HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE
BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 0263

Giovedì 27.05.2004

Pubblicazione: Immediata

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LE LETTERE CREDENZIALI DEGLI AMBASCIATORI DI: SURINAME, SRI LANKA, MALI, YEMEN, ZAMBIA, NIGERIA E TUNISIA

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Alle ore 11 di questa mattina, nella Sala Clementina del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano, il Santo Padre ha ricevuto in Udienza, in occasione della presentazione delle Lettere Credenziali, le Loro Eccellenze i Signori Ambasciatori di: Suriname, Sri Lanka, Mali, Yemen, Zambia, Nigeria e Tunisia.

Di seguito pubblichiamo i discorsi consegnati dal Papa agli Ambasciatori degli Stati sopra enunciati, nonché i cenni biografici essenziali di ciascuno:

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL SURINAME PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR EDGARD STEPHANUS RAGOENATH AMANH

Your Excellency,

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to the Vatican today and accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Suriname to the Holy See. I greatly appreciate your reference to President Venetiaan's desire for close cooperation between your country and the Holy See, and I would ask you kindly to convey to him my cordial greetings. To the Government and people of Suriname I offer the assurance of my prayers for the peace and prosperity of the Nation.

The Church's diplomatic relations form part of her mission of service to the human family and are specifically intended to promote peace and harmony among the world's peoples. These are essential conditions for progress in attaining the common good and integral development of individuals and nations, which can only be achieved to the extent that the dignity proper to every human being is protected by a nation's legislative structures and affirmed by its civic institutions.

In your own country, Mr Ambassador, with its especially rich and varied cultural and religious traditions, the importance of recognizing the innate human dignity of every individual is immediately apparent. Without a vigorous defence and promotion of the common values rooted in the very nature of the human person, the peaceful coexistence of communities of differing ethnic and religious backgrounds would lack a solid foundation. Furthermore, in situations of cultural and religious pluralism, it is increasingly apparent that mutual understanding and respect for differences play a vital role in maintaining the national unity necessary for genuine progress and for ensuring that the dreaded spectre of interreligious or interethnic conflict does not occur. In this regard, I am glad to note the commendable contributions of the long-established Council of Christian Churches and of the Interreligious Council, both of which are particularly active in helping Surinamese society to develop more closely in conformity with the dignity and rights of its citizens.

As you have noted, Suriname together with the rest of the world community is facing the pressing problems of today's ever more globalized world and the emerging new international order. While globalization in itself is a neutral phenomenon, I have not hesitated to make known my concern at witnessing a globalization that exacerbates the conditions of the needy, that does not sufficiently contribute to resolving situations of hunger, poverty and social inequality, and that fails to safeguard the natural environment. To counteract these injustices the international community must strive to ensure that globalization is ethically responsible, treating all peoples as equal partners and not as passive instruments. In this way globalization can serve the whole human family, no longer bringing benefit merely to a privileged few but advancing the common good of all (cf. *Plenary Meeting of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*, 2 May 2003).

A heightened sense of economic, political and cultural interdependence demands an increased solidarity

between the developed and developing nations. One sure sign of the international community's positive commitment to the common good, which such solidarity upholds, is the growing recognition of the urgent need to alleviate poverty wherever it is found (cf. Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte,* No. 14). The Holy See for its part will continue to support the Millennium Development goals as well as new initiatives such as the International Finance Facility, which has as its dual purpose the financing of sustainable development projects and the realization of the target of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income in aid. Reduction of the crushing debt which entraps many developing countries is essential if their economic potential is to be harnessed.

The exercise of solidarity also demands a wholehearted effort within each society (cf. Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis,* No. 39). If genuine international progress is to be made along the path of equal partnership, then practical gestures of assistance by wealthy nations must be met with political transparency and accountability on the part of the receiver. Responsible government, the maintenance of law and order across the country, and the participation of all sectors of society in support of the civic institutions committed to the genuine development of the nation, all have their particular role in contributing to a culture of peace and collaboration. In your own Nation these are among the conditions necessary to attract the investment required to stimulate the economic growth necessary to enable Surinamese living abroad to return to their homeland with the prospect of employment and a secure future.

For her part the Catholic Church in Suriname will likewise continue to assist in the attainment of the goals of peace and prosperity. Faithful to her spiritual and humanitarian mission, she takes an active role in the interreligious initiatives and multicultural activities which endeavour to serve the well-being of the people. Through her numerous schools, health-care facilities, and community development programmes the Church seeks to build a better future for the country. In this service she desires neither power nor privilege, but only the freedom to express her faith and love in works of goodness, justice and peace.

Mr Ambassador, as you enter the diplomatic community accredited to the Holy See, I assure you of the ready assistance of the various offices and agencies of the Roman Curia. May your mission serve to strengthen the bonds of understanding and cooperation between Suriname and the Holy See which have deepened since the establishment of diplomatic relations ten years ago. Upon you and your fellow citizens I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

S.E. il Signor Edgard Stephanus Ragoenath AmanhAmbasciatore del Suriname presso la Santa Sede

Ènato il 15 novembre 1946.

Èsposato.

Ha conseguito il dottorato in Diritto presso l'Università del Suriname.

Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario del Ministero dei Lavori Pubblici (1973-1976); Funzionario del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1976-1977); Segretario di Ambasciata negli U.S.A. (1977-1983); Segretario permanente del Ministero degli Affari Esteri col rango di Ambasciatore (1983-1985); Consigliere diplomatico del Primo Ministro (1985-1987); Segretario del Consiglio per gli Affari Economici (1987-1988); Capo Divisione del Ministero degli Esteri (1988-1989);

- Condirettore della Commissione congiunta Suriname-Corea (1989-1994); Condirettore del Consiglio per la cooperazione Suriname-Guyana (1994-2000); Consigliere politico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (2000-2001).

