Dr. Nicodème Alagbada on Radio Weke (based in Porto-Novo)

Prospects

- Promote intra-Christian relations
- Promote intra-Muslim relations
- Encourage Muslim-Christian relations for peace and development

8) GUINEA DELEGATES' REPORT

Lessons Learnt:

- Good organisation and moderation of the conference
- Rich, varied and informative presentations
- Interesting and fruitful debates
- Timely and edifying presentation by the General Adviser of PROCMURA
- The friendly atmosphere in Maroua

Perspectives and measures to take:

- Make a written report to our agents; our local authorities;
- Ensure that delegates from each denomination are accountable to their respective communities;
- Develop an action plan from the rationale and the recommendations of this Maroua conference and its implementation.

9) BURKINA FASO DELEGATES' REPORT

- Everything is positive
- The understanding of one's faith;
- Acquire an understanding of the values defended by PROCMURA;
- Acceptance of differences between Christians and Muslims;

I. Lessons Learned:

- Positive tolerance between Christians and Muslims;
- The need for implementation of the PROCMURA programme in each African country;
- Learning that in all countries there has been an attempt of reconciliation between Christians and Muslims

II. Perspectives / Actions:

- Replicate the recommendation of the meeting;
- Establishing PROCMURA in Burkina Faso for Muslims and Catholics as PROCMUA is well known by the evangelicals in the country.
- Organisation of sensitization workshops and taking steps to prevent slippage related to religions e.g. The situation in northern Mali, which has an impact on our country and neighbouring countries



Mrs Hélène Bouré from Guinea making her contribution

4.1 CLOSING REMARKS

In his closing remarks, Sheikh El Hadj Hamadou Banoufé expressed his joy and satisfaction for having a successful conference. He said, “We work for God because we work for the development of men and women” and appreciated all who participated and expressed hope of meeting them again God-willing.

On his part, Rev. Robert Goyek thanked all for having spared their precious time to be part of the regional conference saying that he was honoured to be involved in such a big meeting for religious leaders. He reiterated that the work of PROCMURA is the work of God and that is the reason why God has preserved it for over 50 years and asked God to relentlessly move it forward. He reminded participants that the closing of the conference “is not an end but the beginning to work for peace and development in Cameroon and countries represented”.

Dr. Boris Yakoubou Modeste from the Central African Republic expressed his gratitude for such a conference coming at time when his country was in political stand-off between rebels and the government and the fact that participants came up with a message of peace that was sent to delegates who at the time were meeting in Libreville, Gabon. Mrs. Hadja Mariama Sow, a prominent figure of peace from Guinea expressed her gratitude for being part of this landmark meeting.

The General Adviser of PROCMURA, Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah said, he welcomed the fact that the message sent to the delegations in Libreville on the situation in Central African Republic was well received and addressed with the urgency and media coverage it required. On behalf of PROCMURA, the Team Leader - Finance and Administration, Ms. Joy Wandabwa thanked the participants for availing themselves for the important conference in the beginning of the year and noted that the PROCMURA family had extended thanks to the conference hosts. She also extended her gratitude to Danish Partners for their financial logistical support.

Finally the final communiqué was read by the Area Adviser for PROCMURA-Togo. Rev. Dr Adraké. *[See Appendix VII. Maroua Communiqué]*

After reading the communiqué, the conference was closed with a word of prayer by the President of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon and CPCC, Rev. Robert Goyek and Sheikh El Hadj Hamadou Banoufé.



Rev. Robert Goyek(left), El Hadj Baba Sidiki Kontogomdé (second left) and El Hadj Hamadou Banoufé (right) congratulate Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah (second right) during the closing ceremony

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Practical Considerations

The Following teams were selected for practical considerations

a. Drafting of the Final Communiqué

1. Dr. Desiré Adraké
2. Dr. Boris Yakoubou
3. Sheikh Saliou Mbacké
4. Rev. Thaddée Diarra

b. Note Taking

1. Tahirou Sy
2. Pastor Joseph Diouf
3. Rev. François Tounkara
4. Muhammad Mbaha
5. Paul Mwalavu

c. Rapporteurs:

1. Rev. Jean Ng'abana
2. Rev. Daniel Dushimimana
3. Abubakar Muhammad

d. Logistics:

1. Joy Wandabwa (PROCMURA - Kenya)
2. Rev. Arngeir Langås (Mission Afrika - Denmark)
3. Rev. Samuel Dawaï (EFLC - Cameroon)

Appendix II

OPENING SPEECHES

2.1 Welcome Address by the Government Delegate to the Urban Community of Maroua

The Personal Representative of the President of the Republic;
The Governor of the Region of Far-North
The Prefect of Diamaré;
Muslim and Christian communities' religious leaders;
Distinguished guests all protocol observed;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

It gives me great pleasure to speak today on the occasion of the Francophone West and Central African Regional Conference for Christian and Muslim religious leaders for Peace and Development.

Let me first of all welcome Reverends, Christian religious leaders from Africa and elsewhere and wish you a pleasant stay in Maroua city which has been honoured to host this important meeting, and which is held for the first time in Cameroon.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests, the choice of the city of Maroua to host such a meeting for reflection and dialogue is far from being a fact of chance. Our city is actually a good example not only of peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians, but also a continuing dialogue between these two major religions whose leaders have maintained good relations, not to mention consultations, thereby demonstrating that religious faith, far from being a barrier between men, is rather an opportunity that can foster mutual development between communities.

The holding of a regional conference of Christian and Muslim leaders, will undoubtedly go beyond religious differences specific to all and sundry and accepted by each other, deepen the reflection on values that convey these two religions not only to maintain peace and harmony, but also to promote development. It is undeniable that the Maroua conference is timely, given the conflicts witnessed in many places across the world, due to rightly or wrongly, related causes to religion. It will therefore strengthen peaceful relations hitherto maintained by these two great communities, but also prevent any potential threats likely to undermine these achievements.

Moreover, it will identify points of convergence to strengthen this collaboration towards common goals of development, both spiritual and material for these two communities, which is also predestine with Holy Scriptures for man, and as illustrated rightly through the implementation of the policy of Peaceful Coexistence in Cameroon by His Excellency Paul Biya, President of the Republic.

I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing the gratitude of the people of our city which has become the capital of interreligious dialogue, while wishing you a successful and peaceful meeting, just like the religious leaders are united, so should both Muslim and Christian and those who you represent, continue to live in peace, harmony and progress. Finally, I the Personal Representative of Mr. President and Head of State conclude by

wishing you and our distinguished guests, the best wishes for 2013.

Long live the city of Maroua;
Long live interreligious dialogue;
Long live Cameroon and the Head of State.
Thank you for your kind attention.

Robert BAKARY
Government Delegate to the Maroua Urban Community

2.2 Address by the President of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon and of the Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon (EFLC / CPCC)

*The Governor of the Region of Far-North, Personal Representative of the President of the Republic,
The Prefect of the department of Diamaré,
The Government Delegate to the Urban Community of Maroua,
The General Adviser of PROCMURA,
Partners from Mission Afrika,
Their Majesties, Their Eminences, Reverends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a great honour for me to be part of this historic conference on Christian-Muslim relations. Indeed, my fellow Cameroonians and I feel honoured by your presence here in Maroua on the occasion of the Francophone West and Central Africa Regional Conference for Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders for Peace and Development.

We are delighted that, it is the first time that the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations (PROCMURA) based in Nairobi, Kenya, organised such a conference in Cameroon.

I welcome you all to Maroua.

Just to remind you, having had the opportunity to participate in several conferences of this nature across the African continent and elsewhere in the world, and having seen the results and experiences from other African countries in the field of interreligious dialogue Sheikh El Hadj Banoufé Hamadou and I had wished to hold such a conference in Cameroon. Here we are now, finally, thanks to the Almighty God to whom we give thanks.

We want to express our gratitude to our partners, PROCMURA (Kenya) and Mission Afrika (Denmark) for their facilitation and realization of these wishes. We say thank you especially to Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah and Rev. Arngeir Langås for their personal involvement in the implementation of this conference. We express our gratitude to His Excellency Paul Biya, President of the Republic, Head of State whose invaluable support has made the meeting a success.

I request the Personal Representative of the President, to convey our sincere thanks to the Cameroonian authorities. To the Governor of the Region of Far-North, government officials, security services and law enforcement agencies all protocols observed, and all responsible for organisation of this conference, we express our gratitude for their involvement in facilitating the conference.

We would like to note that the choice of Cameroon, our beloved and beautiful country, is not trivial though God's ways are inscrutable. Indeed, Cameroon has something to give to other countries of the world and Africa in particular. Cameroon is a stable country where the culture of peace prevails, within the government and in particular the first of the Cameroonian Head of State, is an indispensable asset to our development. But we also learn from others outside Cameroon, especially on the relations between the two major religions practised in Cameroon namely Islam and Christianity.

That is why we expect from this conference that other countries share with us their experiences of interreligious dialogue in order to establish a real sustainable forum for dialogue and cultivate peace between the Communities of Faith, Christian denominations and Islamic Faith which as a result will allow us to continue to provide our country Cameroon, our contribution to peace and development.

We, Christian and Muslim Leaders of Cameroon firmly believe that religion is a vector of peace and development because men and women in their spirit and mind can contribute to sustainable development of their country. How can we imagine sustainable development without peace? Aren't we also persuaded that religion is an effective tool in the promotion of respect for human life, and that is the pivotal message of religion? Conflicts are inherent in life, in other words we cannot live without conflicts, because it is part of life of individuals, families and the whole society. But we can still prevent, mitigate and resolve them quickly. Conflicts can arise from several sources: political, economic, cultural and social. Misguided interest always leads to conflict and can easily turn into violent conflicts that cause loss of lives and destruction of property, hence slowing down the development of a people or a country.

It is our duty, as religious and traditional leaders to make our contribution to the government's efforts to prevent or resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner. We will do this based on our faith in God, the source of obedience to God and love of neighbour and respect of law, justice, peace and development of our country.

The God we invoke daily as Christians and Muslims in our Temples, our churches and mosques, is the God of life. He loves life and fills us with peace by his grace. On what grounds can we end our neighbours' life, a neighbour who is created in the image of God? In all circumstances and in all places, religion should promote peace and protect the lives of families, peoples and nations. That is why we believe that Christian and Muslim leaders have a duty more than ever before in history, to renew their commitment to the completion of the work taking place here in Maroua from 7th to 10th January 2013 and continue to be agents of peace in their social environment.

Moreover, let us seize this opportunity offered through the conference to remind the people of Cameroon that religion is never a tool of violence, division within families or between peoples. On the contrary, religion is a tool of promoting brotherhood, peace, and love for the holistic development of humankind. Just look at the role of religious communities in conflict or in the areas of education, health of people in Africa! Faith communities come in and support governments in their development efforts. The Bible says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God" (Matthew 5:9).

Consequently, it is our hope that out of this conference, practical and achievable resolutions are taken both at the country and regional level for the preservation and consolidation

of peace. We hope that the outcome of our work here in Maroua, as Christian and Muslim religious leaders will nurture a continuity of such initiatives at local, national, sub-regional and regional levels with a view to the development of God's people and sustainable development in our various nations, and for this purpose, I suggest that, a monitoring body be established here in Cameroon and Central Africa.

*The Governor of the Region of Far North,
Personal Representative of the President of the Republic,
The Prefect of the department of Diamaré,
The Government Delegate of the Urban Community of Maroua
The General Adviser of PROCMURA
Dear Partners from Mission Afrika
Their Majesties, Their Eminences, Reverend,
Ladies and gentlemen*

By renewing our appreciation for your tireless efforts and your availability for our work, once again we thank you for your presence at this ceremony, and wish our participants from different African countries and Europe, a pleasant stay in Maroua.

Finally, we express to each one of you here as well as your families, your staff and all Christian and Muslim communities, our wishes for peace, happiness and prosperity for the year 2013; May God Himself bless you! and also bless us throughout the conference, as well as Cameroon and our various nations that good Christian-Muslim relations last forever more!

Thank you!

2.3 Address by the Grand Imam of the City of Maroua

*The Representative of His Excellency the Head of State,
The Governor of the Region of Far-North,
The Government Delegate to the Urban Community of Maroua,
The President of the Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon,
The General Adviser of PROCMURA,
The Bishop of the Diocese of Maroua-Mokolo,
Distinguished Imams and Pastors,
Distinguished Guests,
Assalamu alaikum WA RAHMATULLÂHI WA BARKÂTUHU
"May peace and blessings be upon you"*

At this first meeting of Christian and Muslim religious leaders, organised by PROCMURA and supported by all congregations here and elsewhere in our peaceful town.

It is noteworthy that this foundation intends to place for us in an atmosphere of mutual respect, fundamental doctrines of our respective religions. It is an ideal opportunity for all of us to exchange ideas, build shared values of dialogue and cooperation for peace and development between followers of the two largest religions in the world.

One of our values and indeed our vision, as Muslims and Christians is promoting the dignity of every single human being. Allah says in the Holy Quran: "Verily, We have raised the dignity of man" and in another verse, God says: "We have given men the ability to tame the oceans and space. We have filled their wonders and supremacy over the other creatures. "

The pursuit of human dignity and the preservation of his/her integrity are virtues taught by all monotheistic religions. Thus, the awakening of this divine principle is a sacred

mission that requires constant efforts so as to assure common human values in relation to his/her physical, moral and material needs, be it as an individual or collective men and women without distinction.

In the quest, we must admit that many initiatives between Muslims and Christians have been set up throughout the world. In this regard, it is imperative to adopt positive attitudes so that the 21st Century continues to be perceived or experienced, as it were, the Century of clash of civilizations or clash of cultures. But it can turn into an era of intelligent understanding and coexistence of brotherhood and love.

*Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

On the occasion of this interreligious meeting for peace and development, let me on behalf of the Muslim community here present our welcome wishes to all guests, eminent personalities who have come from foreign countries.

At the end of these words, we pray to Allah The Most Gracious to bestow the blessing of peaceful coexistence and harmony among people and nations. May He inspires His vision in, leaders of our country and beyond in achieving the objectives of peace, stability and prosperity. Finally, May God, by His grace, grant this conference the success it deserves.

God You are the Only All knowing All Able. Amin

Thank you,
Wassâlâmu alaikum wa rahmatullâhi wa Barkâtuhu,

2.4 Address by the Vicar General of the Diocese of Maroua-Mokolo, Representative of the Bishop:

*Excellency the Personal Representative of the Head of State,
Excellency the Governor of the Region of Far-North,
The Prefect of Diamaré,
The Government Delegate to the Urban Community of Maroua,
Respectable authorities invited all protocols observed,*

I would like to apologise on behalf of Bishop Philip Stevens who is with us in thoughts but not physically present today because he had to attend a seminar of the Episcopal Conference in Sangmelima.

We welcome this excellent initiative on the platform of interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims. Through this dialogue based on the right to differ and respect for this right, we can continue to listen to each other for mutual understanding. Let us, together, hand in hand, work for sustainable dialogue of life so as to promote life! Let us, together, hand in hand, work for social dialogue for the good of humanity beloved of God, the One in whom we believe! Have a successful Regional Conference!

**Father Henri Djoyang
Vicar General of Diocese of Maroua-Mokolo**

2.5 Address by the Vice President of PROCMURA (Rev. Rose-Marie Ibyishaka)

*The Governor of the Region of Far-North,
The Personal Representative of the President of the Republic,
The Prefect of the Department of Diamaré,
The Government Delegate to the Urban Community of Maroua,
The President of CPCC,
The General Adviser of PROCMURA,
The partners from Mission Afrika,
Their Majesties, Their Eminences, Reverends,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

It is a great joy and honour to be here in Maroua, Cameroon more specifically for this conference with the theme “Francophone West Africa and Central Regional Initiative for Religious Leaders Christians and Muslims for Peace and Development “.

On behalf of the General Council and Executive Committee of PROCMURA, I want to welcome you and thank you at the beginning of this year 2013; you have spared time within your busy schedules and availed yourselves for this conference.

We thank you and we are truly grateful.

This initiative of the religious leaders of these two religions (Christianity and Islam) that have a large number of followers in the African continent is significant because it emphasises on the importance of working together and collaborating since there can be no lasting peace and real development in Africa if Muslims and Christians do not agree and are not at peace with themselves and with each other.

