



AFRICA/BURUNDI - The Bishops welcome the Framework Agreement between Burundi and the Holy See signed on 6 November

Bujumbura (Agenzia Fides) - "An agreement that ensures the social and religious peace of the Country to the extent that the Catholic population and its Pastors see their needs understood and protected by the State." This is how the Bishops of Burundi greet, in a statement sent to Fides Agency, the signing of the Framework Agreement between the State of Burundi and the Holy See. The agreement was signed on November 6 by the Foreign Minister of Burundi, Laurent Kavakure, and by His Exc. Mgr. Franco Coppola, Apostolic Nuncio in Burundi. In the Preamble of the Agreement it is remembered that its purpose is to provide a legal framework for relations between State and church in order to promote a "harmonious collaboration for the benefit of the people of Burundi." "This is of great importance and urgency in a Country that is the most Christian in Africa, with more than 65% of Catholics, and that was the first to have a representative of the Holy See. It was February 11, 1963 " the Bishops said.

Recalling that the relationship between the State and church were not always good, the statement emphasizes that this agreement demonstrates the willingness of the government "to want to progress in the democratic process that is characterized, among other things, both for the respect of human rights and of partners such as the Catholic Church." By creating a clear legal framework, the Bishops said, the State allows the intervention of the "great religious Congregations that are otherwise very little encouraged to invest in schools, hospitals and so on, in a Country with no guarantee of legal protection of their works" .

Burundi is one of the first African States to sign such an agreement with the Holy See. The Framework Agreement provides the legal framework in which specific agreements between the State and church in fields such as education, health, development etc...will be included . (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 07/11/2012)