Dal 2001 è Ambasciatore nei Paesi Bassi, ove risiede.

[00857-02.02] [Original text: English]

● DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DELLO SRI LANKA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. LA SIGNORA SARALA MANOURIE FERNANDO

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you today as you present the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the Holy See. I thank you for bringing me the courteous greetings of President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and I ask you kindly to convey to her my good wishes, together with the assurance of my prayers that Almighty God will bless all the people of Sri Lanka with a future of peace and prosperity.

Your Excellency has pointed to the importance of the resumption of peace talks and the promotion of dialogue and negotiation in order to achieve a political resolution of the continuing civil unrest in Sri Lanka. The present cease-fire in fact represents a precious opportunity for both sides in the conflict to concentrate on building trust and a lasting peace grounded in respect for differences and a commitment to reconciliation, justice and solidarity. It is my hope that progress made in the peace process will also serve as an incentive to the international community to offer support and aid as Sri Lanka faces the challenging task of rebuilding and pursuing a sound development which will benefit all its people.

In this context, I very much appreciate your reference to Sri Lanka's long tradition of religious tolerance and diversity as a precious gift which must be protected and promoted. In cooperation with all men and women of good will, the followers of the various religions have a particular role to play in fostering reconciliation, justice and peace in every sphere of society. Precisely because of their shared convictions about the sacredness of creation, the dignity of each individual and the unity of the whole human family, they are challenged to work together in laying the spiritual foundations for genuine social harmony. I renew the hope I expressed during my Pastoral Visit to Sri Lanka that all will continue "to pursue this path, which is surely the one most in accord with its history and the genius of your people" (*Farewell Address*, Colombo, 21 January 1995). A multi-ethnic and religiously diverse society like Sri Lanka will surely find in its rich cultural and spiritual traditions the inspiration needed to building unity within diversity, in a spirit of solidarity which acknowledges and values the contribution of each of its members.

Although the Catholic community in Sri Lanka is a minority, it is fully committed to this goal, and strives through its schools and charitable institutions to be an instrument of peace by teaching tolerance and respect, above all to the young people who are the future of the nation. The Church wishes to make every possible contribution to the ongoing process of pacification. As citizens of Sri Lanka, Catholics rightly expect that their religious and civil freedoms will be fully guaranteed, including their right to propose to others the saving truth which they have come to know and have embraced. Religious freedom, as an expression of the inviolable dignity of the human person in the search for truth, is in a real way the foundation of all other human rights. This freedom, which, as you have noted, also includes the right to adopt a religion or belief of one's choice, has long been recognized as a fundamental human right by the international community and has been enshrined in your country's constitution.

It is precisely in the name of religious freedom that the Catholic Church, in carrying out her mission, firmly deplores all violence perpetrated against others in the name of religion. She likewise rejects any form of proselytization, understood as the attempt to violate another person's freedom of conscience through moral or financial coercion. Such acts represent an offence against the authentic nature of religion, which is meant to be "an inexhaustible wellspring of respect and harmony between peoples; religion is, in fact, the chief antidote to violence and conflict" (*Message for the 2002 World Day of Peace*, 14). I take this opportunity to reiterate my conviction that respectful dialogue and ongoing cooperation between religious leaders and the civil authorities remain the best way to a lasting solution to the troubling issues raised by acts of fanaticism and aggression associated with certain individuals or groups, while at the same time guaranteeing the demands of justice and the exercise of religious freedom.

Your Excellency, I offer you my prayerful good wishes as you take up your high responsibilities. I am confident that the fulfilment of your diplomatic duties will contribute to a further strengthening of the friendly relations between Sri Lanka and the Holy See. Upon you and upon all whom you serve I cordially invoke Almighty God's blessings of wisdom, joy and peace.

S.E. la Signora Sarala Manourie FernandoAmbasciatore dello Sri Lanka presso la Santa Sede

Ènata a Colombo il 7 dicembre 1947.

Èsposata.

Laureata in Filosofia (1969, Università dello Sri Lanka) si è successivamente specializzata in Letteratura Moderna (1973, Università di Caen, Francia) e Politiche Pubbliche Internazionali (1993, Johns Hopkins University, U.S.A.).

Ha intrapreso la carriera diplomatica nel 1975, ricoprendo, tra gli altri, i seguenti incarichi:

Funzionario del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1975-1977); Secondo Segretario di Ambasciata a Washington (1978-1980); Primo Segretario della Missione Permanente presso l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite a New York (1980-1981); Primo Segretario di Ambasciata a Nairobi (1982-1985); Vice Direttore per gli Affari Economici presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1985-1987); Consigliere e successivamente Ministro Consigliere di Ambasciata a Washington (1987-1991); Direttore di Divisione presso il Ministero degli Esteri (1991-1995); Ambasciatore in Tailandia (1995-1998), contemporaneamente accreditata in Vietnam, Laos e Cambogia; Ambasciatore in Svezia (1998-2001), contemporaneamente accreditata in Norvegia, Danimarca, Finlandia, Islanda, Estonia, Lituania e Lettonia; Direttore Generale del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (2001-2003); Segretario Aggiunto del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (2003-2004).

Dal gennaio 2004 è Rappresentate Permanente presso gli Uffici delle Nazioni Unite a Ginevra, ove risiede.

Parla oltre al cingalese, l'inglese ed il francese.