It should also be emphasised that it is important that the contribution of religious leaders should be complemented by government and civil societies to achieve this noble goal of peace and sustainable development. It is in this context that I also greatly thank the Governor, who in spite of his busy schedule and numerous functions he has also been able to find time for this conference, this event honours his presence. He has also shown the importance he accords not only to the conference, but also to Christians and Muslims leaders.

We all know that at any level; family, national, and societal development is peace; and peace is a prerequisite to arrive at true sustainable development which requires us to work hand in hand for it, to develop the spirit of mutual respect, indiscriminate of individual, country, continent or world.

Pst. Rose-Marie IBYISHAKA
PROCMURA 2nd Vice-Chairperson

2.6 Address by the Personal Representative of the Head of State

*The Prefect of the Department of Diamaré,
The Government Delegate to the Urban Community of Maroua,
Administrative, Political and Traditional Authorities,
The General Adviser of PROCMURA;
The President of CPCC;
Members of the Organising Committee;
Distinguished Religious Leaders;
Ladies and Gentlemen;
Dear participants.*

It is a great honour for me to chair this unprecedented ceremony in the region of the Far-North on behalf of the Head of State, President of the Republic, who appointed me as his personal representative. I appreciate the honour and renewed confidence accorded to me by the Head of state.

Also, as the Government Delegate of the Urban Community of Maroua and the Spokesman of the residents of City, I would like to wish distinguished guests and eminent Muslim and Christian religious leaders who have travelled thousands of kilometres and setting aside their cultural and religious differences, a warm welcome and a pleasant stay in the most beautiful regions of Cameroon, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizers for choosing the host City of Maroua for these important sitting.

I also welcome the initiative taken by the various actors in promoting peace and inter-religious communication in this world full of wars and conflicts on all sides. It should also be noted that, this choice is neither haphazard nor accidental, since Cameroon is known as an island of peace in the sub region which is a footprint of turbulence. A region of Far-North in the image of the nation Cameroon is a region of peace and religious tolerance.

I would also like to send my gratitude to the Government of Denmark whose funding has allowed the holding of this conference. Indeed, we note with great satisfaction the commitment of the State of Denmark in the preservation of peace throughout the world.

*Distinguished religious leaders,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear participants,*

The preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon defines it as a Secular State. As for the 1990 Act, it talks about civil liberties, freedom of association, freedom of religion, freedom of opinion just to mention a few. This is the reason why as of today more than 200 religious associations coexist peacefully. It should be added that, despite the proliferation of religious faiths, the State continues to face many pressures on the legalization of new associations we recognise that for some time many sad events occurred all around us which have prompted the State to take a step back from this situation.

Despite government efforts, we continue to see fanaticism on both sides. I would still remember that God Almighty, the Creator of the Universe is and remains the same for all faiths, even if some call him “God” because they are English, others “Dieu” because they are French and others call him “Allah” because they are Muslims, he remains the same regardless of the language used to call him.

The problem is with the prophets who seek to convey the message in their own ways; the prophets themselves are not prohibited from preaching peace and love of neighbour. I urge you to respect life, your neighbour, and preach the love of neighbour and respect the Creator. Many times I wonder why in the name of God should people slaughter each other, I still cannot find an answer.

*Dear speakers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Our ideological differences, religious practices are spirited to divide us and lead us into religious wars; the consequences could, if nothing is done exceed those of the Hiroshima bombing. Hence the problem of the proliferation of religious organizations in the world, misinterpretation of Scripture, the race for wealth, hatred, malice, manipulation of religion, race to the occupation of space by world powers, lessons of civilization, the oppression of Traditional Religions, the attack by political ideologies in the guise of religion.

*The Prefect of the Department of Diamaré,
The Government Delegate of the Urban Community of Maroua,
Religious Leaders,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

This conference as an ideal framework for the establishment of a permanent forum for dialogue between Christians and Muslims, aims to recall the important role of religious leaders in the process of integration and development of the African continent and the need for them to join the political elite, and the civil society to continue the work of justice, peace, security, and development on the continent. This is so because there will be no real development for Africa if Christians and Muslims are not active participants in development programmes. All this is only possible in an environment of peace and the transformation of society.

We commend the holding of these meetings which must be regular in order to bring the spiritual world order. Because despite the speech here on ecumenism, Christian churches are multiplying; factions of Islam extremism and intolerance are gaining more and more ground. In Cameroon, there are actions by Christian Associations to limit these divisions and achieve unity, peace and development; these are the Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon, the Synod of Roman Catholic Churches, the Superior Council of Islam based in Yaoundé. But despite the presence of these bodies, more efforts should be made.

This is an opportunity for me to congratulate the preacher of the week of the Feast of the Nativity, who, through the National CRTV Channel, spent the entire time he was on air, to explain to Muslim faithful on the existence of Jesus Christ and His birth through the Blessed Virgin Mary. I followed this programme with great interest because in other countries, a Muslim cannot talk about Jesus Christ and neither can a priest talk about the prophet Mohamed. Meetings between religious leaders as is the case in Maroua between the Bishop and the Lamido Spiritual Father of the faithful Muslims in the City of Maroua, and the example of Burkina Faso should be multiplied in order to show that we are all facing the same direction.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the spiritual aspect, religious leaders need to know how followers of Christianity and Islam can translate their ideal precepts into action; which is to accept their religious

differences and work together for peace and the continent's development. This is particularly important at a time when religious differences are sometimes seen as players in violent conflict in Africa.

Material development of the churches in Africa is a very important factor for their development, to do this, we must raise awareness of the faithful to show their generosity to their churches and such initiatives are carried out in the western part of Cameroon with the construction of churches by the faithful. This is also the case in the northern regions of Cameroon where many mosques are built by the Muslim faithful, like the case of Al Hadji Abbo, Alhadji Bello Yaya, Issa Balarabe to name just a few. These are initiatives complementary to the actions of churches' external partners such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and others for construction of mosques while Western countries are doing so for churches. It is also important that religious leaders exercise moral rigor in the management of property entrusted to them by the faithful.

Another important aspect is taking care of church ministers which is very important; it allows them to concentrate fully on their work by avoiding external influences and also allows them to have a moral independence. Desolation lies in the fact that while the religious foreign caregivers give themselves a salary or a pension, those in Africa die in misery without any salary or pension.

*Religious leaders;
Ladies and Gentlemen;*

At the end of this conference, we hope that Christians and Muslims alongside government social Partners will continue to work more than in the past for the material and spiritual development of African peoples in peaceful coexistence.

“TOO MUCH PLAY MAKES JACK A DULL BOY”,

In this case, we invite our guests not to leave the Region of Far-North without discovering its legendary hospitality through the Waza National Park, the mountains Rhumsiki, boxes of shells in Maga, and environmental garden of Domayo. With that, I declare the Francophone West and Central Africa Regional Conference for Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders for Peace and Development held in Maroua from 07 to 10 January 2013 officially open.

We guarantee your safety in the city during your stay.

Long live the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA);
Long live Africa;
Long live Cameroon for her illustrious leader His Excellency Paul BIYA.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Mr. Augustine AWA FONKA
Governor of the Region of Far North, Cameroon

2.7 Vote of Thanks

*The Governor of the Region of Far North, Personal Representative of the President of the Republic,
The Prefect of the Department of Diamaré,
The Government Delegate of the Urban Community of Maroua,
The President of CPCC,
His Eminence Imam of the Grand Mosque of Maroua,
All protocols observed,
Assalam Alaykum wa Rahmatou - Lah - Wa Bara Katourou,
Excellencies,*

It is with great joy that I speak on behalf of participants from the fifteen (15) countries of West and Central Africa. After listening to all these distinguished speakers who have preceded me, I have no words to express the feelings of my fellow participants. However, I say the most appropriate word for the occasion, THANK YOU.

Imagine Mr. Governor a situation whereby participants who made more than 24 hours of travel to reach Maroua and proceeded to the opening session of a meeting in the absence of the Cameroonian authorities. This would be unfortunate but here you are with us, despite your many commitments, you came to encourage us to continue this kind of initiative for peace and development and on the other hand, reaffirm us through your commitment and that of the entire Cameroonian people to support us in this noble task. So thank you Mr. Governor.

Congratulations to you Mr. Governor for the confidence placed in you by the Head of State of Cameroon by asking you personally to represent him in this important meeting. May the Almighty Allah guide and enlighten you to safeguard peace because without peace, there is no sustainability. We take the opportunity offered by PROCMURA to humbly ask you to continue to involve youth and women in the area that you lead to fight for peace and development.

Thank you to all the leaders who came here. The participants at this meeting recognize their eminences the Imams, Priests and Pastors, their role as they advocate regularly in their sermons and preaching the virtues that ensure progress, tolerance, mutual support and love of neighbour. We urge them to continue to guide their followers to a happy life together.

It is in this context that I will close by wishing you Mr. Governor, your family, all citizens, and all people present here, our best wishes for a Happy New Year 2013. Also, we ask you to convey to his Excellency, President Paul Biya, and his family and the people of Cameroon that he leads, our most sincere greetings, our best wishes for the year 2013, to him be the strength, good health, the means to lead his people to food self-sufficiency, pledge of peace and sustainable development. Finally, I implore the Almighty Allah that He fills us with His grace and mercy.
Assalam Alaïkum.

Thank you for your attention.

Participant's spokesperson
Hadja Mariama Sow
Republic of GUINEA

Appendix III

Conference Rationale by the General Adviser of PROCMURA Rev. Dr. Johnson A. Mbillah

PROGRAMME FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN AFRICA (PROCMURA)

CONCEPT PAPER: FRANCOPHONE WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS INITIATIVE ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

**Maroua, Cameroon
January 6th - 10th 2013**

1. Introduction

It is well known that Africa, the second largest and second most populous continent in the world, after Asia, is a continent of religion and religious people. Covering 6% of the earth's total surface and 20.4% of the total land area (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa>), the world's population which hit the 7 billion mark at midnight of 31st October 2011, puts Africa's population to be over 1 billion people (<http://www.worldometers.info/world-population>). Barring specifics of religious figures which are sometimes contested by one religious group or the other, it is understood, and generally accepted that over 400 million of Africa's population profess to be Christian and over 400 million profess to be Muslim.

These figures make it clear that the social fabric of Africa is a religious one and that Christianity and Islam currently wield the largest following within the continent's religious landscape. What this means in practice and in the light of this conference is that there can be no peace in the African continent if Muslims and Christians are not at peace among themselves and with one another. In the same vein, there can be no meaningful development in the continent if Christians and Muslims are not active participants in the development agenda alongside others. To put these together, it is clear that peace is a prerequisite for development and for an environmentally friendly development with an ethically accepted norm is an asset to peace.

On peace and development or peace for development, therefore, the political environment of many African countries call for concerted efforts by all sectors of the society to create a serene environment of peace and harmony for sustainable development to take place. The importance of the contribution of religious leaders and religious groups with specific development agendas teaming up with governments and civil society to work towards achieving that goal cannot be over emphasised.

It is well known that in a number of countries in Africa the political class listen to, and sometimes even consult religious leaders when the peace of the land is disturbed. Religious leaders are also often urged to contribute to the socio-economic development agendas of nations.

In the first African Union (AU) interfaith dialogue Forum held in Abuja from June 15 -17 and which the General Adviser of PROCMURA was a member of the Steering Committee that helped to plan the forum; the AU emphasized the importance of African religious leaders'

involvement in the peace and development agenda of the continent. This recognition informed the AU's choice of the theme of the forum which was "Advancing Justice, Peace, Security, and Development: Harnessing the Power of Religious Communities in Africa."

A declaration issued at the end of the forum re-emphasized the importance of the role of religious leaders and communities, in accelerating the pace of integration and development of Africa, and the need for them to join hands with the political elite and civil society to continue their work towards justice, peace, security and development of the continent.

The forum reiterated the responsibility of religious leaders as moral and ethical guarantors of peace and societal transformation. With ample examples put on the table, the forum referred to situations where religious leaders have served as agents of change in the prevention, mitigation and transformation of conflicts using 'the enormous spiritual, moral, and social assets that Religious Leaders and religious communities have.' There was a commitment at the forum to form a Permanent Steering Committee of religious leaders that would help to develop an agenda for mutual engagements with the AU to enhance and strengthen the quest for sustainable peace, security and the development agenda in Africa.

With what has been said so far, it can unreservedly be said that Religious leaders are indispensable agents of peace and environmentally friendly development.

2. The Challenge for Christianity and Islam

In the over 50 years of PROCMURA's life and work, it has always been aware that even though Christianity and Islam claim to be religions with peace at the centre of their teaching and recognised as such by many, history has shown that Christians and Muslims have not always lived up to this core value of peace.

They have in some instances used the concept of a 'Just War' (Christian) and Jihad (Muslim) to perpetuate violence in society and violence among and between themselves. When it comes to the issue of development, Christianity and Islam have always stated clearly that according to their respective scriptures and traditions, humankind are stewards (Christianity), viceroys and vegerents (*Khalifas* in Islam) of God's creation.

The challenge for Christianity and Islam in our contemporary times in Africa in the eyes of PROCMURA is how adherents of these two religions can translate their ideal precepts into practical actions. In deed how they can accept their religious differences and cooperate to work towards peace and development of the continent. This is especially important at this time when religious differences are sometimes seen to be contributory factors to violent conflicts which in turn stifle development. This view, be as it may, does hold some amount of truth except that such a truth cannot be wholly attributed to religion.

It happens through political manipulation, economic stress, ethnicity finding allies in religion, the importation of religious extremism into the continent among others. In spite of all these multiple factors religion is often pushed forward and made the one and only factor.

3. Rationale Behind the Initiative

The rationale behind the dream and initiative of the Maroua conference, apart from the introductory analysis made above, is best understood in terms of one of PROCMURA's programme focuses which among others is its commitment to work towards a broader understanding of how religious leaders can team up with state actors, civil society, regional and continental bodies, towards the material and spiritual development of the African peoples. It seeks to create a credible platform for Christian and Muslim leaders' cooperation and collaboration to attend to issues of mutual concern and interest that will recommend itself to the world of Christianity and Islam as a model worth emulating.

3.1 PROCMURA's Programme Focus on Peace and Development

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

This operational principle which finds value in the stated vision has been carried out in several countries where PROCMURA is active with some degree of success, and has since 1997 developed to become a credible endeavour in Christian-Muslim relations. In that year (1997) the PROCMURA's Executive Committee resolved to send a high powered delegation of Christian and Muslim religious leaders from different African countries to Sudan to meet with the government and Muslim and Christian leaders of that country, to urge them to work together for peace between north and south and between Muslims and Christians.

Difficult as such a mission was, the delegation made it clear then, that the only way to achieve peace and development for the country was through dialogue and negotiations. We look back at the current political situation where Sudan and South Sudan have become two countries through dialogue and negotiations and feel that we have been a pioneer in the interreligious arena to advocate for a tangible solution.

Apart from the Sudan experience, those who are conversant with the Christian and Muslim leaders cooperation to bring about peace in one time war-torn Sierra Leone and Liberia were persons familiar with PROCMURA's principles of Christian and Muslim cooperation for peace.

After these initial invaluable contributions to peace, PROCMURA went through a major evaluation towards redefining its future focus. The process culminated into several staff changes that eventually led to the formulation of a Strategic Plan that among other things, recommended a reinvigoration of PROCMURA's focus on conflict prevention, advocacy for peace in society, peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims and reconciling people in conflict as a proactive measure, and not just as a locus of crises intervention.

This new sense of direction helped to accelerate PROCMURA's determination to work towards peace and development. The re-entry point to this noble course began with a joint conference with the Coptic Evangelical Organisation for Social Services (CEOSS) from Egypt through our partner Danmission, with the express support of the Danish Mission Council Development Department (DMCDD).

In November, 2005 PROCMURA brought together Christians and Muslims from 8

countries around Sub-Saharan Africa to Nairobi to meet with a CEOSS delegation of Christians and Muslims so that together we may share information on issues of peace and development among others. CEOSS reciprocated and invited PROCMURA to go to Egypt with a Christian and Muslim delegation in 2006 to see what Christians and Muslims do together under the umbrella of CEOSS. This joint initiative has since developed into a number of exchanges of experiences between Egypt and Zanzibar.

The reinvigoration of PROCMURA's work in conflict prevention, peace and peaceful co-existence as well as reconciliation in 2005 has seen PROCMURA organise various Christian and Muslim leaders' gatherings on similar and overlapping focuses on regional and country levels. To provide detailed information for each of the conferences that were held over the years would be unreasonable in the context of a concept paper. To serialise some of them though, would be important so as to give participants a feel of what we have done and hope to be doing together in Maroua.

