



AFRICA/CONGO DR - African Bishops revive demand for observer status at African Union

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides) – The meeting of Secretaries General of African national and regional Episcopal Conferences, held in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), concluded with the adoption of a strategic plan to implement the closing Message and Recommendations of the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. The meeting (17-21 March) was organised by the Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) (see Fides 22/3/2011).

According to the final statement sent to Fides, the program sets out the following in relation to evangelisation: the revival and strengthening of basic ecclesial communities; the promotion of the role of the laity of the continent through formation, animation and coordination of their activities; the development of a new program of catechesis that emphasises personal knowledge and understanding of Christ.

Another issue addressed by participants was that of promoting justice, peace and development. To this end it was recommended to develop programs for the formation of Catholic politicians. Commitment was also reaffirmed to ensure that the SECAM Department of Peace, Justice and Development obtains observer status, as the representative of SECAM to the African Union. The Church reaffirms its prophetic role in educating people to understand their political rights and duties.

Another theme discussed was that of social communications. The participants strongly support the establishment of Catholic News Agency for Africa, as proposed by the SECAM Office of Communications. To this end, the Secretaries General promised to make the offices of national and regional social communications available for this purpose, and to contribute to the success of this project. It was finally decided to step up efforts to amend the restrictive laws which prevent the Church from operating her own radio and television stations. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 24/3/2011)