[00858-02.02] [Original text: French]

● DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL MALI PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR MOHAMED SALIA SOKONA

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

1. C'est avec joie que je souhaite la bienvenue à Votre Excellence à l'occasion de la présentation des Lettres qui L'accréditent comme Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire de la République du Mali près le Saint-Siège.

Je vous remercie de vos aimables paroles, par lesquelles vous me transmettez l'hommage respectueux du Président de la République et du peuple malien. Je vous saurais gré d'exprimer en retour à Son Excellence Monsieur Amadou Toumani Touré, Chef de l'État, les vœux courtois que je forme pour sa personne et pour l'accomplissement de sa charge au service de tous les habitants du pays. Ma pensée rejoint aussi les Responsables et tous les habitants de la nation.

2. Vous soulignez, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, la ferme volonté des Autorités de votre pays de travailler activement à l'établissement de relations toujours plus pacifiques et plus fraternelles entre les hommes, non seulement à l'intérieur de vos frontières, mais également dans la sous-région à laquelle vous appartenez, ainsi qu'à l'échelle du Continent africain. C'est une tâche noble qui honore votre nation, malgré les soucis auxquelles les Autorités ont à faire face pour permettre à tous les habitants du pays de jouir de conditions d'existence qui respectent leur dignité et leurs droits fondamentaux. La persistance de conflits ouverts ou larvés, en particulier en Afrique de l'Ouest, rend nécessaire un tel engagement, afin que tous les habitants de la région puissent vivre en sécurité et envisager l'avenir plus sereinement. Je ne doute pas que les instances compétentes, sur le plan régional, mais aussi au niveau continental, ne négligent aucun effort pour travailler, avec le soutien d'un partenariat toujours plus audacieux, à faire reculer l'instabilité qui règne encore en de nombreuses régions et à rechercher des voies et des moyens pour que l'Afrique soit toujours mieux intégrée dans le processus de la mondialisation.

La désertification croissante du Mali constitue également un défi urgent à relever. Liée aux conditions climatiques extrêmes de la zone sahélienne, elle engendre précarité et misère pour un grand nombre de vos compatriotes, souvent contraints à choisir l'exil dans d'autres pays ou d'autres continents afin de subvenir à leurs besoins élémentaires et à ceux de leurs proches. Je souhaite en ce jour lancer un appel à la Communauté internationale, l'invitant à exprimer de manière toujours plus significative sa solidarité et son soutien aux pays qui requièrent son aide. Cet engagement inclut nécessairement le respect des promesses faites par les pays industrialisés aux pays pauvres, en particulier dans les domaines des investissements, des subventions publiques et de l'allégement de la dette, avec l'objectif constant de rendre les personnes toujours plus actrices et promotrices de leur propre développement.

Comme vous le rappelez, le Mali est une nation dont l'histoire, la culture, les valeurs et les traditions religieuses peuvent constituer des atouts pour préserver l'harmonie et la convivialité au sein de la nation, en créant les conditions nécessaires à une paix durable et en suscitant l'établissement de relations sociales toujours plus solides. Les efforts réalisés pour faire progresser la société vers la démocratie et le pluralisme doivent être encouragés, afin que tous les Maliens puissent bénéficier des avantages d'une croissance qui ne se limite pas à l'augmentation légitime du bien-être matériel, mais qui permette un véritable épanouissement des personnes et de la société, dans toutes leurs dimensions humaines et spirituelles.

3. L'éducation des jeunes générations, par la transmission des valeurs fondamentales de la vie humaine, par l'alphabétisation et la possibilité de suivre un cursus scolaire, par l'initiation au sens de l'effort, par la formation des consciences aux sens moral et civique, est un élément essentiel et incontournable de ce développement durable que toute nation se doit d'encourager et de promouvoir. Cette éducation se réalise par un système scolaire adapté, duquel nul ne doit être exclu, mais aussi par la promotion de politiques familiales audacieuses, donnant aux parents les moyens de remplir leur mission d'éducateurs de leurs enfants. Il est essentiel que les jeunes soient encouragés à donner le meilleur d'eux-mêmes, afin qu'ils puissent devenir demain dans leur propre pays les décideurs et les cadres qui permettront de conduire la nation sur les chemins de l'unité, de la stabilité et de la prospérité. Par votre intermédiaire, je voudrais aussi sensibiliser à nouveau les pays concernés et toute la Communauté internationale aux graves fléaux que constituent le trafic des enfants et le travail des mineurs, qui fournissent une main d'œuvre bon marché à des organisations internationales peu scrupuleuses. Je souhaite qu'un sursaut de conscience fasse naître les coopérations internationales nécessaires pour que soit mis un terme à ces pratiques inadmissibles qui bafouent la dignité primordiale d'êtres fragiles, créés à l'image de Dieu, et qui sont contraires aux droits les plus fondamentaux des enfants.

4. Le dialogue respectueux et les relations constructives entre les membres des diverses communautés religieuses qui composent une nation sont un puissant soutien au renforcement de la paix et de la concorde entre tous les citoyens. Il importe cependant, pour maintenir et développer un esprit de confiance et de collaboration entre tous, que les responsables civils et religieux contribuent sans cesse à renforcer les conditions d'exercice d'une véritable liberté religieuse. Les croyants sont invités à manifester que Dieu les a faits membres d'une même famille, les a revêtus d'une même dignité et les appellent à s'engager toujours plus dans le service du bien commun. Il est notamment capital «d'enseigner aux jeunes le chemin du respect et de la compréhension, afin qu'ils ne soient pas conduits à faire un mauvais usage de la religion elle-même pour promouvoir ou pour justifier la haine et la violence» (*Discours à la Mosquée des Omeyyades*, Damas, 6 mai 2001, n. 3). J'encourage les croyants, unis à tous les hommes de bonne volonté, à poursuivre le dialogue de la vie, ciment de la connaissance et de la confiance, nécessaires au bien de la famille humaine tout entière.