Since 2008 the following regional conferences have been held: Eastern Africa conference in Dar Es Salaam 2008, Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa conference in Cairo 2008, West Africa (Anglophone and Francophone) conference Accra 2009. Apart from these we also held a very important quasi continental conference on peace and development for 8 countries from North, South, East, West Central, and the Indian Ocean in Addis Ababa, in 2011.

As follow up to these regional conferences, country programmes for Christian and Muslim religious leaders have been held in Monrovia 2010, Lomé 2010, Porto Novo 2010, Juba 2010, Antananarivo 2010, Kaduna 2010, Freetown 2011, Ouagadougou 2011, and Addis Ababa (women only) 2011, Juba 2012, Malakal (South Sudan) 2012. PROCMURA Area Committee in Rwanda has since 1997 held several Christian and Muslim religious leaders conferences on peace, unity and development which in our view has helped to create a serene environment for mutual co-existence in the country.

Apart from the above, PROCMURA has teamed up with several sister organizations to hold religious leaders colloquia, conferences, workshops seminars, and teaching sessions on collaboration towards sustainable peace and development. Worth mentioning in this respect is the Bangui Christian and Muslim leaders conference on the consolidation of peace in Central Africa 2010, and the Arusha Christian and Muslim leaders conference on Conflict Analysis and Peace Building 2010 as well.

It will be recognised from the information we have provided in this section, that not all the countries who shall be participating in the upcoming Maroua conference have participated in PROCMURA's peace programmes either in country or regional levels.

It is hoped that the upcoming conferences will act as a reminder and background information on what Christian and Muslim leaders around Africa have been saying on the issue of peace, reconciliation and violent conflict prevention as a prerequisite for development, we do hereby refer participants to communiqués or memoranda of understanding issued during such gatherings as preparatory material towards this important conference. We have to sincerely apologise though, that all such documents are in English since our partners require that such reports need to be relayed in that language. We entreat those of you who are bilingual to read it.

For those who are not bilingual we shall ensure that you are abreast with the issues when we meet in Maroua.

3.2 Engaging World Leaders and Organisations

We live in a world where a particular action or failure to act on an issue or issues in any geographical location can and do affect people anywhere and everywhere. Perhaps the talk of the world being a global village is a reflection of this reality. World leaders and organisations recognise this. In fact several development partners recognise that religion and religious people cannot be ignored when it comes to issues of peace and development among others.

From the PROCMURA perspective, we seek to have an informed leadership of Church and Mosque who will be able and willing to contribute to peace and development in Africa and by that example become active contributors on the world stage when issues of that nature are discussed. The involvement of the PROCMURA General Adviser in the proceedings of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in 2003 and the Chairperson of PROCMURA, a year later in 2004 laid the foundation for such engagements.

For thereafter, PROCMURA was part of the team that nominated and led Christian and Muslim religious leaders to Washington DC with the support of Church World Service to meet sections of the American Senate to discuss issues related to the so called 'war on terror' and how that impacted Christian-Muslim relations in Africa.

When we talk about sustainable peace for development, we are not talking about development at any cost, but responsible development that does not exploit people and the environment, and thereby become a source of conflict.

A most recent pan-African religious leaders conference on "Climate justice for sustainable peace in Africa" which the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), PROCMURA, and the South African Faith Communities' Environment institute (SAFCEI) teamed up to organise in Nairobi (June 2011) sought to emphasise exactly that.

It was aimed at preparing the religious leaders of Africa for the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) under the umbrella of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Durban, South Africa in November/December 2011. The focus of the conference was to say it as loudly as possible that environmentally friendly development is that which religious leaders will go for.

After the UNFCCC conference in Durban PROCMURA and AACC in 2012, had East and Southern Africa regional follow up conferences on climate justice and sustainable peace in Nairobi and Accra in September and October respectively. There is the need to have this important issue of the environment in our minds at the Maroua deliberations.

4. The Maroua Conference Focus

The Maroua conference is called against the backdrop of PROCMURA's activities not so pronounced in Central Africa as it is in many parts of West Africa and East Africa. Even though Cameroon was a pioneer of PROCMURA's programmes and was very active in the 1960's it became dormant since the late 1970's to date. The upcoming conference brings together influential Christian and Muslim religious leaders to critically look at issues of peace in society, and how peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims can lead to collaborative efforts towards development in the two regions.

The choice of Cameroon and of the northern town of Maroua came about as a result of constant request by Rev. Robert Goyek for several years that we organise a conference of this nature in Cameroon to be hosted by The Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon in Maroua. The Rev. Goyek's commitment encouraged us to invite him and El Hadj Hamadou Banoufé to a PROCMURA Christian and Muslim religious conference on

peace and development held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2012.

At this meeting we had the opportunity to explore further, the possibility of them hosting the Central and West Africa francophone countries conference which is now bearing fruits. The choice of countries depicts a mix of varied wealth of experiences some of which may be unique and peculiar to any given country.

This variety of experiences, it is hoped, will stimulate sharing across the regions and the different countries and help produce a broader impact on participants across the religious divide. We will have to lament though, that contacts with Côte d'Ivoire where PROCMURA has been very active for many years now has not led to their participation, perhaps because the current situation in the country has not completely stabilized.

5. The Objectives of the Conference

The objectives of the conference can be summarized as follows:

1. To provide a platform for the Christian and Muslim religious leaders to deliberate on the reality that human beings are economic, political, social, cultural as well as spiritual beings constituted with body soul and mind as a unit. It is hoped that this reality will provide good grounds for participants to come up with a holistic developmental approach that shall attend to these realities.
2. To facilitate reflection with the aim of unleashing the potential of religion as a source of good in African countries.
3. To elevate the level of reflection among the participants and provide grounds for replicating the ideals and goals of the conference in the different countries which participants come from.
4. To help accelerate interreligious cooperation into the public sphere and build the sectors capacity to move beyond its current involvement.
5. To inculcate good working relationships between the religious leaders so as to facilitate constructive dissemination of information on the role of religious leaders towards the development of society.
6. To affirm the Christian and Muslim leaders commitment to Africa's development and the development of the countries and regions from which participants come, by will and intent of collaborating with state functionaries and civil society to achieve the stated goals of the conference.
7. To assist participants to consider seriously, the damage that can be caused by religious extremists in our respective communities who would use or shall we say rather misuse our religions to foment violence and thereby stifle both the material and spiritual development of our peoples.
8. To inculcate a spirit of understanding religious differences (not forget them), and accept to live with such differences in peace.
9. To help disabuse minds that see human development as part of the secularisation process and instead, add value to what development means i.e a healthy body and environment that produce a serene atmosphere for the spiritual and material development of the human family.
10. To affirm that religious faith is not an obstacle to development but an ally, by critically examining ways and means by which the religious leaders can work towards the prevention of violent conflicts and galvanise their efforts towards peace in society and peaceful co-existence
11. To work towards an understanding of the concept of pro-existence or living in support of one another's quest for peace and development, as a necessary model that will dispel negative solidarity where people of faith are in solidarity with their

own at any cost to the extent of being 'partners in crime'.

12. To lay emphasis on Christian and Muslim constructive relations in all facets of human existence and emphasise that dialogue as conversation between Christians and Muslims on various aspects of life only finds real value in diapraxis – tangible action together.

Expected Outcomes

The conference is expected to launch an added phase in PROCMURA's cooperation with its partners in Denmark and stakeholders in Africa, towards an African Christian and Muslim renaissance for peace and development.

- That presentations and discussions which will be guided by the overall objectives of the conference which are to promote peace and development and to strengthen civil society in the participating countries will be widely publicised.
- That papers and proceedings of the conference shall be published.
- That the conference will provide new insights in many areas of PROCMURA's work and thereby broaden networking in Africa and beyond.
- That participants from each country will meet during the conference to come up with a plan of action of their own towards replicating the Maroua recommendations in collaboration with the media and civil society.

Prepared by
Rev. Dr. Johnson A. Mbillah
General Adviser of PROCMURA

Appendix IV

Situations of Christian-Muslim Relations by Country

4.1. Contribution of Cameroon

*The General Adviser of PROCMURA,
The Representative of the AACC,
Gentlemen of Mission Afrika,
Dear participants,*

On behalf of all the participants from Cameroon and in our personal names, we wish to once again welcome you all to Maroua, Cameroon and the capital of the region of the Far-North. It is truly a pleasure for us to host this regional conference and also open this important phase of the presentations of the situation in each of our countries.

Introduction

The will of God gave birth to the country we now call Cameroon, a meeting place that we call Africa in miniature. This Country is made up of nearly 300 cultural and linguistic groups composed of Bantu and Sudano-Sahelian populations.

In terms of religion, Islam and Christianity are the most trans-cultural religions dominant in Cameroon. Therefore discussing the relationship between Christians and Muslims is unavoidable and requires our utmost attention, in order to promote peace and social development.

In the context of this conference, we will try to present these relationships in four essential points:

- Factors that promote good relations between Christians and Muslims;
- The challenges which both communities face in the preservation of these relationships;
- The role that Christian and Muslim leaders can play in promoting peace and preventing violent conflict;
- What Christian and Muslim leaders must do to promote peace and development in Cameroon

1. Factors that promote good relations between Christians and Muslims in Cameroon

The first factor is the culture of tolerance and peace which is a characteristic in Cameroonian populace. Culture inherited from our traditional societies;

The mixed religious families in Cameroon, in all regions of Cameroon; Christianity and Islam which are dominant religions in Cameroon did not arrive at the radical education level; It is now that we see the rise of Christian fundamentalism and Islamic radicalism;

The openness and the level of education of the population have led to mutual acceptance,

the mixing between different cultures, to pave way for several cultural understanding. A pastoralist in North West with his or her livestock, a merchant of the North West is doing business freely in the north and elsewhere, a farmer is farming in the large tracts of land in the South, the East, North and elsewhere. In Cameroon, everyone settles in the area of their choice freely and with the same rights of ownership.

The will of all Cameroonians to live together, supported by authorities provide good conditions of peaceful coexistence and a commitment to development; the organization of the Cameroonian administration is based on the spirit of the overall management of the national territory.

Designed in a pyramid shape, this administration controls the populace at all levels of their existence thus preventing conflicts, dealing with them whenever they arise, they apprehend and punish the perpetrators, accompany victims to support them and to take or recommend measures to prevent such occurrences in the future.

Muslims and Christians find the mode of administration a source of personal and collective safety. They then lend a very attentive ear to the government action and as the stakeholders involved and integrated in it;

Muslims and Christians have a common space in life. Whatever their nature of work, school, business, field, farm, small business or large business interests, are inter linked. What counts is the yield and the fact of the matter is, money has no colour; Secularism: Cameroon is a secular State where the State is separated from religion. Merit and not the religious or ethnic background is the first condition of success.

Every citizen has the freedom to practice the religion of their choice; however, we are aware that many factors are missing in the promotion of good relations between Christians and Muslims in Cameroon.

2. Challenges that the two communities are faced with in the preservation of these relationships

The challenges are many. Below are just a few:

- Ethnocentrism and socio-centrism: with the advent of multiparty politics in Cameroon in the 90s, there was a decline in tribal and regional identity. This isolationism is unfortunately also being rediscovered by politicians who use it for their gains;
- The rise of Evangelicalism and Islamisation: there are more provocative or incendiary sermons on both sides;
- Indecency against nature: globalization, pluralism and secularism and their consequences give rise to practices condemned by both faiths such as homosexuality,
- The instrumentalisation of religion by politicians is proving to be a challenge facing religious communities in Cameroon, even at the time of multiparty democracy itself,
- Social injustice, corruption and poverty: Muslim extremists' tendencies and Christian fundamentalists recruiting many among the vulnerable,
- Transfer of interreligious conflict raging in neighbouring countries;
- Illiteracy and denial or resistance to Western education
- The fact of confining religion within a cultural group. In Cameroon, it is generally believed that the North of Cameroon is a Muslim and the south is Christian. These perceptions are very far from reality

3. The role that Christian and Muslim leaders can do in the promotion of peace and prevention of violent conflicts

The role of Christian and Muslim leaders in this sense is not very remarkable and sensitive. It seems warped and conditioned by politics. However, some engage in the path of social "dialogue" or practical dialogue. Thus we can see the establishment of associations for the promotion of interreligious dialogue, the example of ACADIR (Cameroon Association for Interreligious Dialogue), Cameroon Forum;

Christian and Muslim leaders serve at certain levels as an intermediary between political and religious institutions. Governments often use Christian and Muslim dignitaries to accomplish some important tasks for the good of the nation, both at national and local levels;

The growing interest of the Churches in the study of Islam for dialogue, through training specialists;

The non-direct involvement of religion in politics;

The inclusion of courses on Islam in the programme within Institutes of Christian theology;

Thanks to verses of the Quran and the teachings of Islam, Muslims have knowledge of Christianity.

4. What Christian and Muslim leaders must do to promote peace and development in Cameroon?

To promote peace and development in our country:

Christian and Muslim leaders must do the following;

- Overcome their religious barriers created by individuals with ulterior selfish interests to regard themselves as instruments in the service of God through his creation without discrimination of religion;
- Look for permanence in our cultures, to adapt the expression of their faith and for social change;
- Be ethical models in the light of their faith, struggling against the factors that impede peace and development - social injustice, corruption, ethnocentrism and socio-centrism;
- Promote respect for human values, fight against illiteracy and work for the release of Cameroonians from any other form of servitude.
- Seek to know each other for better understanding between Christians and Muslims so as to fight against ignorance and prejudice.
- Avoid provocative speeches or focus on diverging points between Christians and Muslims (through preaching, interventions in the media).
- Encourage the creation of local committees meeting between Christian and Muslim leaders.
- Encourage the creation of neutral meeting centres where Christians and Muslims can freely meet and discuss.
- Encourage the creation of structures to fight poverty.
- Promote the democratization of education.
- Promote labour markets by merit.
- Promote other interests.

Conclusion

It should be noted that relations between Christians and Muslims in Cameroon are relatively good. But the biggest concern is to encourage initiatives that favour of good relations between the two communities of faith, because without good relations, peace and development remain precarious and utopian in Cameroon for the two faith communities.

Rev. Robert Goyek
Sheikh El Hadj Hamadou Banoufé

4.2. Contribution of the Central African Republic

Introduction

Ladies and gentlemen, may the peace and grace of God Almighty be with us all. Before me is the contribution of my country as requested by PROCMURA for this conference and I would like first of all to speak on Interreligious Dialogue after raising the following questions:

- What is our vision of tomorrow's society?
- Is it a society where people live in separate communities, characterized best by the coexistence of majorities and minorities rights and responsibilities differentiated, loosely bound together by mutual ignorance and stereotypes?
- Or, on the contrary, we represent a vibrant and open society, free from discrimination and beneficial to all, which focuses on full integration of all individuals in the full respect of their fundamental rights?

Interreligious dialogue is an open exchange of views, based on respect and mutual understanding between individuals and groups who have origins and ethnic, cultural, religious heritage and linguistic differences. It operates at all levels - within societies, between African societies and between Africa and the rest of the world.

The rich cultural heritage of Africa includes a wide variety of religious as well as secular conceptions of the purpose of existence. Christianity, Judaism and Islam - each with its own interpretation - had a profound effect on our continent. Africa has experienced, however, in the distant and recent past conflicts in which religion played a major role, as for the important role of religious communities in dialogue implies that efforts be taken in the context of religious communities and public authorities.

This is why the freedom of thought, conscience and religion is one of the foundations of any democratic society. This freedom is one of the most essential elements relating to the identity of believers and their conception of life, but also for Atheists, Agnostics, Sceptics and the Unconcerned.

1. Factors that promote good relations between Christians and Muslims

Between our religions, there are differences. Do not be afraid to recognize and look openly and without fear. But do not make these differences a wall that separates us from what we all agree on. Are our religious differences a barrier between us, or cause us to make life difficult for each other? God, in the mystery of his will, wanted that each of us belongs to a different religion. He is the guide, He guides who He wants as He pleases.

But in the heart of a Muslim just like in a Christian's heart it is not the difference that must remain, but friendship and brotherhood. Muslims loyalty to Islam and Christians to Christianity is for all of us to see, in our hearts and in every human being, God, the Creator, because man is God's creation and his successor on earth.

Let's talk about concrete factors and how to manifest the relationship between Muslims and Christians. I started before turning to the facts, to thank the Lord God for the great friendship that exists, and the care of religious leaders in Africa through PROCMURA's programmes. There are good relationships between them and a conference as it shows, promotes and strengthens friendship and mutual respect.

