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BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 180414a

Saturday 14.04.2018

Press Release: First Meeting of the Pre-Synodal Council of the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region (12-13 April 2018)

During the days 12-13 April, the first meeting was held of the Pre-Synodal Council of the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region, chaired by Pope Francis.

The works began with the intervention by the General Secretary, His Eminence Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, who thanked the Holy Father for his presence and addressed a special greeting to the members of the Pre-Synodal Council and the experts convoked for the meeting, some of whom belong to the *Red Ecclesial Panamazónica (REPAM)*.

The working groups examined the project of the *Preparatory Document* for the Special Assembly, which will take as its theme: "Amazonia: new pathways for the Church and for an integral ecology". The members expressed their appreciation for the text, prepared by the General Secretary of the Synod with the help of the experts, and offered useful suggestions for its improvement.

In the debate, the importance of the Pan-Amazon Region for the entire planet was remarked upon. In particular, the members and the experts discussed the pastoral situation of the territory and the need to draw up new pathways for a more incisive inculturation of the Gospel among the populations that inhabit it, in particular the indigenous peoples. Secondly, they reflected on the ecological crisis affecting the region, and underscored the need to promote an integral ecology, along the line set out in the encyclical *Laudato si'*.

At the end of the discussion, the Pre-Synodal Council approved the *Preparatory Document*, which includes a final questionnaire. Subsequently, the text will be transmitted to the Episcopal Conferences concerned and to the other entitled bodies, in order to start the pre-Synodal consultation.

At the conclusion of the work, the Holy Father thanked the members of the Council and the other participants for their contributions and for the spirit of communion expressed during the Meeting.