5. Vous rappelez, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, que la Communauté catholique au Mali, qui contribue de bien des manières au développement de la nation ainsi qu'à sa cohésion, est respectée et appréciée par les responsables de la vie civile. Je m'en réjouis. Dans un esprit de confiance réciproque, il paraît souhaitable qu'un véritable dialogue se poursuive entre les diverses instances ecclésiales et l'État pour permettre à l'Église catholique au Mali de bénéficier d'une reconnaissance effective et stable comme institution à part entière dans la société. Ainsi, elle pourra accomplir sa mission spirituelle auprès de ses membres et, à travers ses œuvres, se mettre toujours plus efficacement au service de tous les Maliens, sans distinction. Aux Évêques du Mali et à tous les membres de la communauté catholique, j'adresse, par votre intermédiaire, des vœux chaleureux, les invitant à être des témoins généreux de l'amour de Dieu et à contribuer à l'édification d'une nation unie et fraternelle où chacun se sente pleinement uni et respecté.

6. Au moment où commence votre mission, je vous offre, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, mes souhaits les meilleurs pour la noble tâche qui vous attend, vous assurant que vous trouverez toujours ici un accueil attentif et une compréhension cordiale auprès de mes collaborateurs.

J'invoque de grand cœur sur Votre Excellence, sur le peuple malien et sur ses dirigeants, l'abondance des Bénédictions divines.

S.E. il Signor Mohamed Salia SokonaAmbasciatore del Mali presso la Santa Sede

Ènato a Siguiri (Repubblica di Guinea) il 19 agosto 1947.

Èsposato ed ha tre figli.

Laureato in Amministrazione Pubblica, ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Vice-Comandante e successivamente Comandante della Regione Militare di Koulikoro (1975-1980);Amministratore dell'Ospedale regionale di Sikasso (1980-1981); Consigliere per gli Affari Amministrativi del Governatorato della Regione di Mopti (1982-1986); Dirigente presso il Ministero dell'Agricoltura (1986-1988); Direttore di Gabinetto al Ministero dell'Amministrazione Territoriale e della Sicurezza (1988-1993); Delegato Generale per i cittadini del Mali all'estero (1994-1997); Ministro delle Forze Armate (1997-2000); Ambasciatore in Burkina Faso e Niger (2000-2004).

Attualmente è Ambasciatore in Francia, ove risiede.

Parla il francese, l'inglese e lo spagnolo.

[00859-03.02] [Texte original: Français]

● DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DELLO YEMEN PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR YAHYA ALI MOHAMED AL-ABIAD

Your Excellency,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Vatican as you present the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Yemen to the Holy See. I appreciate the cordial greetings which you have conveyed from the President, His Excellency Ali Abdallah Saleh. I warmly reciprocate them and assure the Government and citizens of your nation of my prayers for the country's peace and well-being. It is my fervent hope that the friendship which has developed over the last few years between the Republic of Yemen and the Holy See will deepen and be marked by further signs of mutual trust and respect.

I am grateful for your observations made in recognition of the untiring efforts of the Holy See to promote dialogue as a means to peace and the alleviation of conflict in the Middle East and other parts of our troubled world. The Church certainly shares Yemen's desire to build solid foundations for peace on enduring moral principles which find their source in the fundamental God-given dignity of the human person. Indeed the Holy See's activity in the international forum stems from this specific vision of the human person, and from the conviction that when it is undermined or abandoned the very foundation of human society is threatened. This perspective of development calls for the advancement of freedom through the political recognition of the duty to guarantee human rights. Not least of these rights are: the freedom of authentic religious practice; the entitlement to build and maintain places of worship, including those for religious minorities; active participation of all citizens in democratic civic life; and access to education.

Against the backdrop of the human tragedy of tyranny and war there has arisen an opportunity – indeed a duty – for nations to construct that lasting peace for which the human family longs (cf. *Message for the 2004 World Day of Peace*, Introduction). This requires the firm conviction that peace is possible, that it can be taught and protected, and that any activity by individuals or groups contrary to peace is unacceptable (cf. *ibid.,* nos. 4, 5). Your Government's recent successful efforts to root out the evil perpetuated by terrorist groups have been rightly welcomed by the international community. Such initiatives are positive and necessary steps towards the building

of a civilization of love in which all peoples can be secure and live in peace.

Since the unification of North and South Yemen almost fifteen years ago, your government has introduced various programmes with the object of improving the standard of living of Yemen's citizens. Authentic development requires a coordinated plan of national progress which honours the legitimate aspirations of all sectors of society and to which political and civic leaders can be held accountable. In fact human history teaches us time and time again that if such programmes are to effect lasting change for the good, they must be grounded in the practice of transparent governance and accompanied by an impartial judiciary system, political freedom and a robust independent press. Without these foundations common to all civilized societies, the hope for progress, to which every human being rightly aspires, remains elusive. For this reason I have said on numerous occasions that all forms of corruption are a scourge which affronts the inviolable dignity of every person and paralyzes a nation's social, economic and cultural advancement.

