

Provincial Desk November 2024 **Provincial Desk**

UCEAF JUSTICE, PEACE & INTEGRITY OF CREATION COMMITTEE MEETING 23-24 JANUARY 2024



L-R: Frs Gervas Taratara, Paul Flamm Vincent Makokhah, Albano Mwombeki and Deocar Massawe

The Union of Circumscriptions of Eastern Africa – UCEAF - Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Committee met for two days in January at Des places House, Westland, Nairobi, Kenya. It was the first time the committee met since 2018. The long interval was due in large part to the COVID crisis, together with other issues that prevented an earlier gathering.

The meeting was attended by the JPIC councilors from Kenya, Fr. Vincent Makokhah, and Tanzania, Fr. Albano Mwombeki, together with Fr. Paul Flamm, the UCEAF JPIC Committee Chair. Fr. Deocar Massawe and Fr. Gervase Taratara attended as resource people from Tanzania. The JPIC Councilors from Ethiopia and Uganda were not able to attend.

Circumscription Reports

We began the meeting with reports on JPIC issues and initiatives from each circumscription.

Tanzania:

Significant progress was made in initial and ongoing formation, reminding the confreres and candidates that JPIC is an integral part of our identity and mission. Unfortunately, lack of funding, together with the COVID crisis resulted in some setbacks, particularly at Spiritan Missionary Seminary, Njiro Arusha (SMS). However, a well-planned schedule will be implemented in the near future.

Concerning JPIC initiatives, the province has worked in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Arusha and the Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC), together with other people of goodwill, in efforts to protect the rights of pastoralists. These efforts include insisting that pastoralists be treated with respect and dignity, for example by promoting mutual dialogue with key government officials in seeking ways to avoid forcing them to leave their ancestral lands; and ensuring upkeep of social infrastructure and access to social services.

However, it is recognized that there is a need to broaden the network of collaboration in addressing the above issues.

The province has also been ministering to refugee communities from Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) since 1995. Since 2008, confreres have been serving the Burundian and Congolese Catholic Communities in the Nyarugusu refugee camp in Kigoma, which has a population of 137,024 people, including thousands of people fleeing to this day the ongoing conflict and other hardships in eastern DRC.

The government continues to insist that there is peace in Burundi; therefore, the Burundians must return. However, to date, there is no formal program for repatriation for the Congolese.

Severe restrictions have been placed on various aspects of the daily life and needs of the people living in the camps. For example, markets were closed and owners of shops required to knock them down. They continue to spring up here and there, but not on the scale of the past. Crops grown in the camp are sometimes ordered to be cut down.

To address these, and other issues, advice will be sought from the Bishop concerned with, either matters of justice and peace, or with itinerants and migrant people, to identify avenues for advocacy.

Another issue of great concern in the ministry in Nyarugusu, is a shortage of essential medicines. One major cause is deep cuts in budgets. Efforts to address this problem include working together with the faithful to form groups to visit the chronically ill and disabled, and to help ensure their needs are met.

The province will also open a new health facility in the coming months that is based in the refugee-hosting community of the Makere Division. Refugees will come on a referral basis for services not available in the camp.

Another major focus of the ministry in Nyarugusu is on family life and formation in Christian values for the youth, for example by conducting retreats and seminars for the faithful.

Efforts will also be made to revive the relationship between the Episcopal Conferences of Burundi and Tanzania, and expand it to include relevant dioceses in DRC, and Rwanda in working together to promote peace and reconciliation in the Great Lakes Region.

It was also noted that the province has assigned a confrere to give talks on JPIC for the men and women, priests and religious participating in the annual Inter Congregational Ongoing Formation program (ICOF).

Kenya:

The provincial administration encourages students in formation to take courses on JPIC. Similarly, confreres engaged in ministries that raise JPIC concerns, for example that with the Pokot people, are encouraged to collaborate with fellow Spiritans in similar ministries, as well as with other stakeholders like government officials of good will and Catholic dioceses in addressing the underlying causes on the injustices they see. Challenges to those efforts include lack of funding, as well as lack of interest in such matters.

Analysis of JPIC issues and vision of a more just and peaceful society

After the reports, the confreres engaged in an analysis of JPIC concerns and their underlying causes that may or may not be addressed by the circumscriptions' current JPIC initiatives. Included were lack of freedom of expression; fear to speak the truth; the huge gap between the rich and the poor; and lack of access to basic social infrastructure and services, like education and health care. Underlying causes included greed, corruption, cultural traditions and understandings; discrimination; and lack of implementation of existing laws.