If we look at our Holy Books, we find that Islam commands "do good and forbid evil" in respect of every human person. We also find that the *Qur'an* is full of verses that encourage respect for the human person in general and Christians or "People of the Book in particular". And in the Gospel, Jesus tells us to love each other as ourselves. But the problem is not in our Holy Books: it is in our behaviour, how we live, and us as believers. How well do we understand our Holy Books? And how we would make the distinction between a person and another because of his or her religion, contradicting what God has commanded us.

A- Relations between the Christians and the Muslims

First, relations between Muslims and Christians are primarily relations of citizen to citizen: both are in the same status, and have put their efforts to serve the same cause and come to realize unity, freedom, dignity, giving back to the society and independence. At this level we are talking about national unity. In this regard we are all in agreement.

Every Christian and every Muslim must understand this and not be carried away by divisions that may come from different religious backgrounds, avoid falling into the trap of those who want to make a sedition (fitna) and would thus use religion as an attenuation and division factor in the country.

Secondly, relations between Christians and Muslims are relationships between believers in God, a Muslim believing in God and a Christian believing in God and that faith in God is the foundation of the relationship between citizens in a country.

Thirdly, this is a human to human relationship. This relationship is based on faith itself, in Islam as in Christianity, and it is the basis of all unity among all believers - which is also of national unity. Every human being is a human person, created by God and keeping his or her dignity of God himself.

That is why, among all human beings, despite their religion or nationality difference, there is fundamental equality: all are created by God and are descendants of Adam. How much more, are members of the same society and the same country different in their religious affiliation?

These are the three relationships that underpin our unity as Muslims and Christians: 1. National unity in a single country. 2. Faith in one God in two different religions. 3. We are all God's creation, the same creation with equal dignity.

B- Learning and teaching skills on interfaith relations

Learning and teaching these necessary skills on interreligious relations is not automatic, because they must be taught, practised and maintained throughout life. Therefore, public authorities, education professionals, civil society organizations, religious communities, the media and other education providers, working in all institutional establishments and at all levels, can play a decisive role in this respect, in the pursuit of what are PROCMURA's objectives.

C- The family environment

Parents and the wider family environment play an important role in helping to prepare young people to live in a society within which good interfaith relations are cultivated.

As models for their children, they should actively contribute to changing attitudes and conceptions of good relations between Christians and Muslims. Educational programmes for adults and families, devoted to religious diversity can help the family play this important role.

D- Opportunities for interreligious dialogue

It is essential to create and expand opportunities for dialogue open to all Christians and Muslims at all levels: physical spaces such as streets, markets, shops, houses, kindergartens, schools and universities, community centres, youth associations, churches, synagogues and mosques, libraries and other leisure facilities, or virtual spaces like the media.

II. Challenges that both communities face in maintaining good relations

To achieve their goals, both Christian and Muslim communities must accept that they have a source of shared history that dates back to Abraham the patriarch, from him three religious communities are founded: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Christians and Muslims are attributed to Abraham, although they disagree regarding the story of Isaac and Ishmael. They agree on the basic principles of the faith, including: The belief in one God, the Creator: "God of our father Abraham." Both communities therefore reject polytheism and insist on monotheism. In relation to Jesus and the Virgin Mary, the Koran brings Muslims closer to Christians.

The initial moral principles are common, in addition to the concept and the relationship between the worship of God with the morality of men because of the mercy and love of others for the purpose of religion in both. This is what is expressed in the life of the believer through prayer, fasting and charity, and desire to build justice and peace and human values confirm the common interest.

Islam and Christianity as religious and social systems, they seek to build a society on religious virtues, including the virtues of equality, peace and justice for development. Not ignoring the fact that the two religions represent a monotheistic Universalist ideal against constantly tested temporal realities, it is their fundamental challenge.

To what extent are conflicts between human communities claim their entities and not face the challenge? God is Unique and men have equal duties, it is a spiritual point of view. But the existence of monotheistic Universalist claims, historically represent only a temporal reality.

4.3 The role that Christian and Muslim Leaders can play in the promotion of peace and conflict prevention

For the Muslim and Christian leaders to play a key role in the promotion of peace, they must have control mechanisms for conflict prevention.

To do this, they must understand that conflict prevention encompasses training people how to apply different outreach approaches depending on the target group. These methods often are philosophical, psychological, religious, and legal relationship. The most common of approaches for conflict resolution seeks to equip each one with the knowledge of behavioural self-control and understanding of others.

Religious leaders know that conflict prevention cannot be effective without the knowledge of conflict resolution. Because conflict resolutions differ from problem solving and fixing relations: in one case it is to remove a dispute between people, in the other case it is to remove unwanted situation by a person. This definition does not exclude relational problems: a conflict is often seen as a mutual problem. In all cases, it will be necessary to analyse a conflict using the methodology of problem solving.

Peace and Islam are derived from the same root and can be considered synonymous. One of the names of God is peace. Greetings among Christian and Muslim faithful is peace “PEACE BE WITH YOU (SALAAM, SHALOM)”.

We all recognize that God is the God of peace. Therefore, Muslims or Christians who approach God through Islam or Christianity cannot fail to be at peace with God, with oneself and with others.

Putting all these values together, putting a human person in their place in cosmos and looking at life in a spiritual perspective, Religious leaders of good faith and good principles must succeed in making our world a better place, to regain human dignity, achieve equality, enjoying the universal religious brotherhood and establish lasting peace. Here, the roles that Christian and Muslim leaders must play in peace and conflict prevention in our respective countries in particular and Africa in general.

4.4 What Christian and Muslim leaders must do to promote peace and development of our countries?

On this point, I will have to honour my brother Boris Yakoubou, and introduce you to some of the activities carried out by Christian and Muslim leaders for peace and development in our country, I conclude with these words:

Despite all religious and social differences, teachings of both sides and especially the morality and common factors are capable of bringing people together and not dividing them. Therefore, Christians and Muslims can first understand themselves then understand each other because they are open to each other and can pass this knowledge to future generations.

Religious consciousness precedes all; we are called to it to work honestly for a prosperous and civilized cause because plurality is an asset rather than a problem. Finally interreligious dialogue between Muslims is part of Islamic law, and this a sample of the first secular Constitution drawn up by the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) that legislates Christian-Muslim relations.

May God the ultimate purveyor bless all of us here abundantly and all those who aspire

to the success of interreligious dialogue and ambassadors of the cause while according his blessings for success and the culmination of this conference on Christian-Muslim relations.

**His Eminence Sheikh Oumar Kobine Layama
President of the Islamic Community in the Central African Republic**

General Introduction

Religions and Christian-Muslim relations in the Central African Republic, Article 8 of the Constitution of the Central African Republic guarantees the freedom of religion and forbids all forms of religious fundamentalism and intolerance. This makes the Central African Republic a secular State, and has allowed many faiths to settle in the country. The two main religions are Christianity and Islam.

But there has been in recent years a kind of proliferation of new religious groups in all directions, mainly from Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Europe.

The CAR has a population of about 5 million inhabitants, which can be shown according to religion as follows,

- Catholics: 28.9%
- Protestants (across the board): 51%
- Muslims: 10.1%
- Animist religions represent 8.9% of the active population with 4.6% in urban areas against 4.3% in rural areas

At first, the relationship between these religions were rocky, biased and with some tendencies of fundamentalism. Gradually, through concerted actions, meetings and dialogues, we can now say that all these religious groups coexist peacefully, accept and respect each other.

Speaking of interreligious dialogue for peace building for sustainable development let us look at the role of religion in building, maintaining and sustaining peace. In other words, what is the contribution of religions to promote, maintain and develop a sustainable peace in the society? But on the other hand, the role or contribution of religions also reflects the importance of religion in society.

Generally, there is no doubt today about the role and place of religion in the state structure, including the contribution to development and the responsibility of women and men of religion in the construction and consolidation peace.

What should the Christian and Muslim leaders do to promote peace and development in our country? This is the main question which we try to answer. Promoting peace and development means that religious leaders are first united, unanimous, in effective collaboration, efficient and successful. This is not always easy in practise, considering the schedules and multiple concerns of each other. To establish this kind of collaboration for the promotion of peace and development, a certain number of requirements must be taken into account, and this is what is in our case.

The following requirements can be considered:

Objective forum and meetings for all irrespective of religion:

The main objectives are to pray and share ideas and experiences, to reflect and to take common positions on behalf of the faith in one God. Indeed, men and women who make religion should not remain in each Church, Temple or in his or her place of worship. There is no dialogue if there are no meetings, a meeting that takes place in a proper conscience and freedom, where everyone is called upon to recount their own religious experience in a spirit of mutual enrichment. These are meetings of people who wish good for their society, who would identify and better understand all the problems that affect their society, and what are the obstacles to development.

The promotion of civic education:

For a long time it was thought that the development of Africa must be achieved through economic growth. But soon we realized that despite Africa being rich in natural resources in many of its countries, poverty and corruption still ravage the greater part of the population in the continent. It was understood, perhaps a little late, Africa was lacking trained men and women and active citizens in many of its countries.

The men and women of religion must be active citizens, by virtue of the faith they profess. Otherwise, they must be trained and acquire the necessary knowledge for the realization of their rights and civic duties, in accordance with the law, love and charity.

In the same vein, the Gospel and Catholic social teachings insist on what it calls the "integral training" of man. Pope Paul VI said that "the causes of underdevelopment are not primarily of the material order". Above all there is will, thought, and more so "the lack of brotherhood among individuals and between nations. It is therefore necessary to join hands so that economic processes evolve "towards fully human outcomes."

The organization of joint activities to mobilize believers.

It is important that the Christian and Muslim leaders organise or encourage meetings for the faithful. These meetings are carried out through concrete activities that provide opportunities for all and sundry to witness to their faith, to express solidarity, love and brotherhood, despite their divergent views. Here are some examples of such kind of joint activities:

- A Bible and Koran study day. In Central Africa Republic, Youth Christian Students (YCS), a Catholic movement, developed the idea of what she called the "Bible and Koran study day," during which young Christians and Muslims meet to discuss the Bible and the Koran, in order to know more about these Holy books that are sometimes unclear and misinterpreted.
- Interfaith Seminars in Bangui. There is also the organisation of conferences by the Central African belief, culture and education network (Réseau Foi Culture et Education-Centrafrrique – RFCE-RCA), during which Christians and Muslims come together for several days to discuss a number of topics, including the involvement of religion in the process of peace building for development. The RFCE-RCA has been organising such conferences for a decade (2001-2010), and the results are very positive and encouraging. For example, relations between Christians and Muslims in Central Africa have been consolidated.
- The meeting in Assisi in 1986, on 27 October 1986, and His Holiness Pope John

Paul II invited representatives of the various world religions to gather in Assisi to pray for peace. That day, for the first time, world religious leaders met, and together before God, they prayed, each in their own way for peace in the world. It was a testimony of faith, love and solidarity, which shows the commitment and contribution of religion in our world. Pilgrims of truth and peace; Twenty six (26) years after the events in Assisi, Pope Benedict VI renewed the testimony, through what was called "pilgrims of truth and peace." Indeed, in October 27, 2011, Pope Benedict XVI reiterated the same invitation to all religions and all people of good will. They met again in Assisi, and together prayed for peace in the world.

- In Central Africa the pilgrimage of truth and peace was celebrated. At the Cathedral of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception Square, religious leaders had a morning prayer for peace and shared stories of love and brotherhood. Religious leaders join hands to stand in solidarity and fraternity during the pilgrimage of peace and truth in Bangui (CAR). October 2011

There is no doubt that today world peace is threatened by conflicts more or less visible, with the risk of total degeneration. In this sense, the world needs more men and women of faith through the witness of their faith and their prayer, commitment to justice and peace.

A common stance against certain socio-political problems

Inspired by the philosophy of "Zo Kwe Zo" and the motto of the CAR "Unity-Dignity-Work", the Church of Central Africa had initiated action around the idea of "Oiko Mene" (same blood). At the height of armed conflicts 1996-1997, while lives were threatened, the Church stood to remember the sacredness of the human being, a call for national unity, encourage the reconciliation, and say "No" to racism, tribalism and ethnocentrism.

At the end of the political transition CAR in 2005 after the coup d'état of General François Bozizé, the Church has again engaged through a structure called "Advisory Group", consisting of religious leaders and personalities civil society.

This group is in fact the moral authority of the Country, and guarantees the implementation and enforcement of a document called the Code of Conduct, which must govern political life in Central African Republic, including citizenship and respect for all the results of parliamentary and presidential elections.

The work of counselling and mediation played by the Advisory Group has effectively helped to calm the spirits and defuse crisis that were feared during presidential and parliamentary elections of 2005.

The Code of Conduct was taken back in 2011 during the last election, by the Advisory Group which also played an important role, because the opposition refused the election results, and formed a front called "FARE" - Front for Cancellation and Reversal of Elections.

The protection and promotion of the dignity of the human person, in accordance with the values of justice, truth, freedom and love

It is not wrong to consider that today the world's wealth has been growing tremendously, but at the same time, increasing inequalities and injustices among peoples, with the emergence of new forms of poverty. Corruption exists in all countries, rich or poor, human rights are violated and mortgaged in most of our countries.

Today the Church calls for an integral development, justice and the common good, in love

and truth, and that takes into account all aspects of the human person. It is inconceivable that in our world today, there are still people dying of hunger, people who cannot be cured, others cannot take advantage of social education, or people who cannot sleep in peace because they are forced to move continually.

The creation and development of synergies, dynamic networks between religious leaders across the country

At all levels and in general, a network allows its components to be strong, complementary, with larger capacity for action. A network can also take action through lobbying or dynamic and effective advocacy.

It is important that religious leaders are organized into networks, not only networks between Christians and Muslims, but inclusive networks.

These initiatives should be used to strengthen the capacity of religions and their involvement in issues of peace and development.

Conclusion

The question of development is so complex that all inherent approaches that come from religions must not only be taken into account, but also be regarded as notable contributions. Our approach is not exhaustive. We have suggested the contribution towards the above considerations, some elements that Christian and Muslim leaders should do to promote peace and development.

If peace is a value and also a universal duty, men and women of religion must at all times beware of their responsibility and their commitment to this duty.

The contribution of the Church to a positive, effective and sustainable peace for development is only possible if the believers themselves are at peace with each other and are committed to meeting this peace around them and the world through testimonies of faith and love. They must remember that their commitment must be real, through actions and concrete meetings and dialogues.

There is no doubt that the coalition of men and women of religion, if it is not misleading and destructive, if it does not hide political manipulation, economic or extremist, is and will always be a considerable factor for unity, peace and sustainable development.

The Holy Quran is just warning believers in these words: "O! You, who believe, enter fully into the peace and beware against the stratagems of the devil (the cursed) because he is your enemy." Sura 2 Verse 208

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION

By Boris Yakoubou Modeste, Ph.D

Faith Culture and Education Network (EGFR)

Group Member Resources for Peace (GRP)

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Bangui, Central African Republic

4.3. Contribution of the Democratic Republic of Congo

The state of Christian-Muslim relations: Challenges and opportunities for cooperation for peace and development.

We want to apologize first, for the quality of the presentation that we will present since the persons designated to do the presentation namely: Imam Abdallah Mangala and Rev. Dr Molo Kakulé could not travel to Maroua. However, I will be making a presentation without too much detail.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a secular State in accordance with its Constitution in Articles 1 and 37. It recognizes that every citizen has the freedom of expression of their faith. Thus we have outside the traditional churches (Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Kimbanguistes) and the Muslim community, other churches called independent, recovery and non-denominational.

As for Muslim-Christian relations, we can say so far there is peaceful coexistence. We have not experienced any conflict. There is a platform that is established and composed of the heads of religious denominations who work together in finding solutions in certain situations prevailing in the country. The Congolese government consults the Church during official ceremonies and when solving some problems touching on the welfare of citizens.

4.4. Contribution of Senegal

Christian - Muslim relations in Senegal, By Pastor Joseph Diouf, Area Adviser- PROCMURA Senegal,

Senegal is a country in West Africa with a population estimated at 12 million. It is a secular State where freedom of expression and freedom of religion is guaranteed in the Constitution. Senegal is known for its legendary hospitality (Téranga) and its respect for visitors. Ninety percent (90%) of Senegalese are Muslims, five percent (5%) Christians and the rest are Traditional Religions.