Mr Ambassador I was pleased to learn of your nation's commitment to the young generation and the creation of educational opportunities for it. It is indeed the duty of the state to ensure that all its citizens have access to an adequate education and are prepared for the proper exercise of their civic rights and duties. Where schools, training institutes and universities function in a professional manner and are staffed by people of personal integrity with a love of learning, hope is offered to a nation and most especially to its young. Education is a highly effective means to break the cycle of poverty which still afflicts so many families today and it is increasingly being recognized by the international community as the main road to peace. Through the learning and socialization gained through schooling, boys and girls from all strata of society are integrated into a nation's civic life and thus able to have the satisfaction of contributing to it.

The Catholic Church, in service of the human family, is prepared to reach out to all members of Yemeni society without distinction, striving to promote with them the values common to all peoples of peace, justice, solidarity and freedom. Her charitable mission, particularly to the poor and suffering, forms part of her "commitment to practical and concrete love for every human being" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte,* 49) and is already much appreciated in your country. While the Church is willing to contribute even more extensively to the country's human development programmes, it must also be recalled that Christian charity is always more than simply humanitarian aid. For the Catholic Church, her acts of charity are inextricably linked to the celebration of the Eucharist from which she draws the spiritual power needed to sustain the life of her people and carry out her mission. For this reason it is particularly important that the Catholic community in the Republic of Yemen receives authorization – as already promised – to construct a Church and Pastoral Centre in Sana'a and, in Aden, have its property returned to it.

Your Excellency, I am confident that the diplomatic mission which you begin today will further strengthen the bonds of understanding and cooperation existing between Yemen and the Holy See. I assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia are willing to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties. With my sincere good wishes, I invoke upon you, your family and all the people of Yemen, abundant divine blessings.

S.E. il Signor Yahya Ali Mohamed Al-AbiadAmbasciatore dello Yemen presso la Santa Sede

Ènato a Sana'a l'8 febbraio 1953.

Èsposato.

Laureato in Ingegneria Meccanica (Università Rudolf Diesel, Meissen, 1979), ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Ingegnere Meccanico presso la Compagnia Elettrica Pubblica (1974-1982) e la Centrale Termoelettrica di Ras Katnieb (1982-1991); Vice Direttore Amministrativo (1992-1997) e successivamente Direttore Amministrativo (1997-2001) della Compagnia Pubblica per l'Elettricità; Ministro per l'Elettricità e l'Acqua (2001-2003); Membro del Consiglio Consultivo dello Yemen (2003).

Dal 2003 è Ambasciatore in Germania, ove risiede.

Oltre all'arabo parla il tedesco e l'inglese.

[00860-02.02] [Original text: English]

● DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DELLO ZAMBIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR ANDERSON KASEBA CHIBWA

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters of Credence appointing you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Zambia to the Holy See. I thank you for the greetings which you bring from His Excellency President Mwanawasa and I ask you kindly to convey to him and the Government the assurance of my prayers for the peace and well-being of the Nation. This year your country celebrates the fortieth anniversary of independence, and on this auspicious occasion I repeat the heartfelt good wishes that I expressed fifteen years ago in Lusaka: may all Zambians work together so that your land will be "a place of authentic freedom, brotherhood and mutual solidarity — a nation where your children can grow up and live in dignity and in the freedom worthy of the children of God" (Arrival Ceremony in Lusaka, 2 May 1989, No. 2).

As your Excellency has noted, the African continent today continues to face many challenges, especially in the areas of development, foreign debt, poverty, human rights and the HIV/AIDS crisis. Indeed, "tensions and conflicts . . . violence, impoverishment and the deterioration of the institutional fabric are plunging entire peoples into despair" (Address to the Diplomatic Corps, 12 January 2004, No. 1). Certainly the spirit of mutual solidarity that I referred to above, and about which you yourself have also spoken, is an essential element for responding to these challenges. This is a spirit that is open to dialogue rooted in the deep truth that all people belong to the one human family: "by simply being born into this world, we are of one inheritance and one stock with every other human being" (Message for the 1987 World Day of Peace, 1). Far from being a rigid uniformity, this oneness finds expression in the magnificent diversity of the human family, a diversity in which differences of race, culture, language and history are not causes of separation or division but of mutual enrichment and growth.

Authentic solidarity represents the sure path for overcoming ethnic animosities, religious intolerance, class divisions and other prejudices that strike at the very heart of human dignity often giving rise to division, enmity, oppression and violence. Since this solidarity is necessarily based on the radical equality of all men and women, any policy that contradicts the basic dignity and human rights of any person or group is to be rejected. On the other hand, initiatives that build open and honest relationships, that forge just alliances, that unite people in cooperation redounding to the benefit of all, are to be encouraged and fostered. Such solidarity does not mean ignoring real linguistic, racial, religious, social or cultural differences, nor does it deny the sometimes great difficulties in overcoming long-standing divisions and injustice; what it does involve is giving pride of place to what is held in common, to those things that unite people in the common quest for peace and progress.

We are speaking here, then, of a solidarity that protects and defends the legitimate freedom of each person and the rightful security of every nation. Without this freedom and security, the very conditions for development are lacking, the necessary ingredients for progress are absent. In other words, the freedom that States must have in order to ensure their growth and development as equal partners in the larger family of nations is dependent on mutual respect among them. Individuals and peoples have the right to an active voice in the decisions that affect them and their future, and they must be free to exercise this right. It is for this reason that seeking economic, military or political superiority at the expense of the rights of others places in jeopardy any prospects for true development or true peace (cf. Message for the 1987 World Day of Peace, 6).

It is this solidarity, then, that must ever guide economic assistance, political cooperation and even peace-keeping military operations in whatever part of the globe they may occur and between whatever parties they may take place. In this regard, I am pleased to note that Zambia, which is one of the countries on the African continent that has enjoyed political stability and peace since independence, is actively involved in efforts aimed at pacification and reconciliation in Africa — especially in the Great Lakes region — and elsewhere. I also call on the international community to ensure that the aid programmes offered to your country and to other areas of Africa and the world are firmly grounded in a solidarity based on respect for individual freedom and human

dignity.