Contrary to that, our vision of a more just and peaceful society is one in which the rights and dignity of all members of society are respected, which in turn ensures that all people have access to, at a minimum, the essential social infrastructure and services like roads, water, sanitation, education and health care.

It was recognized that the nature of the injustices and their underlying causes are essentially the same throughout the society, even to the regional and international levels. In recognition of that, the confreres agreed to the following four broad underlying causes of injustice that were identified by the participants from the Catholic church in six countries in the Great Lakes region at the 2010 **Conference of the Catholic Episcopate of the Great Lakes Region for Peace and Reconciliation**: Bad governance; Ethnic and tribal conflicts; Widespread, profound trauma; and Plundering or uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources together with the subsequent destruction of the environment.

The confreres also acknowledged that the challenges to the church as a whole include underutilization and insufficient awareness of the Church's unique potential to promote peace and reconciliation; the lack of pertinent information on the underlying causes of our problems; and insufficient coordination of the Church's initiatives for peace and reconciliation.

Bagamoyo 2021 General Chapter Decisions on JPIC

The results of the above analysis were then put in the light of the General chapter decisions on matters of JPIC as one of the main areas of animation of the General Council for the next eight years.

The Chapter prefaces its decisions on matters of JPIC by quoting SRL 14:

“We count the following as constitutive parts of our mission of evangelization:

- *Integral liberation of people;*
- *Action for justice and peace; and*
- *Participation in development.*

It follows that we must make ourselves “the advocates, the supporters and the defenders of the weak and the little ones against all those who oppress them” (Regulations 1849; N.D., X, 517). (SRL 14)

In keeping with SRL 14, the General chapter decisions emphasize the importance of a broad based strategic plan for animation concerning the role JPIC that includes both lay and professed Spiritans in our initial and ongoing formation programs, as well as in our parishes and other works [like schools] that address injustices, threats to life and the environment, and social and economic justice, especially those that affect migrants, prisoners, indigenous people and other marginalized groups.

In those efforts we are to work in collaboration at the level of Spiritan unions of circumscriptions as well as with likeminded partners, including VIVAT International. *Laudato Si* is a key document underlying our animation efforts.

UCEAF Common JPIC initiatives and Circumscription JPIC programs

It was agreed by the participants that the preceding analysis of the injustices we face and their underlying causes, together with the Bagamoyo 2021 General Chapter decisions concerning JPIC

should guide the formulation of the common JPIC initiatives at the level of UCEAF, as well as JPIC programs in each of the UCEAF circumscriptions.

The Tanzania JPIC Program which was approved as a working document at the 2011 Provincial Chapter was offered as an example. However, the working document itself still needs to be updated and then approved. The first step will be to request the committees for each of the major categories of the province's ministries (parishes, education, health and special ministries) to review and renew the commitments they made in the 2011 JPIC Program.

UCEAF Program for Formation in JPIC

The participants were reminded that the *UCEAF Program for Formation in JPIC* was formally approved by both the UCEAF Formation Committee and the UCEAF JPIC Committee, as well as by Fr. John Mbinda, CSSp during his term as the President – UCEAF Superiors in September 2016. The program brings together in one document guidelines that have been given by the SRL, General Chapter decisions, the Guide for Spiritan Formation with its annex on formation in JPIC, as well as other documents issued by the Generalate's JPIC coordinators.

In addition, Fr. Jude Nnorom, CSSp., in his then capacity as the Coordinator, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) and Inter-Religious Dialogue (IRD) at the level of the Congregation as a whole, offered the UCEAF Program for Formation in JPIC as *a template for other unions within the congregation seeking for ways and means of indigenizing Spiritan JPIC formation in their respective countries.*

Therefore, the participants of the UCEAF JPIC Committee meeting committed themselves to renewing efforts to implement the UCEAF Program for Formation in JPIC at each level of formation in their respective circumscriptions.

In the light of the Bagamoyo 2021 General Chapter decisions concerning JPIC, we trust that our confreres in the UCEAF Formation Committee will make a similar commitment.

Ongoing formation in JPIC

The participants also agreed to undertake new initiatives to implement a program of ongoing formation in JPIC that will encourage the confreres to incorporate matters of JPIC as *a constitutive part of our mission of evangelization.*

The participants suggest that the first step should be to secure approval from the provincial to appoint a coordinator for JPIC at the level the province, as well as at the level of each zone. They in turn will form a committee to plan and implement a program of ongoing formation for our confreres in their respective ministries.

