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AFRICA/ZAMBIA - "The Constitution cannot be eaten, but can ensure food on our tables"

Lusaka (Agenzia Fides) - "Even though we cannot eat a Constitution, a good Constitution will ensure that there is food on our tables, medicine in our hospitals and that quality education is offered in our schools," Fr. Cleophas Lungu, Secretary General of the Zambian Episcopal Conference, said on June 11, during a meeting of non-government organizations reviewing progress toward a new constitution.
Fr. Lungu intended to highlight that for the Catholic Church the new Constitution must be done in the right way, in a sure way and in a legal way, in order to promote development as a step toward improved social services and bettering the lives of the country's impoverished residents. "Zambia can no longer afford to see more national resources being gobbled (..). Yes, for us, a new constitution is a must, because we see it as a tool for social, economic and political development of our Country."
For this reason, the Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference has welcomed the agreement reached by civil society organizations (with the collaboration of the Catholic Church) to outline the minimum standards for the new Constitution to be given to members of the technical committee reworking a draft of the document.
"We need to remain vigilant and alert," added Fr. Lungu. "Past experience has shown that we cannot entrust the whole process of constitutional revision in the hands of politicians. Remember all it takes for bad things to happen is for good people to remain silent."
Zambia has revised its Constitution four times since gaining independence from Britain in 1964 as successive governments have molded the Constitution to silence the opposition parties and entrench their stay in power. That current review, if approved, would lead to the country's fifth Constitution in Zambia's half century of independence. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 13/06/2013)

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