Indeed, the Church herself, moved by fidelity to her Divine Master and following his example, reaches out in compassion and love to all men and women in gestures of solidarity. In Zambia she is committed to the betterment of society through her work in the fields of education, health care, charitable activity, and as she seeks to defend human rights, promote moral values and foster the integral development of all people and of the whole person. I thank Your Excellency for your words of appreciation of this ongoing task and for your pledge of cooperation in these very areas.

Mr Ambassador, I am certain that your term of service will do much to strengthen the bonds of friendship between your Government and the Holy See. I offer you my best wishes for the success of your mission and I assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia will always be ready to assist you in fulfilling your lofty duties. Upon yourself and the beloved people of Zambia I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

S.E. il Signor Anderson Kaseba ChibwaAmbasciatore dello Zambia presso la Santa Sede

Ènato il 9 gennaio 1949.

Èsposato ed ha sei figli

Laureato in Lettere all'Università dello Zambia (1974), ha conseguito un Master presso l'Università di Miami (1978).

Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Ricercatore presso il Consiglio Nazionale per la Ricerca Scientifica dello Zambia (1974-1982); Docente presso l'Istituto Pan-Africano per lo Sviluppo in Camerun (1982-1999); Responsabile di Progetto per il *CARE International* Zambia (1999-2003).

Èstato inoltre Consulente di numerose Organizzazioni internazionali.

Dal 2003 è Ambasciatore in Gran Bretagna, ove risiede.

[00861-02.02] [Original text: English]

● DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI NIGERIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR KINGSLEY SUNNY EBENYI

Mr Ambassador,

As you come to the Vatican to present the Letters accrediting you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the Holy See, I offer you a cordial welcome. Not only does your presence here today remind me of the warm and enthusiastic reception I received during my Pastoral Visits to your country in 1981 and 1998, but the kind greetings you bring from President Obasanjo rekindle the memory of our friendly meeting here in the Vatican during the Jubilee Year 2000. I ask you to convey my good wishes to His Excellency the President and to assure him of my prayers for the well-being of the nation.

I am pleased to hear you refer to your country's commitment to good governance and to the consolidation of democracy. Indeed, having made the important transition from military rule to a civilian government, the challenge before you now is to build up and strengthen your young democracy, increasing the participation of all segments of the population in a representative and juridically safeguarded ordering of public life. An essential requirement in this regard is the need for political authority to be exercised with transparency and accountability. Public life, both on the national and international levels, is to be guided by "four precise requirements of the human spirit: truth, justice, love and freedom" (Message for the 2003 World Day of Peace, No. 3). I encourage Nigeria to be ever more committed to this courageous democratic endeavour undertaken with a deep sense and

spirit of service to its people.

Indeed, there exists an indissoluble bond between peace and truth that must be recognized if men and women are to live in freedom, justice and security. "Honesty in the supply of information, equity in legal systems, openness in democratic procedures give citizens a sense of security, a readiness to settle controversies by peaceful means, and a desire for genuine and constructive dialogue, all of which constitute the true premises of a lasting peace" (*ibid*., No. 8). When people more fully grasp the meaning and consequences of events in their own lives and in the world, they are better equipped to make effective contributions to peace, especially through the proper use of societal structures and mechanisms — juridical, political, economic — to serve the common good.

Of course, as the Federal Republic seeks ever greater national stability and unity along the path of increased democratization of society and institutions, challenges are not lacking. Moral courage and political wisdom are necessary, for example, in dealing effectively with the outbreaks of violence in the Niger Delta region, with the political and ethnic tensions in the north-west, and with the problems of corruption, poverty and disease. Through a resolute commitment to work tirelessly and steadfastly for the cause of peace, for the defence of human dignity and human rights, for the integral development of every individual, these challenges can be met and the way will be prepared for heightening awareness of the common destiny and interdependence that links all Nigerians, and indeed all peoples, as members of the one great family of mankind. Increasingly, Nigeria has emerged as a country predisposed to serve the cause of peace and development through international institutions such as the African Union and the United Nations. I encourage Nigerian leaders to be steadfast in their solidarity with other nations in order that a free and just world may become a reality.

In the service of peace, which is also the service of truth, religion has a vital role to play. It makes its most effective contribution in this area by concentrating on those things that are proper to it: "attention to God, the fostering of universal brotherhood and the spreading of a culture of human solidarity" (*ibid*., No. 9). Now, when communities or peoples of different religious convictions or cultures live in the same area it can sometimes happen that tensions will develop or increase, which, because of the strong passions involved, can turn into violent conflict. For this reason, it is of paramount importance to recall that "recourse to violence in the name of religious belief is a perversion of the very teachings of the major religions. I reaffirm here what many religious figures have repeated so often: the use of violence can never claim a religious justification, nor can it foster the growth of true religious feeling" (Message for the 1999 World Day of Peace, No. 5).

The Catholic Church in Nigeria is committed to the peaceful advancement of the nation, especially through her presence in the fields of education, health care and social services. The effective guarantee of the right of religious freedom will enable Catholics to continue to work for the spiritual and material progress of society. In this regard, I am confident that the Government will fulfil its commitment to address the difficulties faced by foreign missionary workers seeking visa renewals. It is also my fervent hope that tensions between diverse ethnic and religious communities, escalating to the point of violence and even murder in some parts of the country, will be defused by sincere dialogue and efforts aimed at reconciliation and mutual understanding and cooperation.

