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OCEANIA/PAPUA NEW GUINEA - The Church: population growth is not a nightmare

Port Moresby (Agenzia Fides) - The increase in population in Papua New Guinea is not a nightmare, but it can result in an encouraging prospect for growth and social and economic progress of the country. This was stated in a note sent to Fides, by Fr. Giorgio Licini PIME, Secretary of the Commission for Social Communications in the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the Solomon Islands. Papua New Guinea has large natural reserves. It has a territorial extension almost equal to slightly more than France and Germany, which have respectively 65 and 81 million inhabitants. Papua has less than 8 million. The data of the 2011 census, published recently, show a lower rate of population growth of about 3.1 % per annum. The nation is in line with many developing countries, while in the West there is a gradual aging of the population.
This trend, according to Fr. Licini, is not a problem or a "spectrum" for the country, as some observers argue, following the neo-Malthusian ideologies. "PNG does not need to promote family planning or practices such as contraception and abortion. With a population which is still limited and with considerable internal resources, PNG can easily plan to become a country of 30-40 million people by the end of the century, with a much stronger and diversified economy", he notes. "We need, however, to fight corruption, instill a better sense of discipline among citizens and work hard for education, infrastructure development and a society free of crime". In particular, a key element is a commitment towards mass literacy and quality education. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 30/01/2014)

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