Islam in Senegal is like brotherhood: Tidianes, Mourides Khadres, Layenes, Niassènes, etc. As for Christianity, Catholicism makes up the majority. Many branches are made up of traditional churches (Lutheran, Methodist, Assemblies of God, Presbyterians, Baptists, etc.) and a proliferation of small revival churches.

1. Factors that promote good relations between Christians and Muslims

In Senegal, the celebration of festivals is a factor that promotes relations between different faith communities. As a tradition during Easter, Christians offer their Muslim neighbours porridge juice, monkey bread and peanut paste locally known as Ngalakh. In return, Muslims offer their Christian neighbours mutton on the occasion of the celebration of Eid El Adha.

This tradition is a clear indicator of existing good neighbourly relations and which are shared among faith communities.

Occasions of joy for instance Baptism, Confirmation, marriage as well as those of grief

like death, natural disasters, floods, drought, etc. are moments when the multi-religious populace express solidarity and sympathy. These are moments when everyone forgets their different religious backgrounds and doctrines and instead come closer to the God who unites and loves all.

Fun activities are also factors that promote good relations among communities. In spite of our different religions, we endeavour to nurture "kinship" between ethnic groups regardless of one's social status (Imam, Minister, Director, or other); the relations are based on mutual respect and sacredness. Upon arrival in Senegal, foreigners are integrated into Senegalese families and given Senegalese names.

One such example is that of an American missionary Bent LASSUS was given the name Diégane Ndour and his wife Wodé Kama. As I returned from a conference in Togo, I met a young Ivorian banker on the plane who informed me that when he arrives in Senegal he is called Mourtala Mbacké and that he is Catholic.

Muslim families give their children Christian names in admiration and respect for a friend, colleague or an acquaintance in respect to the Christian and Muslim faith. In September last year, the Imam of SARR Thiadiaye transferred to me the paternity of her two daughters who were getting married on the same day. As a pastor all of these honours that the biological father should have are transferred to the pastor (see photos of the ceremony).

One of the girls returned to Fouta and the other to Mauritania. As a matter of fact, Fouta and Mauritania are known for their commitment to Islam. Those who come from these places said they had never seen such a gesture before and appreciated it. Such a spirit of peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims goes beyond national borders up to Mauritania.

2. Challenges that the two communities face in a preserving these relationships

Private Christian schools admit Muslim students, Christian institutions also sponsor Muslim students to the University. Sometimes tensions between Christians and Muslims that emerge from time to time pose a threat to peaceful coexistence.

On the Christian side, the emergence of small groups in several areas has seen people renting small houses to make them places of worship thereby causing fanfare. They ask for money from their faithfuls in exchange for healing prayers and deliverance. This practice does not augur well in the Senegalese society.

There are also missionaries who come with small projects targeting the Muslim community (talibés) in the guise of humanitarian aid but with proselyte spirit.

In December, a Brazilian pastor was arrested and imprisoned for baptizing infants without advice from their parents. This behaviour is a threat to Christian- Muslim relations.

On the Muslims' side, on several occasions, we see more and more groups of people walking barefoot, with a photo of their marabout (Muslim saint or hermit) hanging on their neck and singing the Khassaides. They approach anyone and ask for alms aggressively. For example, On December 27, 2012, this group entered a café and caused a lot of disturbance. They insulted the manager because he did not want to give them alms. One customer also confirmed of having witnessed similar events in the City of Dakar and in one occasion blocked the way when a driver refused to give alms, by simply lying on the road.

There is also intolerance in some cities like Touba and Tivaouane where Christians are

not allowed to have their place of worship. A few months ago, churches were burned because YOFF, the district marabout said that his father had requested that the area remains strictly for Muslims.

The activities of Daaras are a nuisance in the neighbourhoods because they sing every night with no respect for the sick and workers who get up early to go to work.

3. The role of Christian and Muslim leaders in promoting peace and preventing violent conflicts

The Catholic Church, Department of Christian-Muslim Dialogue and PROCMURA Senegal, are the two main Christian organisations that work for the promotion of peace and peaceful coexistence in Senegal. The Catholic side, led by father Jacques Seck accompanied by an Imam, traverse the country to give teachings that are very much appreciated by both communities. These lessons have greatly contributed to the preservation of peace and stability in Senegal.

Since 1990, PROCMURA Senegal has been doing outreach programmes within churches through training of youth and women pastors an initiative that has tremendously improved cordial relations.

In Ndoumdokh, it was alleged that a Muslim group had the intention to destroy the area Church. It took the intervention of the Committee of PROCMURA Senegal to avert the brewing conflict. In Diourbel, pastors were assaulted by Imam Sheikh Ndigueul's talibés who destroyed the sound equipment belonging to the Baptist Church. The reason for attack was that the choir of the church traversed through the village where the marabout lives singing Christian songs. We intervened to find a solution.

Since then, we have made courtesy visits to these Sheikhs, most whom are not familiar with the Koran. We focused mainly on the teachings and lectures. Today PROCMURA is well accepted and some associations request for its involvement in their activities. For example, PROCMURA is always invited to annual Conference of Imams in Fatick, Kaolack and Thiès. We share intense moments of peace with religious leaders in the quest for peaceful coexistence e.g. during the inauguration of Mosques, etc.

Similarly, several cultural associations have partnered with PROCMURA Senegal and regularly invited us to give teachings and fellowship, in their annual activities. One of them is the Toucar Association, the owners of Orchards which has over 300 integrated farmers; PROCMURA gives lessons on development. The head of Women Programme, Rev. Marie-Agnes Ndour, also traverse the towns to give teachings specific to women and support their socio-economic activities.

4. What Christian and Muslim leaders must do to promote peace and development in our country?

There is no conflict in Senegal between Muslims and Christians, as we see in some countries such as Nigeria and others. However, signs of threats still exist even if we are not witnessing real confrontation between members of both faith communities. These signs need to be taken seriously so as to make sure that preventive measures are implemented. The establishment of a National Council for Interreligious Dialogue in Senegal is necessary and it should involve institutions that work in this area. The Council will reflect on the

political, social, and economic factors that pose threats to peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims.

The board should have the courage to challenge with love, members from certain practices that are likely to cause conflicts from the Muslim side.

This conference in Maroua is a step in the actual meeting of religious leaders in the quest for peace and conflict prevention in Africa.

Pastor Joseph Diouf

PROCMURA Area Adviser for Senegal

PROCMURA Regional Coordinator for Francophone West Africa

4.5. Niger Contribution

**Theme: Christian-Muslim relations in Niger,
Presented by:**

**Ms. Fatuma Moctar,
Pastor LABO Soumaila,**

1) Neighbours of Niger

- The country has eight regions;
- Its total surface area is: 1,267,000 km²;
- Population of 15 million people;
- 10 major ethnic groups;
- The country's constitution "secular";
- The history of Christianity in Niger;
- Coexistence with Muslims;
- The AMEEN (Alliance of Evangelical Churches and Missions of Niger);
- The CNDP (National Council for Policy Dialogue);
- The reactions to external influences;
- The efforts of the Government;
- The construction of a Christian cemetery in collaboration with the Catholic mission in Niger;
- CDMA / AIDS (Alliance of Religious Muslims and Christians in the fight against AIDS).

2) Opportunities for Collaboration

- The sacredness of man
- The Constitution (laïcité)
- The firmness of the State (Ministry of Religious Affairs)
- Family, ethnic and linguistic links
- Social actions (NGOs Schools Health; Orphanages)
- Christian witness

3) Challenges

- Illiteracy, ignorance and poverty (the example of the teacher and the Arabic newspaper and the reaction of the villagers).
- Media.
- Conversions to the Christian faith.
- Intermarriages.

- The introduction of practices contrary to the culture (Christians ways of worshipping);
- The drums of Christians during worship...

4) Peace and Development:

"Peace is a culture and behaviour", where as "Development is the combination of mental changes, we do not develop someone, but man develops in response to changes in his life that he accepts" (Dr. Sherif Chako Former Minister of the equipment, Niger (from 1996 to 1999)

Conclusion

Let us accept the necessary changes in our lives so that peace may reign in our hearts, in our families, in our communities, in our country, in Africa and in the world.

THE PEACE OF GOD IS IN EVERYONE. AMEN!

4.6. Contribution of Guinea

I bring to you warm and sincere greetings from Guinea wishing every member of our respective delegations a good stay. First and foremost, let me personally thank Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah, General Adviser of PROCMURA for the honour to participate in this conference and make a the presentation on Religion and Peace. In fact, this is the first time I am taking part in a conference organized by PROCMURA.

May God be glorified, Amen! That said, I invite you to the agenda for which I set before you.

Introduction

During the last five years, the world and all mankind have permanently been under the threat of religious extremism. Religious extremism that emanates from those who think both have perfect knowledge of their religion and believe that there's is the best.

These are the kinds of puritans and zealots that mankind has ever known. This is reflected especially in some countries in the world, some of which are in West Africa and others in East Africa. This has affected the minds and hearts of men who love peace and tranquillity to the extent that necessary efforts must be brought forward to counter conflicts and the rise of religious extremism. It is therefore normal that PROCMURA takes itself through the diagnosis to prevent conflicts, solve problems and by all means preserve the achievements of the good relations between Muslims and Christians on the continent and in other areas of the world.

The work to be done is to identify anything that can make our coexistence impossible, prepare appropriate responses, immutable and precisely that we can all live together in peace. I salute with all my heart the initiators of this conference of Maroua for being proactive and visionary leaders. But while saluting them, we must ask in our turn the question whether this is the first time we are dealing with the problem of good relations between Muslims and Christians.

We say no, that the issue of good cohabitation and religious extremism is a hot topic it has been asked and will continue to be asked. We see it with AACC, CWS, FECCIWA the UN, AU and ECOWAS who have organized seminars, workshops, conferences and

colleges relating to peace and good cohabitation.

On our part we will discuss today the factors that promote good relations between Muslims and Christians, the challenges they face, and what roles they must play to live in peace with everyone.

1. Factors that promote good relations between Muslims and Christians.

Factors that promote good relations between Muslims and Christians are many and varied. We can mention among others: justice, religious tolerance, peace, understanding religion, the love of neighbour, good leadership, fairness, proper management of public money or private etc.

How and why justice contributes to the promotion of good relations between Muslims and Christians?

Justice is by definition a moral principle that requires absolute respect of the right to fairness in everyday life. It is also the virtue and moral quality which is to be fair, to respect the rights of others. In short, justice is a character, an action by which an authority and the judiciary recognizes the right of everyone. In this regard, it must be cultivated and preserved and practised in the lives of men and women.

Believers or unbelievers, because it produces peace within them. In other words, those who want peace, harmony and tranquillity in the family, religious community or village, in service or in the country are obliged to cultivate daily justice.

Good knowledge of religion is a factor that contributes to the promotion of good cohabitation because no religion requires a believer or a believer's religious extremism, puritanism and intolerance; human dignity must be at the heart of our religious practices.

In other words, all religions preach love of others, acceptance of others, and tolerance. But there are men and women who say they know their religion and they practice evil daily. In response, I would say that those have not assimilated well the teachings of their masters or teachers of theology. In fact, God is love and peace therefore one who loves God has to be the one who loves both peace and love of neighbour.

That is why, if someone or a person says they love God while hate his brother or sister, they say that person is a liar. Because it is impossible to love God we do not see without first loving, accepting, welcoming, and attending our neighbour.

So my brothers and sisters gathered here, love God and love people, practice the religion that pleases God, but more importantly save the good relationship between Muslims and Christians Because religion is primarily the way of salvation for men.

It is not suppression machine, much less a means of systematic destruction established by men. From the love of neighbour, every human being, every believer and believer in God is first and foremost a human being before being a believer or a believer in God. When we speak of human beings, we speak of the dignity that embodies and which deserves special attention due to his rank.

Yes, we must love and respect others who are not of our religion or our denomination. I say respect because it is respect for each other and their religion, their political choices and that makes the common life become possible. For example, I cannot love Islam as a religion, I cannot believe Muslim practices but I am obliged to respect Islam and all Muslims who love peace and social peace. So love for me is to break the barriers of superiority, religious segregation and politics of racial hatred.

The acceptance of the other and religious tolerance.

Accepting one another is to agree to accept their lifestyle, religious practices, and traditions. At the same time, we must take into account the presence of the other, to be committed to it, to ensure their protection, reception, asylum, although you are not from the same country or the same religion or the ethnicity or the same family or the same political affiliation. So if we want good relations between Muslims and Christians to become a reality and effective, we must practise justice, good knowledge of our religion, love each other, exercise religious tolerance and acceptance of the other as God's creation.

This is the ideal life that you want to carry on this earth, until one is reminded of God. But is that possible today? The answer is yes, if we want to, not if we lack will. This leads us to the second point of our reflection which is challenges.

2. Challenges

The challenges facing both communities in maintaining these good relations are: religious extremism, intolerance, lack of love, the poor design of human life, the rejection of the other, social injustice, poor governance and lack of understanding of our religion.

Religious extremism: Human behaviour is to defend the most radical positions, even when the former is not true or is anti-modern. The law of retaliation "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" is Biblical but is applied more because barbarism has escalated significantly in the lives of many of the faithful in the Church. But we do not see the need to apply to men of our century, hence the appeal to human reason.

The Church that I know well is based on three (3) pillars: Bible, Tradition, and Reason without which the Church can no longer hold. Religious extremism which is practised excessively nowadays is a major challenge against the good relations between the religious continents.

Religious intolerance: It is being hostile or aggressive towards those we do not share the opinion and beliefs. In doing so, it is built into a system that allows them to commit all kinds of violence, abuse and cruelty against others. In addition to this, lack of knowledge, or ignorance of religion and lack of love for others. Yes, brothers, sisters, yes, when a human being ignores religion, the way it should be practised in the 21st century, there is no doubt that it is both a danger and a threat to others or the society in which we live. When a believer does not embody the religious reference, moral probity and justice, he or she becomes an anti-religious, as opposed to the cardinal virtues. Other challenges to list: Injustice, inequity, poor governance and mismanagement of public money or private.

My brothers, my sisters gathered here to work, to consolidate peace and begin the development of our dear continent. These challenges set in motion, create all kinds of crises, spirals of violence, splits in our families, our religious communities, our ethnic entities, national, regional and sub-regional organizations. In other words, religious extremism, injustice practised in excess, lack of transparency in the management of public money, poor governance, and lack of true faith and love of neighbour generate all discord and begin to mutilate the social fabric. In our capacity as good Muslim and Christian believers, do we let ourselves remain idle and indifferent?

The answer to the above question is no, as we shall see in the third point of my presentation, Christian and Muslim religious leaders need to be proactive, they must play their role

in everyday life, for the simple reason that they are the moral and spiritual forces of a religious community of their nation. In this regard, they have put all their weight to prevent cycles of violence, conflict and stop thinking about various wounds caused by so-called conflicts, and reconcile with each other.

In Guinea, during and after social events, many religious leaders have repeatedly held demonstration in various forms to condemn the repression of citizens. They made statements condemning in the strongest terms the barbarism and the various military blunders, arbitrary arrests and violence of any kind of human rights.

It was after a series of crises, of social and political uprisings that the Country has experienced an awareness of the inhumane treatment made by the people and religious leaders. But beyond advice and tips Christians churches and Islamic Mosques or Islamic Country Leagues, and political authorities have found it necessary to create a structure for developing plans and methods of prayer in the country. Formed by Christians and Muslims, the Secretary General of Religious Affairs of Guinea-Conakry is playing many roles in the stability of religious, political and socio-economy of the country.

This is the time and place to say; today's world does not need men and women who pray for others, but beyond that, their devolved role, the world needs religious leaders to be proactive, transparent, respectful and respectable in their domains.

In doing so, jobs are created, ignorance reduced, development is underway and political stability is strengthened in our respective countries and our religious communities. But that's not all, because such religious leaders also become sources of inspiration and serve their community to ensure they take-off on all plans.

In addition, another way to participate in the promotion of peace and development is to cultivate within our religious communities, the imperative of good coexistence and unity between sons and daughters of a nation and a continent. In this regard, we must always remember that peace is not just empty words but behaviour. This cannot be the prerogative of religious leaders alone, but a concern to all of their respective religious communities. Brothers and sisters, by agreeing to put ourselves over some words and attitudes that annoy, we readily create a climate of peace and pave way for sustainable development of our respective countries.

That is why it is necessary that we make human reason prevail over our passions and appetites that consider only our self-interest. This work is now possible in our respective countries, provided that we listen to God and listen to our people.