Mr Ambassador, I trust that your mission will serve to strengthen the ties of friendship existing between your country and the Holy See. As you assume your new responsibilities I offer you my prayerful good wishes, and I assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia will be ready to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon you and the beloved people of Nigeria I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

S.E. il Signor Kingsley Sunny EbenyiAmbasciatore di Nigeria presso la Santa Sede

Ènato a Umuaram, Ikem, il 28 luglio 1964.

Èsposato.

Laureato in Medicina Veterinaria (1992), ha conseguito una specializzazione in Amministrazione Pubblica (2000).

Dopo aver esercitato la libera professione (1992-1994), ha assunto la Direzione di Imprese agrarie (1994-1999). È stato quindi Deputato per lo Stato di Enugu (1999-2004).

Ha partecipato, in qualità di membro di Delegazioni governative, a Conferenze internazionali in materia economica ed agro-alimentare.

Attualmente è Ambasciatore a Madrid, ove risiede.

[00862-02.02] [Original text: English]

● DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI TUNISIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR AFIF HENDAOUI

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

1. J'accueille avec plaisir Votre Excellence au Vatican à l'occasion de la présentation des Lettres qui L'accréditent comme Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire de la République Tunisienne près le Saint-Siège.

Je vous remercie des paroles aimables que vous m'avez transmises de la part de Son Excellence Monsieur Zine Le Abidine Ben Ali, Président de la République, et je vous saurais gré de lui exprimer en retour mes vœux cordiaux pour sa personne et pour ses compatriotes. Je demande au Très-Haut de soutenir les efforts de tous les Tunisiens pour édifier une société toujours plus fraternelle et solidaire, où chaque citoyen puisse bénéficier du progrès et réaliser ses justes aspirations à vivre dans la justice et dans la paix.

2. Vous avez rappelé, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, la longue tradition de tolérance et d'accueil qui caractérise la Tunisie ainsi que le profond attachement de votre pays à la cause de la paix. Devant la situation internationale actuelle, marquée par la violence intolérable du terrorisme et ébranlée par l'instabilité de plusieurs régions du monde, notamment celle du Moyen-Orient, il est urgent d'unir les efforts des hommes de bonne volonté en faveur de la paix. Le Saint-Siège ne ménage aucune peine pour y parvenir, rappelant notamment à chacun des membres de la communauté internationale ses propres responsabilités en la matière. Comme je l'ai souvent affirmé, seul le recours aux négociations, dans un dialogue franc et exigeant, pourra permettre aux adversaires et aux belligérants de trouver des chemins nouveaux pour résoudre les conflits et pour restaurer une situation de justice et de respect mutuel. J'en appelle donc une nouvelle fois aux personnes qui ont une autorité dans le processus de la guerre. Elles doivent se rappeler que leur première mission est de faire aux hommes et aux peuples le don de la paix, pour que chacun puisse envisager son avenir et celui de sa famille avec confiance et sérénité. La violence et la guerre, nous ne le savons que trop, ne peuvent pas résoudre les conflits. Au contraire, elles engendrent le plus souvent des blessures et des dommages tels qu'ils suscitent des haines durables entre les personnes et les peuples et ruinent, parfois pour longtemps, toute possibilité de dialogue et de respect.

Je me réjouis de la large convergence de vues, que vous avez vous-même soulignée, entre votre pays et le Saint-Siège sur cette question, et je souhaite que nos efforts mutuels soient la source d'avancées significatives pour la paix du monde, car il n'est pas possible de rester passifs devant les drames qui déchirent le monde présent et qui pèsent si lourdement sur les générations à venir. Je pense particulièrement au conflit qui dure depuis tant d'années en Terre sainte et qui blesse gravement la conscience de tous les croyants.

3. La longue expérience de la foi chrétienne dans son dialogue avec les sociétés humaines au long de l'histoire lui a appris que la religion, dans sa véritable essence, est un puissant vecteur d'humanisation pour l'homme. Elle l'invite au respect du Créateur et de sa création ; elle lui découvre sa dignité de créature appelée à soumettre le monde, en orientant son histoire selon les desseins de Dieu, en cherchant toujours la vérité et en se conduisant selon les exigences de la justice et du droit. Ces caractéristiques d'un comportement "humain" s'appliquent aux relations entre les personnes et entre les groupes, au sein de la société, mais elles valent aussi pour les rapports entre les nations, dans l'ordre international. Comme je l'ai rappelé dans mon dernier *Message*

pour la Journée mondiale de la paix, "le droit est la première route à suivre pour atteindre la paix. Les peuples doivent être éduqués au respect de ce droit. Mais on n'arrivera pas au terme du chemin si la justice n'est pas complétée par l'amour. Justice et amour apparaissent parfois comme *des forces antagonistes*. Ils ne sont en vérité que les deux faces d'une même réalité" (n. 10).

4. Nul doute que les différentes religions, en particulier le christianisme et l'islam, aient beaucoup à faire encore, à la place qui est la leur, pour établir entre elles un vrai dialogue, respectueux et fécond, pour dénoncer toute manipulation de la religion au service de la violence, et pour convaincre les hommes, et notamment les responsables politiques, de s'engager dans des perspectives nouvelles pour édifier la fraternité et une paix juste et durable entre tous. Je me réjouis donc de l'engagement de votre pays en faveur de l'instauration d'un dialogue sincère entre les cultures et entre les religions. C'est là un objectif important, qui doit permettre l'établissement de relations plus solidaires entre les communautés humaines et religieuses.

