agenzia fides
Fondata nel 1927
Organo di informazione delle Pontificie Opere Missionarie
http://www.fides.org

AFRICA/KENYA - Bishop of Marsabit tells Fides: in spite of climate change woes, people are not discouraged

Rome (Agenzia Fides) – "The failure of the Copenhagen Summit has deeply disappointed us, as we have been experiencing the deadly effects of global warming for years now," Fides was told by Bishop Peter Kihara Kariuki, Bishop of Marsabit, in northern Kenya. Bishop Kihara has been in Rome to attend the course "The Bishop: The First Representative of Christ in Priestly Formation" for the English-speaking Bishops responsible for clergy formation. The course is organized by the International Center for Missionary Animation (CIAM).
"It has practically not rained in 3 years. The population depends on aid from the Church, the government, and NGOs to eat and drink. The little water that is collected is not potable. The people have to use drinking water sent by the government with a tank, at several distribution points. There are people who have to travel dozens of kilometers to get water," said Bishop Kihara.
The Bishop of Marsabit describes the social situation of his Diocese: "The majority of the population consists of nomadic herdsmen who are constantly in search of pasture and water for their flocks. Because of the drought, most of the animals died and people are now dependent on aid from the government, the Church, and NGOs to survive. This comes in addition to that the strong condition of insecurity present in the local culture, which includes the possibility of people stealing others' herds. Conflicts between herdsmen are mortal, because everyone has a gun, often an automatic rifle. The weapons come from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Uganda. The government has launched a campaign to force the population to surrender their weapons, but people respond, "Why should I give up my gun? Is the government is able to guarantee my safety?" Unfortunately the weapons are seen as essential to protect the flock and their lives."
"As a Church we want to give a future to the younger generations, especially trying to change the traditional mindset that is the basis of conflicts between herdsmen. Our hope lies mainly in the education of young men and women. We try to offer technical training to teach new trades to the new generations, for example how to open a small business," said Bishop Kihara.
The Bishop continues: "This area has for years been neglected by the government: the only activity promoting human development was that of the Church, which still remains very active with schools and health clinics. The government is working with these facilities, providing medicines and personnel. The majority of the population, about 300,000 people, are Muslim. Then there are the adherents to traditional African religion, and then Christians. Among these, Catholics number about 26,000."
"The diocese has an area of 68,000 km2. There are 12 parishes in addition to several missions. To move from one point to the other in the diocese, you must travel long distances and this affects costs, as the fuel for cars is very expensive. However, this does not prevent us from continuing our work of evangelization and human promotion. There are 32 priests in the diocese; only 8 are diocesan. The others belong to missionary orders (Consolation, Comboni) or are Fidei Donum priests from Germany and Romania (from the Diocese of Iaşi)," concluded Bishop Kihara. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 20/2/2010)

I contenuti del sito sono pubblicati sotto Licenza Creative Common - http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.it