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AFRICA/KENYA - A bridge of solidarity between the Christian and Muslim communities

Nairobi (Agenzia Fides) - The humanitarian mission of the Camillian Task Force (CTF) in Wajir, in north western Kenya has just concluded. CTF Kenya, the humanitarian agency of the Order of the Servants of the Sick (MI) led by Fr. Joseph Khiyaniri, had been there since August 2011 with the Camillian Sisters and 5 other volunteers, under the guidance of CTF Rome. This is what was reported to Fides by Fr. Aris Miranda, MI, International Coordinator of the CTF. In 2011, the Horn of Africa, in particular Kenya, had faced a severe food crisis due to the long drought and mass evacuations of Somalis in Kenya because of the civil war. Compounding the crisis, which affected about 3.75 million people, were the crops which were destroyed, the poor condition of the cattle, the increase in food prices, adds Father Miranda. 385,000 children under 5 years of age and 90,000 pregnant and lactating women were suffering from acute malnutrition. To bring relief to the victims, the CTF Rome in 2011 sent a team to the Diocese of Garissa to evaluate and implement any action which were finally put into practice in June 2013 in Wajir. The project was divided into two phases which included 6 months for the aid and 1 year for rehabilitation. The first was focused on health care and nutrition programs through mobile clinics and distribution of food and water. The second on the building capabilities of people and recovery of the community with programs on food safety, on community-based health care assistance with the training of health workers and mobile clinics, and on public health care programs. 9 villages and thousands of Muslim families of Somali refugees in Wajir have all benefited from these programs. The project was completed on June 30 reaching its primary objective: the creation of a bridge of solidarity between the Muslim and Christian communities in Wajir projected towards peace, self-confidence and a rapid recovery. These communities were dependent on food aid in the last ten years, and now have shown they can produce food in the desert as an alternative source to pasture. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 15/07/2013)

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