Dear Muslim and Christian religious leaders, you may well promote peace and development first by beginning in your respective religious communities then your respective countries, but you have to be yourselves good examples you want religious communities to emulate.

Conclusion

Nowadays, discussing the factors that contribute to the promotion of good relations between Muslims and Christians and the challenges faced by these two religious communities, is to ask the question of life, common to those who are not of the same religion nor my family, nor of the same ethnicity, but yet aspire to the welfare and well-being of all.

It also deeply diagnoses the ills besetting our religious communities and considers the range of solutions for the short, medium and long term, for a better tomorrow that we

intend to bequeath to future generations. This should begin with the good faith of the continent. This should also involve all Muslim and Christian religious leaders of all countries precisely because we are the moral and spiritual force of the populace. For anyone who wants peace in their family, religious community must always cultivate justice and love for their neighbours.

God bless us all. Amen

Rev. Father Francis Tounkara,
Coordinator of the Council Christian Guinea

4.7. Mali's contribution

Perspectives of Christian and Muslim leaders in Mali on Peaceful Coexistence

Presented by
Reverend Thaddée Diarra
Imam and Seydou Niankado

I would like on behalf of the delegation accompanying me to bring to you my warmest greetings and sincere congratulations to the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa for organizing this conference. I welcome this initiative as it serves to strengthen peaceful coexistence between Christianity and Islamic religions practised in our continent. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today.

Mali is most brutally confronted with the thorny question of relations between religion, peace and development of all the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The multidimensional crisis plaguing the North that is cut from the rest of the Country has a religious leaning, specifically Islamic extremism. This is a confrontation of Islam itself. Insofar fundamentalist movements AQIM and its affiliates and Ançardine MUJAO try in their intolerance of sharia to impose a more legalistic way. They attack not only other Muslims but also Christians and their places of worship.

This crisis can be averted through dialogue and negotiation thus preventing further deterioration of relations between Christians and Muslims pondering the dangers of religious radicalism. Therefore, it is through this conference on relations between Christians and Muslims that we can reflect on the factors that promote peace and development, challenges, the roles and responsibilities of religious leaders.

A. Christian View on Peaceful Co-existence

By Reverend Thaddée DIARRA

We will examine this issue through three virtues that are essential to the maintenance of social peace and social development. They are the following:

I. Tolerance

For peaceful coexistence to persist between people of different faiths and diverse political views, General Moussa Traoré, the former President of the Republic of Mali, loved to use the word "tolerance." Yes! He was right to insist on tolerance. Because without tolerance;

coexistence of different religious and political views becomes difficult or impossible, even within the same religious community.

In 2010, one evening I was surfing on the internet and I stumbled upon this sad and awful information: "A Sunni Muslim rebel group has claimed responsibility for the two explosions at a mosque in South Eastern Iran".

Indeed, in July 2010, the Sunni group Jundallah claimed responsibility Friday, July 16, of a twin suicide attack in a Shiite Mosque that killed at least 27 people at night in Zahedan, South-eastern Iran

The then Minister of Health and Welfare, Marzieh Vahid M. Dastagerdi confirmed 27 deaths, stressing that the toll could rise, given that 270 people were injured, eleven in critical condition .

Jundallah based in the province of Sistan-Baluchistan, on the border with Pakistan, says it is fighting for the rights of the Sunni Baluch minority, and accuses Iran's Shia-dominated government of persecution.

Tolerance is a virtue that allows one to think and act differently, regardless of who has the power to prohibit it. That is why Voltaire, a French writer and philosopher said, "I do not agree with what you have to say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it." Tolerance is also meant to support and accept the religious, philosophical and political divide. Thus, Albert Memmi in his *Exercice du bonheur* wrote: "Tolerance is a practice and a conquest of oneself.' To be tolerant is to be able to accept the existence of what is disapproved.

Tolerance is very important. It avoids conflict and promotes peaceful coexistence.

Thus, the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said, and I quote: "Tolerance is the virtue that makes peace possible.' Pauline Vaillancourt, on her 'Les Points sur les i' asserts that "tolerance is the art of being happy in the company of others.' In some philosophies such as Buddhist Philosophy "... tolerance to those who attacks us, is an exercise to practise on yourself"

What tolerance is and what it really isn't. In this regard, the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance by United Nations (Article 1.4) clearly states:

Consistent with respect for human rights, the practice of tolerance does not mean toleration of social injustice or the abandonment or weakening of one's convictions. It means that one is free to adhere to one's own convictions and accepts that others adhere to theirs. It means accepting the fact that human beings, naturally diverse in their appearance, situation, speech, behaviour and values, have the right to live in peace and to be as they are. It also means that one's views are not to be imposed on others.

It is even more difficult to understand behaviour (and possibly accept it) if you do not know the origins. This is why it is essential to get to know better. We also need to educate our faithful because some see education as a vehicle for tolerance. Helen Keller once said, 'The best result of education is tolerance.'

But it should be noted that, despite the progress of education in the world, intolerance still exists in the religious sphere. This is because most religions teach only to believe in the legitimacy of their faith and designating all other variants as fake.

ii. Mutual Respect

Tolerance is good. But it is not enough to maintain sustainable social peace. Tolerance is a recipe for mutual respect. Respect is the feeling of consideration, for a person or something. It is characterized by an attitude of difference and concern not to impair the object of respect, or strike it unnecessarily. Respect is a value deeper than mere politeness, since it is free of all hypocrisy. Mutual respect is one of the foundations of peace and social relationships. Respect leads, pushes the recognition and appreciation of the value of the respected human person. Tolerance, in turn, implies that the support of someone or something regardless of opinion or judgment which it is worn. We may hate what you tolerate.

The Bible exhorts us to respect each other. Because it says that, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them” *Genesis 1: 27*

Because of this divine image in every human being, he deserves our respect. Mali is a respectful country even before the arrival of the monotheistic religions in our country. Although our ancestors of past centuries had not heard of this Bible verse, intuitively, they knew that the human person is sacred and should be respected accordingly.

That is why they taught their children the virtue of mutual respect. Children were taught respect for parents, respect for the elderly, for authorities and for seniors. These first two virtues (tolerance and mutual respect) have characterized the Malian people since time immemorial. In these days, we advocate secularism. In practice, Mali is a secular State since the twelfth and Thirteenth Century. All ethnic groups and all religions lived in stability. This explains the fact that we have so far maintained social peace. But since the Pakistani and Afghan Qur’anic teachers began attending Mali, religious fundamentalism has surfaced. It is our duty to keep peace and transmit to future generations a culture of tolerance, consideration and mutual respect that our forefathers gave us.

III. Loving One's Neighbour as Self

Certainly, tolerance and mutual respect are very important virtues that can prevent violent conflict and promote peace and socio-economic development of the country. However, to live together in peace and harmony, there is another greater virtue in its features which includes the first two, this virtue, which the Bible command strongly is love for one's neighbour.

Love your neighbour as yourself. In the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 10, verses 25 to 37, 25, And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?”²⁷ So he answered and said, “‘you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbour as yourself.’”

28 And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.”²⁹ But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?”³⁰ Then Jesus answered and said: “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came

and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was.

And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, when he departed,[c] he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' 36 So which of these three do you think was neighbour to him who fell among the thieves?"37 And he said, "He who showed mercy on him."Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

From the Lord's answer we understand our neighbour:

This is any person to whom we owe a debt, that of love as ourselves. In the practical implementation of the love for our neighbour, this neighbour is the one who needs our help. Someone said: "Our neighbour is one who is close to us when they need us and will inspire compassion. But there's also our other neighbour, who is not necessarily in extreme distress, but who needs our presence, our loving words, our brands attention, our kindness, our services and our gifts. There are still those who need our patience, our constant forgiveness, and our help to recover.

Finally, there are those who should be reprimanded; with firmness full of affection. The reprimand is part of the love of our Heavenly Father. (Hebrews 12.4/11)

Our neighbour is:

- Our joint. A force to look far to find our neighbour, we neglect the one that is closest to us!
- Our children who require our attention, our love and care
- Our parents, who gave us to life and that the Lord asks us to honour.
- Our natural family, our brothers and sisters, everyone who owns our family affection
- Our spiritual family, our brothers and sisters in the Lord, those of us who are born of God, those with whom we gather to pray, hear the Word of God, take the Lord's Supper, to which we practice "Brotherly Love".
- Our neighbours, we meet every day
- Our colleagues, our partners, with whom relations are not always easy.
- Our patrons or employees
- Our service providers, merchants, all those that we encounter in the circumstances of our daily lives. In a word, our neighbour is the one whom we have the opportunity to do good regardless of nationality, race, religion or social qualities or defects.

Generally, we declare and affirm, loving God, we can certify our neighbour. We can without duplicity, say that we love our neighbour as ourselves? In other words we accept them as they are, regardless of religion, colour, race, ethnicity, strengths and weaknesses. The Bible says: "If someone claims to love God yet hates his brother, he is a liar. Because he does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he does not see. Moreover, Christ himself has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.'

How many times have we said to the other: "Yes, I love you, really, God knows I love you, and yet at the bottom of our heart, we hate them. This is hypocrisy. The Bible says: "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good, particularly with regard to: Brotherly Love: Be kindly affectionate to one another - mutual esteem: do put others before you. "Romans Chapter 12 Verse 9

Hillel, a Jewish scholar, once said: "What is hateful to you do not do to your neighbour: that is the whole Torah, the rest is commentary, go and study it deeper." Shabbat 31a
The Lord Jesus said, "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them,

for this is the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 7:12

Love for God includes and demands love of neighbour. Thus this is what we, Christian and Muslim leaders must do to promote peace and development in our countries and be role models for the younger generation. Do we tolerate each other? Have mutual respect for each other, and do we love each other? Then let us instil the virtues of tolerance, mutual respect and love for the next generation. Despite the diversity of religions, ethnicities, languages and political party in Africa, Africa will be a continent of peace and happiness and will affirm that life is good. God bless you.

B. Muslim Perspective on Peaceful Coexistence

By Imam Seydou Niankado

For many observers, the African continent continues to embody a vast fertile land for disagreements, misunderstandings, rejection or conflict, latent or open, reflect the same reality: the uneasy coexistence.

No country is free of conflicts. In Mali, to identify the causes and natures, historians distinguish four main types of armed conflicts: wars of expansion, wars of self-defence or liberation wars waged against punitive recalcitrant or rebellious force against the authority of any king, and finally, clan wars born of rivalry between step-brothers. These wars were not of tribal or racial character. They stemmed from a concern for territorial, economic or ideological hegemony in cases where it was a new way; putting in place the governance we wanted. There were no motives or intent, or the magnitude of genocide conflicts with their current batch of horror.

Echoes of deadly conflict in Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola, Rwanda, Chad, Nigeria and neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire among others, were felt strongly in Mali. They called to the agenda of the need for Muslims and Christian's religious calls - for dialogue, agreement and respect for others.

The adherence of both religions at the same Abrahamic tradition is frequently mentioned: Say, [O believers], "We have believed in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him." Quran, Sura 2, verse 136.)

"And We sent, following in their footsteps, Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah; and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light and confirming that which preceded it of the Torah as guidance and instruction for the righteous." (Qur'an, Sura 5, verse 46.)

Muslims and Christians in Mali evoke in their sermons, the traditions and social practices forged by our ancestors to keep the peace, tolerance, non-violence, moderation, brotherhood. To do this, songs, proverbs, fables, myths, tales and anecdotes are involved to educate the society about the conflict and its attendant suffering, desolation, trauma and nightmare. Compared to many African countries, Mali's history and traditions spring from a culture of peace.

Among the factors of social cohesion, we must mention the various forms of alliance: blood ties, marriage ties, kinship or "sinakounya" in the Bambara language etymologically meaning "sônôgôya: relax, play down, soften, facilitate, or to enhance things". Forms of alliance, in addition to mediation, include; negotiation, reconciliation and advice.

These roles are traditionally assigned to social groups (nyamakalas), quickly met with the support of Muslim and Christian leaders. Islam forbids breaking ties which Allah has made sacred. Mediation between parents, spouses, employees, sons of the nation, is a religious duty. Good relations between Christians and Muslims in Mali are basically explained by these provisions.

Today, we must admit that we live in a world gone flat. Information Technology and Communication, the upheaval of political and geostrategic landscape, the proliferation of religious sects, the emergence of new forms of terrorism, conceit, arrogance and extremist rhetoric have changed the world. Relations between communities, religions, nations have fallen into the cold. Distrust and suspicion have permanently settled at all levels.

The Muslim and Christian leaders in Mali must now reckon with these new threats to stability and challenges.

In each African country there is a considerable risk to the extent that the coexistence between Islam and Christianity has become the simple transposition of quarrels, hegemony, distorted and broken looks; that the West and the Arab world have for each other. On both sides of our sermons are increasing allure of attacks and replicas of equal violence. Everyone retreats into their truths that have become the "Truth". This is the sad record of these errors that need to be put as the barbarism and crimes plaguing today on African soil of Mali under the veneer of an alleged authentic Islam and a Sharia sprung from nowhere.

This has wounded and humiliated the Muslim faith thus tarnishing the image of Mali. Our country is not only halved but hit in the depths of her soul's, beauty and charm. I mean Mali is a peaceful, tolerant, hospitable, cultured, and highly religious land notably Timbuktu whose light, inspires science, art and theology since the dawn of Islam. Mali is where Muslims read and meditated on the: Holy Quran, about differences, freedom and religious tolerance. The Holy Quran says, I quote:

"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion"(Sura 2, verse 256)

"And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed - all of them entirely. Then [O Muhammad] would you compel the people in order that they become believers? And it is not for a soul to believe except by permission of Allah, and He will place defilement upon those who will not use reason." Sura 10, verses 99 and 100)

And We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it. So judge between them by what Allah has revealed and do not follow their inclinations away from what has come to you of the truth. To each of you We prescribed a law and a method. Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation [united 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 (Sura 5, verse 48)

Whoever- on the path of drug trafficking-is beginning to teach with cannon and a whip under the influence of drugs, cannot be a Muslim. It is the antithesis of the Qur'anic text. This is at odds with the Islamic context. It is the worst enemy of Islam. Yet, it is happening today in Mali, and is an insult to Islam, a fracture in our common image, a war against humans and humanity. It must be treated as such without amalgam or scapegoat.

The current context of political pluralism and media offers Muslim and Christian leaders, the opportunity to put all their weight in the consolidation of peace, but is also a major

challenge. How can we keep impartiality and neutrality in a context that requires the commitment? How to gain height, keep calm and objectivity when we so often deceive ourselves and combat opponents?

Bound to be a prisoner of hope, I pray with you to Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, to guide us in the way of eternal peace. Amen

Conclusion

1. Factors that promote good relations between Christians and Muslims.

Factors that promote good relations between Christians and Muslims in Mali include:

- Ethnic and linguistic diversity;
- Common cultural references for example, Bobos Christians and Muslims live in perfect harmony without stigmatizing and mutually help each other whenever circumstances arise.
- The attitudes and practices of solidarity in the management of cultural and social activities (baptisms, marriages, deaths) together. It should however be noted that economic difficulties that are exacerbated because of inequality, injustice, corruption and impunity and politicking, tend to affect the relations between Christians and Muslims which are often made of intolerance.

2. The challenges which the two communities face in preserving these relationships.

The challenges which religious leaders are faced with in this context are to avoid the demons of money and corruption.

- The collision between political and religious leaders can bring Christians and Muslims to exploit and contribute to the subjugation of the people by the ruling class.
- Regarding Islam, relations with the oil monarchies are one of the dimensions of the crises due to the weight of their funding in the lives of religious institutions.
- The challenge in this context for religious leaders is, not lend themselves to the exploitation and commoditisation of faith.

3. The role of Christian and Muslim leaders in promoting peace and preventing violent conflicts.

Christian and Muslim leaders have since the 90s played an important role in crises management in Mali. It was at first in conflict management in some privatizations, school crises, and now to this question of the north. Apart from the periodic serious attacks, religious leaders have mitigated much conflict and suffering of believers in distress.

4. What Christian and Muslim leaders must do to promote peace and development in our country

It is now required of religious leaders as well as political leaders, to exercise ethics in the business management of the city.

May God bless and sustain Africa.

