



## **AMERICA/PANAMA - No to text changes in Electoral Ethics Pact**

Panama (Agenzia Fides) – The Catholic Church in Panama, which proposed an “Electoral Ethics Pact ” (see Fides 31/01/2013) to prevent fraud, aggression and bad use of resources in electoral campaigns, is firmly against any modification of the text, despite pressure from various political groups.

The Church’s position comes in response to a request from the Democratic Change party (CD) to allow the use of negative information, presented as a right of citizens to know the truth about candidates. The CD has made this request a condition for its signature to the Pact.

However, in a note sent to Fides by Prensa Latina, Bishop José Domingo Ulloa, one of the main promoters of the Electoral Ethics Pact, said there is only a thin line between a negative campaign and a dirty campaign, and it was therefore best to reject the request, to avoid irritating people and creating tensions.

The Bishops’ Commission for "Justice and Peace", mainly responsible for the Pact signing campaign, said it should close on 6 March. The initiative is a historic event for the country and has already prompted a change in the behaviour of political groups. (CE) (Agenzia Fides, 21/02/2013)