The long-term goal of the program will be to animate both our confreres and the people with whom we minister to make matters of JPIC an integral part of their own responsibilities to proclaim the good news of Our Lord Jesus Christ in their parishes, schools, health and special ministries.

Funding of JPIC Ministries

The participants agreed that funding for JPIC initiatives should remain at the level of each circumscription in the light of their own JPIC programs. Funding will also be sought to support the UCEAF JPIC Committee meetings which will be held once a year in January. Our hope is that the meetings will eventually be hosted on a rotating basis in each of the UCEAF circumscriptions

Election of UCEAF JPIC Coordinator

The meeting closed with the election of the UCEAF JPIC Coordinator.

In view of his formal education in JPIC, as well as his experience and zeal in matters of JPIC, Fr. Deocar Joseph Massawe was unanimously chosen as the UCEAF JPIC Coordinator for a term of four years, effective immediately.

Fr. Paul Flamm was chosen as the UCEAF JPIC Committee Secretary to ensure a proper handover of duties to the new coordinator is done.

Frs. Paul Flamm and Deocar Massawe

**CANONICAL VISITATION
COASTAL ZONE**

Canonical Visitation Coastal Zone (except Pemba and Zanzibar)

JANUARY 2024							Date and Activity
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	20 Arrival-Dar es Salaam
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	21 Salasala
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22 Meeting with Archbishop Ruwa'ichi
29	30	31					23 Libermann Schools
							24 Kipawa
							25 Dominico
							26 Kinzudi
							27&28 Kerege & Kiaraka
							29 Dogodogo Centre
							30 Postulancy
							31 February Moyo Safi
FEBRUARY 2024							Date and Activity
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	
			1	2	3	4	1&2 Marian Schools
							4 MODECO
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	6 Epiphany
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	7 Coastal Zone Meeting
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	8 Departure for Arusha
26	27	28	29				

As seen in the above schedule cf. SRL 169, the Provincial Superior was on canonical visitation of Spiritan communities, parishes and education institutions owned and managed by the Congregation at the coastal zone. It was the time to observe, listen and encourage the confreres. Where he could, he celebrated Masses in the parishes and outstations, visited new projects and took time to meet members of parish executive committees (kamati tendaji). He also met the teaching staff members of

our schools, school management teams, heads of schools and non-teaching staff members in some schools.

Overall, confreres are doing good work with dedication, sacrifice and creativity. The pace of growth in our parishes is phenomenal. The same could be said in our educational works. As expected, main challenges are human and financial resources. This state of affairs requires diligent attention for appropriate and sustainable response in line with the recommendation of Bagamoyo II (1.2).

SAVE THE DATES

Training

Provincial Development and Planning Office in conjunction with Central Development Office (Rome) will organize a Workshop on Project writing and Project management;

Arrival-22 April

Departure-28 April

N.B. There will be further information communicated about the content of the workshop.

Annual Retreat (Cf. SRL 96 & 96.1):

1st group: 22-28 June

2nd group: 29 June 5 July

3rd group: 3 August 9 August

Remarks about the annual retreat: We are all reminded that faithfulness to the Rule of Life doesn't provide for multiple choice option hence the obligation to conform to what is stipulated. We have enough time to organize our calendars so as to avail ourselves for this important spiritual exercise and ongoing formation. **Please don't organize private activities, which will interfere with these dates.**

VACATION

 Fr Thomas Salekio

 Fr Peter Njau

Welcome back home and enjoy your stay with family, relatives and friends.

BEREAVEMENT

We extend our prayerful sympathies to:

Fr. Ricklan Mallya-(Mother) Cesilia Stephen Mallya, 9 January, 2024

Fr. Festo Urasa (Father) Ferdinand Urassa, 26 January 2024

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them, may they rest in peace.

BIRTHDAYS

FEBRUARY		
George	Mayembe	01
Patience	Mugisha	02
Joseph	Shayo	07
Colman	Kimaryo	07
Patrick	Njau Kagua	08
Justi	Tarimo	12
Valentine	Bayo	14
Priva	Temu	22
Flavian	Komba	23
Firmin	Laswai	25

PRAYERS

Fr Adam Bago had a surgical procedure on 21 January, 2024. He is well and in convalescence. Fr Nolasco Mushi is in Dar es Salaam attending clinic. Fr Nicetas Kyara returned from India on 29 January. Some complications emerged which necessitated his return to India on 7 February for specialized attention. We thank Fr Flavian Komba who has been accompanying him. Let us continue to pray for them and all who support us in the care of our sick Confreres.

Fraternally,



Florentine Mallya, CSSp.
Provincial Superior