4.8. Contribution of Burkina Faso

My gratitude to PROCMURA and in this case, its General Adviser, Rev. Dr. Johnson for the honour of asking me to talk about relations between Christians and Muslims in the country of honest men, on the following points:

- Factors that promote good relations between Christians and Muslims.
- Challenges that both communities face in preserving these relations.
- The role that Christians and Muslims leaders must play in the promotion of peace and the prevention of violent conflict.
- What Christians and Muslims leaders should do to promote peace and development in Burkina Faso.

Before addressing these points, let me point out first of all the excellent relations that exist between Christians (Catholics and Evangelicals in Burkina Faso). The Catholic Church arrived in 1900 where as the Evangelical Churches (the first arrived in 1921). At the beginning, there was little gnashing of cohabitation. Since time immemorial, the two communities live in harmony in our cities and in the countryside. On March 8th 1999 I had the honour to be at the great Cathedral of Ouagadougou in the presence of Bishop Jean-Marie Compaoré. This is a proof of the excellent relations.

That said, back to the subject

I. Factors that promote good relations between Christians and Muslims

The following are some of the factors contributing to the promotion of good relations between Christians and Muslims in Burkina Faso:

- The fact that Muslims in this country live according to the rules of the Qur'an, in the year 1958 decided to set up a community called "Muslim Community of Upper Volta", now Burkina Faso, which strives to live in peace with the other components of civil society and national authorities.
- In many families in Burkina Faso, each member of the family is free to practice the religion of their choice.
- Children of the same family can be followers of different religions. This practice contributes to a peaceful coexistence among religions.
- The attitude of impartial government is emphasized.
- While attending the invitation of government, religious leaders alongside other leaders of civil society and the State often search for solutions to the country's problems. Such occasions include The National Day of Forgiveness (JNP), where the President meets leaders of different faiths.
- Our native languages are also among the factors contributing to the promotion of good relations for peace. Mooré language spoken by the majority of the population is an all day long vehicle that promotes cultural values that are factors of peace.

Examples:

Goodbye: in this language is " Wenn-na Taas Y ne laafi ", literally translated as "May God guide you to your destination in peace."

A tomorrow is "Wenn-na Kôod-beogo"

Hospitality: is also a factor

There is a saying/adage in Burkina Faso that says "the head of the family serves when a visitor is satisfied."

II. Challenges that both communities (Muslim and Christian) face in preserving these relationships

Fanaticism, fundamentalism and sectarianism. Many believers fall into the trap of fundamentalism, and fanaticism because they misinterpret what God says. Let us all know that God wants even the wicked to live and change.

Anyone who believes in God must know that the Creator recommends loving each other (love is not ill to one's neighbour, taken from (Romans 10: 13).

No father wants his son to be a murderer. Adam and Eve, the parents of Cain and Abel confirm this truth.

III. The role that Christian and Muslim leaders must play in the promotion of peace

They must play the role of:

- Agents of peace
- Mediators
- Sensitizers

Religious leaders must lead their followers to continue the awareness for peaceful coexistence. As far as it depends on you live peaceably with all men (Romans 12:18). Prevention is better than cure.

IV. What Christians and Muslims Leaders should do to promote peace and development in Burkina Faso

- They must demonstrate:
- Their knowledge,
- Their expertise,
- Their technical knowledge,
- Love and compassion for one another,
- During Ramadhan, Catholic Christians Leaders of Burkina Faso attend the prayer of the feast of Tabaski with our Muslim brothers.
- At Muslim or Christian festivals, followers visit each other.

Conclusion

This article appeals to everyone, to work for peaceful coexistence.

If everyone is committed to peace with God's help, peace is possible in the world.

On earth peace be among men of good will

Pastor Tapsoba I. Flavien
El Hadji Baba Sidiki Kontogomé

4.9. Contribution of Benin

By Abdul Raimi Aminou Anifowoché

Economist Independent Consultant;

Former student of l'Ecole des Cadres du Commerce et des Affaires Economiques de Neuilly sur Seine (France);

Programme Office of Islamic Associations Network's and NGOs of Benin (RAI-Benin);

Member of the "Friends of Islam" Association / President of the NGO, Protest Sida (AIDS) Benin;

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful;

All praise is to the Lord of the worlds. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon His servant and His Messenger Muhammad, his family and Companions.

I implore Allah so that this presentation is beneficial for me and for all Muslims and all those involved directly or indirectly in the search for peace.

S49 V10, Sura Al-Hujurāt (The Rooms) “The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy. ‘

S61 V4, Sura Aş-Şaf (The Ranks) “Allah loves those who fight in His way in order, well assembled as solid building materials. Indeed, Allah loves those who fight in His cause in a row as though they are a [single] structure joined firmly..”

Introduction

When we talk about religion in Benin, statistics show that 27% are Christian, 22% are Muslim and 37% are animists. Since the advent of democracy in 1990, there has been resurgence of religion in the public arena. To make them visible in society, the three religions use the following means: the proliferation of places of worship, public demonstrations, media, and making religious public-donations, schools, health centres, and orphanages.

Animism (traditional religions) is, by far, the first religion in the country. Shared and it is better known that, whatever religion they practice, the Beninese people are mostly attached to voodoo.

Therefore, traditional religions still exist in Benin despite the introduction of Islam and Christianity and no new sects that grow in all directions like mushrooms will shake them. It is not uncommon in Benin to find members practicing Christianity, Islam, and other, traditional indigenous religion within the same family; in fact all beliefs can even be combined. It is in this context that many Beninese people coexist and believe in God and are tolerant. So this has somehow bound the populace together in peace.

Religious leaders' awareness

The Qur'an says: “no compulsion in religion.” I believe that when a problem arises, you have to sit and process it. Nobody can defend God it is God who defends us.

In Benin, religious leaders are aware that they must participate in peacekeeping and are forced to play their role in order to avoid having to develop any form of intolerance and to prevent violence by encouraging dialogue based on a sincere mutual understanding.

Dialogue between Christians and Muslims must be singular “notably through respectful human relations, an agreement on the values of life and mutual cooperation in all that promotes the common good.” Such a dialogue also requires the preparation of competent persons to help to know and understand the religious values we have in common and to respect these differences honestly.

Christians and Muslims should know and should continue perpetually to know each other, share their traditions, rituals, and spirituality. They should jointly bring down the walls of prejudice; discover their similarities and the richness of their differences so that they become meaningful. We must develop a cultural and spiritual dialogue.

We must act together, mobilize ourselves around a cause, a solidarity project because it is in the collective action that believers discover that it is possible to act towards a common goal, by dissecting interreligious conflict. Christians and Muslims are called to witness to their experiences, share their experience in interreligious dialogue. These testimonies, this communication effort, can sow new projects, new initiatives, and to “communicate” in the positive sense of the term. These actions must be perpetuated over generations.

Muslims for peace in Benin

We cannot talk about peace in Benin, especially for us Muslims, without referring to the various problems plaguing inter-religious neighbouring Nigeria, which when she sneezes or coughs, Benin gets sick. This is the opportunity to thank PROCMURA when through its participation in finding solutions to various problems faced by the people of Northern Nigeria, brought together 60 Christian and Muslim religious leaders of eight (8) African countries that include: Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania (including Zanzibar Island), in the PLC Global Hotel Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 8 to 13 January 2012 on the theme: “Africa Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders for Peace and Development.”

This successful meeting whose effects are palpable today, it can be noted with great interest the guidelines are derived and provide a benchmark to establish the bases of analysis for each of our French-speaking countries, in my humble opinion, need to be inspired. Is it easy for us to accept that mutilation were held hard against the innocent people in the name of a religious ideology that did credit neither in faith nor in the practice of our religion?

As Muslim leaders, we should be in bitterness for killings and indiscriminate destruction of property including places of worship that are carried out by some members of our community because Islam strongly condemns the heinous crimes committed against innocent and inhumane acts which bear the mark of animosity between humans against fellow humans.

Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa, and one of the leading powers of the continent, thus all Africans must make every effort to maintain a peaceful Nigeria. If Nigeria is divided and is undergoing turbulence, there will be a negative impact not only on West Africa, beginning with our country Benin with the 8.5 million souls but also on the African continent. The signs are there and palpable. This is the fundamental reason to continue to be in solidarity with each other in the promotion of justice, peace and reconciliation, and always pray for unity between our two communities.

The challenges that Christians and Muslims face in maintaining good relations in Benin

Our various efforts should focus on addressing common challenges in enabling us to maintain our good relations, a number of these include maintaining unconditional recognition and respect on both sides in entirety.

This respect for others should lead to the recognition of the values of each entity by a study of religious principles or basic precepts to clear the air, a phenomenon that often leads to misunderstandings because of incorrect interpretation of what the other thinks or says.

For my part, I sincerely believe that we Muslims in Benin should redefine our position in relation to the place and the role we play in the culture of peace and the promotion of socio-political and economic development of our country. It is understood that there is no development without peace and without a responsible youth.

The involvement of youth in promoting peace and development

Everyone knows that there is a growing number of graduates from the Arab countries and are jobless on the streets in our towns and countryside; these graduates, if ignored, swell the ranks of the unemployed, and automatically become a social problem. To take care of themselves, they make themselves Imams, and come together to make the daily prayers on the sidewalk, some groups are even found a few meters from a mosque of their choice, if not to be seen and heard. Some of them, proclaiming themselves “imams” are scholars, instilling their entourage to false values, contrary to the precepts of the *Qur’ān*. It is urgent then that we prioritize issues related to youth to clearly identify this portion of our population who are the leaders of tomorrow and today are an easy target to corruption and to be terrorists. Benin is not immune from any disorders whatsoever, but it behoves us to preserve peace at all costs. The action must be conducted jointly between our two communities and Beninese youth who must find their dignity regardless of their religious and/or traditional as I can confirm, with full knowledge that our youth are losing the mark.

The youth who were once synonymous with moral value, to knowledge, fairness, respect and other words related to good faith, true faith, are now inadequate with real human values such as civic education and religious education.

Our today’s youth who are tomorrow’s future, must be for us, the real foundation on which we must rely, sit our hope for the perpetuation of our respective shares in each of our communities if we expect a bit of hope for a better tomorrow. And if we do not get the youth out of this uncertainty, we would have failed in our mission, because we are shepherds whom help will be required.

To this end, the youth should be able to find through us a good character capable of discernment.

The challenges that religious leaders face in the promotion of peace and development

How can we live in an environment where subsistence is lacking, where morality is lacking, where corruption and crime are pawn on the streets, juvenile delinquency, prostitution, drugs, cyber-crime and AIDS are the ill?

We must quickly act and find appropriate solutions. Faced with this threat, Islam and Christianity are two religions whose followers are forced to live with secularism of our

country; and beyond that secularism.

Muslim religious leaders, meanwhile, must spare no effort to bring other communities informed on the vision of good collaboration and sharing that can be experienced during major Muslim holidays like *Tabaski* and *Ramadhan*. Muslims celebrate the Benin royal Christmas; in some Muslim families Santa Claus stands in a corner of their living room and undergoes grooming on the eve of this feast. What about Easter? It is the same scenario.

Assessment of the state of relations between Muslims and Christians in Benin

Benin is a very religious Country but the “money” factor has become bigger than a weapon of mass destruction. Indeed, for some religious and political leaders’ money determines everything. What do we do with it since it is a weapon? Will we sit right back to redefine behaviours; stand before this phenomenon so that we play our role as leaders without violating the Qur’ānic laws?

What do we do to reach our goals without ambiguities; taking into account the Qu’rānic precepts to remain faithful to our commitments to Allah, the Almighty?

Some associations play their role in the pacification of intra-Muslim, Muslim-Christian relations, it is the Islamic Union of Benin (UIB), one of the largest bodies of Muslim countries, chaired by the Imam of the Central City of Natitingou, the Association of Muslim Intellectuals Benin (AIMB), the Union of Muslim Women from Benin (UFMUB), the Consultation Framework for Religious Confessions (CCCR) whose President of the Central LMAM City of Natitingou and first Vice-President is the Rev. Dr. Nicodemus Alagbada, the Network of Associations and Islamic NGO’s in Benin (RAI - Benin) which I am a member.

This network, is composed of thirty associations and non-governmental organizations, it is a member of the Network of African Islamic Organizations on Population and Development (RAOI / PD), whose President is the Sultan of Sokoto in Nigeria and position of Women’s’ Wing Secretariat Affairs is chaired by Dr. Adissatou Yacoubou Baba Moussa of Benin for nearly a decade, the Muslim community is imbued with the vision of PROCMURA through Mr. and Mrs. Paul Saï whom, I give a fitting tribute to all they had to do to the consolidation of Christian-Muslim relations in Benin in general, and in particular Porto-Novo. We are proud to have learnt the lessons on PROCMURA’s ideals and we want to learn on the role of this laudable programme on peace.

What are our commitments for the conference in Porto Novo?

We cannot do much without referring to the conference theme “Christians and Muslims together for peace and development” held at Christian Home and Training Centre (CCAF) in Porto-Novo, Benin, on 26th and 27th July 2010 under the auspices of PROCMURA. During this conference, it became clear that we, religious leaders in Benin are strongly committed to:

- Lead by example and take responsibility;
- Conduct awareness campaigns and education within our communities and help promote tolerance and affirmative action for peace and peaceful coexistence;
- Promote respect for and appreciation of religious values, beliefs and practices of each other;
- Engage our government and its internal and external agencies to work for responsible and democratic governance.
- I can assure you that we have not failed in our mission, given the consistency in our actions and the role of each of the associations mentioned.

For cons, the formation of the youth rout is a challenge we are facing but we are trying to establish a policy along the lines of a better education for them. Our concern now is to prioritize the role of youth in our community.

Allah teaches us in the Qur'ān the responsibility of Muslim youth and gives us examples of the youth who have experienced God and have devoted their lives. Followers of Musa (PL) were all young: Allah tells us: "Nobody believed in the (the message) of Moses, except for a group of young men from his people, for fear of reprisals from Pharaoh and their chiefs."

People of the Cave were young: "We will tell you their story with truth. These are youths who believed in their Lord, and We have given them the greatest ways to move (in the good way). "

Ibrahim (Abraham) (Peace be upon him) was so young when he decided to destroy the idols, the Qur'ān states: "Some said:" We heard a young man speak ill of them, he is called Abraham. "

And Yusuf (Joseph) was young when he was confronted with the suffering in prison and the invitation to commit fornication, but he preferred the obedience of Allah: He said: My Lord, the prison is preferable to what they invite me. And if you do away from me their guile, I will fall for them and will be of the ignorant (sinners). These are examples of young people who have sold their souls to God, and it is these models that should inspire our youth to turn to their responsibilities.

It will be for them to preserve their Muslim identity and personality and not melt and lose any sign of religiosity, to prayer, to pay the alms, fasting, refraining from prohibitions, be jealous of their religion, their faith, correct in practice, be of strong ethics, be of a cultivated mind, organized in their business, preserve their time, able to earn a living and be beneficial to other humans. They will have to be able to spread the call in society, fight the vices and bad things, hasten to do good. Allah says: "By wisdom and fair exhortation calls (people) to the Way of thy Lord."

The responsibility of the youth does not stop there, but our youth in this country should feel proud of belonging to a larger community and the Muslim world, and they share with their Muslim brothers and sisters, their joys and their suffering out of that selfishness and individualism. Islam teaches us to be in solidarity with one another and from generations to generations. Our young people must learn to be helpful to society and their communities and that Islam is the centre of their lives.

Conclusion

It goes without saying that, it is acting at the base, and in the Newspaper that the Christian and Muslim believers will facilitate the work of institutions and religious figures. Dialogue and peace are related and together we can embed the two main religions of the Book in a fertile ground for brotherhood and solidarity.

We believe that the spiritual dimension of man grows by religion, and that the emancipation of this dimension is the best source of hope for humanity. The majority of today's youth will in the near future be fathers or mothers, and it is therefore essential that they can pass this well over their children. Thank you for your attention and God bless you

Amine

4.10 Contribution from Chad

Chad is a country where the South is predominantly Christian, while the North is predominantly Muslim, as in many other countries before the 1979 war, the problem of Christians–Muslims conflict was not visible, especially in the South of the country, although Muslims are in large numbers in the country. But with the arrival of the President from the Northern Region of the country, some Muslims have regarded this as a conquest of the country and the end of the secular state.

It was followed by a sharp increase in Mosques in the South, preaching in public places, and even the arrival of Eastern (Pakistani) Muslim preachers. To this effect farmers' conflict sprouted, who sometimes took a religious dimension. All this was seen with suspicion by the Christian South.

