



VATICAN - Benedict XVI receives President of Burundi and Prime Minister of Bangladesh: reaffirming the importance of dialogue and respect for human rights, in addition to the Church's contribution to human promotion

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) – On the afternoon of November 17, the Holy Father Benedict XVI received the President of Burundi, Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza. They then had an interview with Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of State, who was accompanied by Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, Secretary for Relations with States. As communicated by the Holy See Press Office, the meetings have touched topics of common interest such as the importance of dialogue and respect for human rights as key elements for building a society that is sound and oriented to the well-being of all its members. There was a reiteration of the Church's commitment to offer her contribution to the development of the Nation of Burundi, in the spiritual, educational, health and socio-humanitarian fields. To such an end, a framework agreement was discussed for the future, as it would define and ensure the legal status of the Church and her activities in the country.

At the end of the General Audience on November 18, the Holy Father Benedict XVI received the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Ms. Sheikh Hasina, who subsequently met Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of State, accompanied by Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, Secretary for Relations with States. During the cordial talks, there was an exchange of views on the current situation in Bangladesh, on the main challenges there, and on efforts to promote a society ever more open and respectful of the human rights of all citizens. Furthermore, with reference to the regular contacts between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, they discussed the positive and valued contribution of the Catholic Church to promoting human and social life in the country, through its education, health and welfare. (SL) (Agenzia Fides 19/11/2009)