5. À sa place, la modeste communauté catholique qui vit en Tunisie n'a pas d'autre ambition que de témoigner de la dignité de l'homme, créé à l'image de Dieu, et de se mettre fraternellement à son service. Permettez-moi, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, de saluer, par votre intermédiaire, son pasteur, l'Évêque de Tunis, et tous les fidèles catholiques qui la composent. Engagés notamment dans des tâches d'éducation mais aussi de santé, ils travaillent et veulent continuer à travailler avec cœur au développement du pays, et ils s'attachent à poursuivre un dialogue de la vie, ouvert et loyal, avec les croyants musulmans. Je les encourage à grandir dans l'amour mutuel, à se montrer accueillants à leurs frères qui viennent d'autres Églises, témoignant ainsi de leur sens de la fraternité et de leur amour pour la paix.

6. Au moment où vous inaugurez votre noble mission au service de la paix et des bonnes relations entre votre pays et le Saint-Siège, je veux vous assurer, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, de mes vœux chaleureux et du soutien de mes collaborateurs. Vous serez toujours le bienvenu au Vatican, où vous trouverez auprès d'eux l'aide dont vous pourrez avoir besoin. Sur votre personne, sur votre famille et sur tout le personnel de votre Ambassade, j'invoque l'abondance des Bénédictions divines.

S.E. il Signor Afif HendaouiAmbasciatore di Tunisia presso la Santa Sede

Ènato a Tunisi il 16 luglio 1948.

Èsposato ed ha due figli.

Laureato in Scienze Economiche all'Università di Liegi, ha conseguito un dottorato di ricerca presso l'Università di Bruxelles. È anche specializzato in Sociologia.

Ha intrapreso nel 1975 la carriera universitaria presso l'Università di Bruxelles. Nel 1982 ha ottenuto la docenza in Scienze Politiche ed Economiche presso l'Università di Tunisi, di cui è stato Presidente per la Facoltà di Diritto dal 1991 al 1996.

Ha ricoperto quindi i seguenti incarichi: Ambasciatore in Svezia (1996-2000); Ministro del governo con delega per i Diritti Umani, la Comunicazione ed i rapporti con la Camera dei Deputati (2000-2001); Ambasciatore in Austria (2001-2003).

Dal 2003 è Ambasciatore a presso la Confederazione Elvetica, ove risiede.

Parla arabo, francese ed inglese.

[00863-03.02] [Texte original: Français]

DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE AGLI AMBASCIATORI IN OCCASIONE DELLA PRESENTAZIONE COLLETTIVA DELLE LETTERE CREDENZIALI

Pubblichiamo di seguito il discorso che Giovanni Paolo II ha rivolto questa mattina agli Ecc.mi nuovi Ambasciatori presso la Santa Sede, nella Sala Clementina del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano, al termine dello scambio delle Lettere Credenziali di ciascun Ambasciatore al Santo Padre:

● DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE

Excellences,

1. Je vous accueille avec joie à l'occasion de la présentation des Lettres qui vous accréditent comme Ambassadeurs extraordinaires et plénipotentiaires de vos pays: Suriname, Sri Lanka, Mali, Yémen, Zambie, Nigéria et Tunisie. Je vous remercie de m'avoir transmis les paroles courtoises de vos Chefs d'État, vous demandant en retour de leur exprimer mes vœux déférents pour leurs personnes et pour leur haute mission au service de leurs pays. À travers vous, je salue aussi les Responsables de la société civile et les Autorités religieuses de vos nations, et tous vos compatriotes. Je profite de votre présence au Vatican pour adresser mes vœux fervents à la communauté catholique de vos pays respectifs et mes souhaits cordiaux à tous vos concitoyens.

2. De tous les continents parviennent en permanence des informations inquiétantes sur la situation des droits de l'homme, faisant apparaître que des personnes, hommes, femmes, enfants, sont torturées et profondément bafouées dans leur dignité, contrairement à la Déclaration universelle des Droits de l'homme (cf. article 5). C'est l'humanité tout entière qui est ainsi blessée et bafouée. Parce que tout homme est notre frère en humanité, nous ne pouvons pas nous taire devant de telles exactions, qui ne sont pas tolérables. Il appartient à tous les hommes de bonne volonté, qu'ils aient des responsabilités ou qu'ils soient simples citoyens, de tout faire pour le respect de tout être humain.

3. Aujourd'hui, j'en appelle à la conscience de nos contemporains. En effet, c'est la conscience des hommes qui doit être éduquée, pour que cessent à tout jamais les violences insupportables qui pèsent sur nos frères en humanité et que tous les hommes se mobilisent pour le respect des droits les plus fondamentaux de toute personne. Nous ne pourrons vivre dans la paix et notre cœur ne pourra demeurer en paix tant que tous les hommes ne seront pas traités dignement. C'est notre devoir d'être solidaires de tous. La paix ne pourra advenir si nous ne nous mobilisons pas tous, en particulier vous qui êtes diplomates, pour que chaque homme de la planète soit respecté. Seule la paix permet d'espérer en l'avenir. Pour cela, votre mission est d'être au service des relations fraternelles entre les personnes et entre les peuples.

4. Je forme donc pour vos gouvernements et pour tous les habitants de vos pays, ainsi que pour toute l'humanité, des vœux de paix. Au moment où vous commencez votre noble mission auprès du Saint-Siège, je vous offre mes souhaits les meilleurs, invoquant l'abondance des Bénédictions divines sur vous-mêmes, sur vos familles, sur vos collaborateurs et sur les nations que vous représentez.

[00856-03.02] [Texte original: Français]

[B0263-XX.01]