The President of the Republic forewarned, took steps to ensure that Chad does not experience an open conflict. Indeed, he has taken measures to maintain the secularism of the State. Thus, since 1995, the Chadian government has been working hard to ensure peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims through interfaith seminars, asking pastors, priests and imams to preach peace in churches and mosques.

In 2011, the President signed a decree establishing a day of peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims, so every November 28th of each year is celebrated in all regions, all districts and all departments in Chad. During this day, religious leaders in conjunction with local administrative authorities organise a day of prayer for peace, unity and peaceful coexistence.

During this same time, the President and the entire government attend a high-profile prayer session in the capital organised by the religious leaders of the city. This has contributed significantly to lower tensions. We can conclude that for the moment, Chad is spared the conflict between Christians and Muslims.

**Pasteur Philippe KAHAISSOU
GADJI BEN GADJI**

Appendix V

LECTURE NOTES

The Role of Religion in Peace and Development

By M. Sy Issaka M. Tahirou (Civil Peace Service Consultant in the Sahel)

I. Development:

In its literal sense, can develop according to the context:

- Deploy, extend;
- Take place logically;
- Go through the different stages;
- Grow, expand
- Increase strength, power, extend
- To multiply, grow;

In our case, we need to understand development in its broadest sense, ranging from spirituality to the environment through the material. It is at this point that the link of peace and religion is more noticeable.

II. The Context of Peace:

We have all kinds of material definitions or interpretations, for example there is the theory that makes the distinction between negative peace (absence of war) and positive peace (a society without physical or structural violence).

The notion which is increasingly recognised in this area is that the path to lasting peace leads to conflict transformation and social change according to John Paul Lederach.

For me, peace is a dynamic in which one feels the best conditions for their development, it is therefore not static but as in the current situation:

- Peace promotes harmony in the lives of citizens and the community and allows effective participation in the development process;
- Peace as respect and protection of human rights, promote access to resources and basic conditions for life.
- It pleases me to quote a few references to show that peace animates our lives, our whole life:
- In the United Nations Charter peace is the subject of its first chapter: "... to maintain peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace and suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, in accordance with the principles of justice and international law ...".
- "As-Salam" which means peace in Arabic is not only one of the 99 names of Allah exalted (SWT), but it has become a common term used as greetings.
- For Christians the word "Shalom" which also means "Peace" integrates culture greetings, Pope Paul VI said that "development is the new name of peace" (*Populorum Progressio*, 76-80).

III. The Influence of Religion in the Context of Peace:

I would like to begin my argument by drawing on the concepts developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which after study has attempted to classify the actions of Peace into four main categories:

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	GOOD GOVERNANCE	REFORM OF JUSTICE & SECURITY INSTITUTIONS	CULTURE OF TRUTH, JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION
Balanced physical reconstruction	Civil society development	Security sector reform (police, military, intelligence)	Enhancing non-violent dispute resolution systems
Sound and equitable economic management	Freedoms of expression association, press	Small arms and light weapons reduction	Dialogue among conflicting groups
Equitable distribution of development benefits	Media development	Nonviolent accompaniment	Prejudice reduction or diversity training
Gender equality	Power sharing	Community policing	Trauma healing
Equitable access to services	Participatory processes	Peacekeeping	Conflict resolution skills training
Repatriation/reintegration of displaced persons	Improved access	Nonviolent observers	Peace education
Sustainable use of (and equitable access to) natural resources	Democratisation	Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants	Transitional justice
	Electoral processes	De-mining	War crimes trials
	Transparency and accountability		Raparations
	Anti-corruption and good governance programs		
	Human rights protection		
	Rule of law		

TRANSFORMING ATTITUDES, STRUCTURES, RELATIONSHIPS AND BEHAVIOURS ⁸

Source: OECD/ DAC: Guide to the assessment activities; Conflict Prevention and Peace Building, 2008

Another reference is that the four dimensions of transformation by John Paul Lederach:

- Personal Change: That the actors change their attitudes, behaviours and they cease the use of violence as a way to accept consultation in conflict resolution, etc.
- Changing relationships: That actors develop trust between themselves, improve their communication/cooperation and exceed prejudices, etc.
- Structural change: Those structures exclusive and violent change and become more just and inclusive and that they should promote the participation of all stakeholders without distinction, etc.
- Cultural change: That culture of peace and non-violence is born and/or is maintained in communities, that behaviours of peace/non-violent become the dominant standard in society, etc.

IV. My Engagement in Inter-Religious Dialogue:

- As a trainer in Culture of Peace and Non-Violent Conflict Management, I contributed to the training of several religious leaders in Mali.
- In Burkina Faso where I am currently based, I am in contact with several religious leaders in terms of exchanges including the contribution of religion to mitigate the negative impact of the conflict interreligious in northern Mali and prevent crises in the community.
- My role as technical adviser is to share support and advice in the development and implementation of actions.

- I am also involved in the development of strategies to the work of peace.

Conclusion and Recommendation:

- Religion is an essential potential in Africa to achieve social cohesion and ensuring an environment for sustainable development.
- Religion engenders peace and allows the development of communities.
- We must work to ensure that religion is a resource for peace rather than a source of conflict for this purpose we need to combine our efforts to:
 - Develop action approaches and instruments,
 - Disseminate religious values for peace and non-violence,
 - Conduct advocacy and lobbying within our leaders and partners that are involved in religious matters effectively at all levels in the development of our societies.

May the grace of the Lord accompany our efforts, AMEN!

Appendix VI

Closing Remarks by President of EFLC / CEPCA

The Governor of the Region of Far-North, Personal Representative of the President of the Republic,

The Prefect of the Department of Diamaré,

Mr. Government Delegate to the Urban Community of Maroua,

The General Adviser of PROCMURA,

Dear Partners from Mission Afrika,

Their Majesties, Their Eminences, Reverends,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ladies and gentlemen,

May I thank God for the Christian and Muslim religious leaders' Regional Conference for Francophone West and Central Africa on Peace and Development, held in Maroua in early 2013.

Prominent delegates from Africa and Europe have shown interest in the topic chosen for our work. Certainly, the number of participants who came to Maroua is a manifestation that inspires Cameroon. We hope that we have not failed at home, and if imperfections have befallen the organisation, please accept our apologies, and we promise to do better next time. We thank you the General Adviser of PROCMURA for your renewed confidence by agreeing to hold other meetings of this nature in Cameroon.

By rewarding your contributions, your discussions, the Maroua initiative seems to have led to goals, and achieved the desired results. Indeed, the relevant resolutions were formulated and adopted by countries in the context of the development of the people of God and the sustainable development of our different nations.

If we all remembered during our discussions that Christians and Muslims recognise one God, as the Creator, we endlessly reiterated that Christian-Muslim relations would be concerned not over dogmatic questions specific to each religion, or any initiative conversion or reconversion of the faithful.

Also, we rejoice that peace among peoples, and the development of our country has been at the centre of our work. Thus, the results achieved through resolutions in Maroua, we religious leaders and participants now have the duty, in our social environment, each one in their case, to walk the talk, to bring peace to our respective nations and our continent; to emancipate itself and give the opportunity to every creature of God to have more hope in daily life until the advent to heaven.

I thank you once again for the sacrifices you have made in your calendar at the beginning of 2013, braving the distanced Maroua area of the Far-North of Cameroon, we wish you a good return to your respective communities.

God Almighty will accompany you along your journeys.

Thank you!

Appendix VII

Maroua Communiqué

We, Christian and Muslim religious leaders from twelve (12) Francophone West and Central African countries of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Chad and Togo at the invitation of the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) in collaboration with the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon (EFLC);

Having deliberated on the theme: Francophone West and Central Africa Regional Initiative for Christians and Muslim Religious Leaders on Peace and Development at Hotel le Sahel in Maroua, Cameroon from 6 to 10 January 2013;

Having critically examined and discussed major papers presentations on two sub-themes of the conference: Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities for Collaboration for Peace and Development and the Role of Religion in Peace and Development;

AWARE that religion and religious differences have often been negatively exploited for political, economic, social and personal gains, thereby causing conflicts that result in several loss of lives and wanton destruction of property;

VERY CONCERNED about the rise of violent conflicts in some of the countries here gathered;

ENCOURAGED that there are concerted efforts being made towards collaboration between Christians and Muslims for justice, peace and development in the countries represented at the conference and some other countries around Africa;

UNDERSTAND that, as religious leaders, we must at all times be agents of justice, peace and reconciliation for development and thereby serve as examples for others to emulate;

CONSCIOUS that Christianity and Islam of which we are religious leaders are the two major religions in west and central African countries;

Do hereby resolve:

- To lead our respective communities by example and take the responsibility of promoting peace and development in our respective regions;
- To conduct outreach and awareness campaigns within our religious communities and help promote religious tolerance, positive peace and peaceful coexistence;
- To put in place national structures for Muslim-Christian relations in our respective countries based on the principles of PROCMURA;
- To respect and appreciate religious values, beliefs and practices of each other;
- To collectively, engage national governments, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States

(ECCAS) and the African Union (AU), to promote accountable and democratic governance and consciously search for peaceful solutions to crises that undermine some of our States;

In order to achieve these, we accordingly:

- Call on religious leaders to exercise political neutrality and avoid negative tendencies that have the potential of causing conflicts;
- Call on governments and political leaders to practice good governance and ensure peaceful transitions from one government to another;
- Appeal to governments and armed groups in northern Mali, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo to cease-fire and seek dialogue to resolve their disputes so as to put an end to the suffering of their people;
- Appeal to Christian and Muslim religious leaders of Nigeria to tirelessly continue in their quest for interreligious peace in their communities;

Finally we would want to:

Reaffirm our commitment and determination to be in solidarity with each other so as to maintain peace and work towards sustainable development in Africa in general and West and Central Africa in particular.

Express our gratitude to the Head of State and Government of Cameroon for allowing us to enter, stay and ensure our well-being during the entire meeting.

Commit ourselves to ensure that our actions are guided by the tenets of our two religions which have peace at the core of their teachings.

Recognise the importance of our partners from Denmark who have accompanied us in this journey of peace in the region.

Done in Maroua January 10, 2013

Participants:

Burkina Faso, Togo, Benin, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Chad, Cameroon, Rwanda.

Appendix VIII

Maroua Women Statement

Francophone West and Central Africa Regional Initiative for Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders on Peace and Development

Maroua, Cameroon

6 - 10 January 2013

STATEMENT ON WOMEN IN CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

We, Christian and Muslim women from Burkina Faso, Togo, Senegal, Niger, Mali, Rwanda, Guinea, Cameroon and Democratic Republic of Congo who participated in the PROCMURA Christian and Muslim religious leaders initiative on peace and development, held at Hotel le Sahel in Maroua, Cameroon from 6th to 10th January 2013, had the opportunity to meet as sisters to discuss issues of importance to women in Christian - Muslim relations which were in line with the conference proceedings.

Having shared openly and frankly on issues that affect both Muslim and Christian women and all women in our regions and indeed Africa at large, we came to the conclusion that our respective religious traditions if interpreted properly recognise the importance of women in society.

We lamented, however, that there are certain cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and rising vices such as child trafficking and rape that call for concerted efforts to eradicate.

We were agreed that illiteracy poses the greatest challenge in the development of the girl-child and vowed to work together to ensure that education is taken more seriously since that forms the foundational base of eradicating several vices meted against women.

In spite of some of the challenges mentioned, we were encouraged by women political leadership in a number of countries and even in the African Union and at various levels of science and economics among others, and pledged to consciously work towards ensuring that such a trend continues.

In the context of the proceedings of this particular conference which has a focus on Muslim and Christian leaders being proactive in the pursuit of peace and development we would like to call on:

- Peace activists in the continent to always ensure that women are included in peace negotiations as we are often at the receiving end in conflict situations.
- Religious leaders most of whom are men, to appreciate the role of women more than ever before in the material and spiritual development of society.
- On governments to take account of women in the leadership development of the

countries in the region and Africa as a whole.

On our part we pledge our commitment to:

- Push for the training of Christian and Muslim women on the tenets of their religion to the highest level possible, so as to equip them with relevant knowledge that will assist them to embark on interfaith relations with confidence.
- Advocate for the creation of structures in religious organizations that would assist all and sundry to practice their religious faith without prejudice either as majorities or minorities in any given situation
- Work towards creating a network of Christian and Muslim women that would collaborate and work together on issues of particular concern to women in Christian-Muslim relations and to the wider society
- Advocate for, and promote unity in diversity as an acceptable norm of Christian and Muslim leaders in the society and the countries from which we come
- Strongly advocate for the involvement of women in the promotion of peace and development and live in solidarity with one another as we vigorously pursue peace by example.
- Commit ourselves to promote PROCMURA's ideals of Christian and Muslim constructive engagement for peace in Africa and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims.

Done in Maroua, January 10th 2013

Appendix IX

Religious Leaders Call for Peace in the Central African Republic

**Francophone West and Central Africa Regional Initiative for Christian and Muslim
Religious Leaders on Peace and Development
Maroua, Cameroon
6 - 10 January 2013**

TO HEADS OF STATES AND DELEGATIONS CURRENTLY IN LIBREVILLE FOR DIALOGUE ON THE POLITICO-MILITARY SITUATION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

We, participants at the “Francophone West and Central Africa Regional Initiative for Christian and Muslim religious leaders for peace and development”, held from 6 to 10 January 2013 in Maroua, Cameroon, organized by the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA).

- Considering the suffering of the people of the Central African Republic and the political, economic and social implications as a result of the politico-military situation in that country;
- Considering the commitment of both sides to seek peaceful solutions to the crisis that precipitated the ongoing dialogue currently being held in Libreville, Gabon;
- Considering the contribution of Heads of States from the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and other countries of the world aimed at preserving peace and harmony in Africa;
- Knowing that every human being is a noble and sacred person created by God;
- Are concerned about the political and military situation that is prevailing at the moment in Central African Republic.

Peace comes from God, God is peace. We pray and invoke God’s peace on the country and the peoples of the Central African Republic.

We encourage the various sides in conflict to work towards dialogue and reconciliation, in love and in truth, to find consensual solutions so as to prevent the Central African peoples from physical, moral and spiritual suffering.

We call on the ECCAS and the international community to support the ongoing dialogue process, so as to strengthen the rule of law.

We appeal to all to ensure that the rights and dignity of individuals are protected, taking into account the specific needs of the most vulnerable in conflict situations such as women and children.

May the culture of neighbourly love, tolerance and acceptance of one another, be

strengthened and consolidated in the heart of all stakeholders.

May God bless you and help you to make a commitment to a true and lasting peace in the Central African Republic.

May the peace of God be with the people of Central African Republic.

Peace be with you all.

Done in Maroua, January 9, 2013
Participants

Appendix X

List of Participants

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

FRANCOPHONE WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

Maroua, Cameroon, 6th -10th January 2013

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Appendix XI

Photo Gallery







“From the PROCMURA perspective, we seek to have an informed leadership of Church and Mosque who will be able and willing to contribute to peace and development in Africa and by that example become active contributors on the world stage when issues of that nature are discussed”.

Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah

The General Adviser of PROCMURA

“The holding of a regional conference of Christian and Muslim leaders, will undoubtedly go beyond religious differences specific to all and sundry and accepted by each other, deepen the reflection on values that convey these two religions not only to maintain peace and harmony, but also to promote development. It is undeniable that the Maroua conference is timely, given the conflicts witnessed in many places across the world, due to rightly or wrongly, related causes to religion.”

Robert Bakary

Government Delegate to the Urban Community of Maroua

“The pursuit of human dignity and the preservation of his/her integrity are virtues taught by all monotheistic religions. Thus, the awakening of this divine principle is a sacred mission that requires constant efforts so as to assure common human values in relation to his/her physical, moral and material needs, be it as an individual or collective men and women without distinction”.

Mamadou Mal Bakari

The Grand Imam of Maroua Lamidat

“This initiative of the religious leaders of these two religions (Christianity and Islam) that have a large number of followers in the African continent is significant because it emphasises on the importance of working together and collaborating since there can be no lasting peace and real development in Africa if Muslims and Christians do not agree and are not at peace with themselves and with each other”.

Rev. Rose-Marie Ibyishaka

Vice President of PROCMURA

“We believe that Christian and Muslim leaders have a duty more than ever before in history, to renew their commitment to the completion of the work taking place here in Maroua from 7th to 10th January 2013 and continue to be agents of peace in their social environment”.

Rev. Robert GOYEK

The President of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon and of the Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon (EFLC / CPCC)



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