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Il 14 e 15 dicembre ha avuto luogo a Nairobi (Kenya) il 2° Vertice della Conferenza Internazionale sulla Regione dei Grandi Laghi. Vi hanno preso parte i Capi di Stato e di Governo di undici Paesi della Regione, come pure quelli di altri Stati limitrofi e associati.

La Santa Sede vi ha partecipato con una Delegazione guidata da S.E. Mons. Luigi Travaglino, Nunzio Apostolico, in qualità di Inviato Speciale, e formata da S.E. Mons. Alain Paul Lebeaupin, Nunzio Apostolico in Kenya, Capo Delegazione Aggiunto, e dal Rev.do Julien Kaboré, Segretario della medesima Rappresentanza

Pontificia.

Il Santo Padre ha voluto rendersi presente all'importante incontro con un Messaggio a firma del Cardinale Segretario di Stato, diretto a S.E. il Sig. Mwai Kibaki, Presidente della Repubblica del Kenya e Presidente di turno della medesima Conferenza.

Pubblichiamo di seguito il Messaggio del Santo Padre a firma del Cardinale Segretario di Stato:

• **MESSAGGIO DEL SANTO PADRE**

To His Excellency

Mr MWAI KIBAKI

President of the Republic of Kenya

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI has been informed of the Second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region taking place in Nairobi. He has directed me to convey to you, Mr President, and to all the Heads of State and Heads of Government gathered for this important event, his cordial greetings and the assurance of his prayers for the success of your meeting.

At the First Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, held two years ago, the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Peace, Stability, Democracy and Development was signed. His Holiness gives thanks to Almighty God for this important step forward and for the principles adopted in the Declaration which call for a greater commitment to achieve peace and stability.

Those attending this Conference are motivated by the awareness that precious time, energy and resources have been invested in armed conflicts that have left behind widespread devastation and caused detrimental setbacks. Countless people of the Great Lakes region have suffered too much and for too long. Accordingly, the present Summit is called to take up again the challenge and satisfy the long-suffering populations' yearning for lasting peace by signing and bringing to fulfilment the Pact on Security, Stability and Development. The four aspects envisaged in this plan (peace and security, democracy and good government, economic development and regional integration, social and humanitarian promotion) are interwoven and mutually inclusive. None of these human achievements can subsist, in a lasting and genuine form, without the support of the others. They will require from all those involved – authorities and citizens alike – generosity, courage and perseverance.

The Catholic Church attaches great importance to the values enshrined in these proposals and for many years has dedicated her untiring commitment to them. His Holiness is confident that the Catholic community will continue to do so with generous zeal, in cooperation with members of other religions and all men and women of good will. By engaging responsibly in public life they give clear expression to a particular form of fraternal charity.

His Holiness encourages all the Delegations present at this Conference to assume courageously their historic responsibility. His prayers will accompany them as they seek to agree upon and put into place the concrete measures that would decisively discourage any recourse to violence, and foster the only rational and human alternative to war: negotiation and dialogue. He is confident that on the basis of a genuine and stable peace, the Great Lakes Region with its human and natural resources, and the support of the international community, can overcome its present difficulties and offer its people the genuine hope of a dignified future.

Placing this noble aspiration in the providential hands of the Almighty, the Holy Father is pleased to extend to you, Mr President, to the Heads of State and Government and to all present at the Nairobi Conference, God's abundant blessings of well-being and peace. To these sentiments of His Holiness, I add my own personal greetings and good wishes.

From the Vatican, 5 December 2006

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone

Secretary of State

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DICHIARAZIONE DELLE CONFERENZE EPISCOPALI DELL'AFRICA PRESENTI AL 2° VERTICE DELLA CONFERENZA INTERNAZIONALE SULLA REGIONE DEI GRANDI LAGHI

L'atto più significativo del Vertice è stata l'adozione del "Patto su sicurezza, stabilità e sviluppo". Attesa la convergenza dei suoi obiettivi con parecchie aree di azione della Chiesa in quella Regione, la Santa Sede ha chiesto alle Conferenze Episcopali di adoperarsi per accompagnare l'attuazione del Patto e promuoverne lo spirito.

In questa prospettiva il Presidente dell'Associazione dei Membri delle Conferenze Episcopali dell'Africa orientale (AMECEA) e quelli di diverse Conferenze Episcopali della Regione hanno potuto presenziare al Summit, al termine del quale hanno diffuso una Dichiarazione. Con essa i Presuli esprimono gratitudine per il Messaggio del Santo Padre ed apprezzamento per l'iniziativa dei Capi di Stato e di Governo, auspicando che il lavoro finora compiuto non sia vano e che gli impegni solennemente presi siano attuati con coraggio e lungimiranza.

Pubblichiamo di seguito il testo della Dichiarazione:

• TESTO DELLA DICHIARAZIONE

2ND SUMMIT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION

14TH TO 15TH DECEMBER 2006

"They will know you are my disciples if you love one another"(John 13:35)

Dear Catholic Christians and All People of Good will in the Great Lakes Region.

We, the Archbishops and Bishops attending the Great Lakes Regional Summit in Nairobi on the 14th and 15th December 2006 wish to express our appreciation to the Heads of States and Governments of the Great Lakes Region for their initiative to come together, to sign and adopt a "Pact on security, stability and development" in the Great Lakes Region.

We further deeply appreciate the support of other countries, friends of the Great Lakes Region. We pray that they will continue supporting the initiative for the benefit of our people.

The presence of a Special Envoy of the Holy See and the message of the Holy Father are very clear signs of how close the Great Lakes Region is to the heart of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI.

Inspired by this message, it is our determination to continue our commitment to promote the values enshrined in the proposals of the Pact.

As we know our region has had its share of problems including political instability in some areas, violence as a result of negative ethnicity, poverty and many others.

Due to violence leading to loss of human lives some of our people have been left divided and without hope. Therefore, this initiative of our Heads of State and Government offers a chance to initiate the process of healing, which the Church fully endorses and commits itself to promote leading our people to forgive and reconcile with one another in the interest of peaceful co-existence now and in the future.

We call upon all those concerned to ensure equitable distribution of resources at the national and regional levels. We challenge ourselves to be pro-active so that we can be able to foresee and forestall explosive negative situations. This way we shall save our region from exhaustive wars and other negative experiences.

We urge our political leaders to nurture a culture of tolerance, patience and forgiveness. We urge them to be sensitive to the plight of the majority of people when their differences of opinion plunge different countries into political instability. While we pray for them, we again urge prudence and wise discretion.

We urge our lay people to take up the challenge of their calling and mission. This is to be the salt of the earth. They are to take up their rightful roles in the society including the political and administrative offices.

As the summit comes to an end, we encourage our Heads of States and Government to ensure the implementation of the Pact to the detail. This will ensure that the gains from several summits are not in vain.

Finally we send all of you greetings, peace and best wishes of a blessed Christmas and Happy New Year 2007.

Nairobi, 15 December 2006

Signed:

Archbishop Paul Bakyenga – Chairman, AMECEA

Archbishop John Njue – Chairman, Kenya Episcopal Conference

Bishop Jude Thaddeaus Ruwa'ichi – Chairman, Tanzania Episcopal Conference

Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo- Chairman, Episcopal Conference of Congo

Bishop Fredrick Drandua – Vice Chairman, Uganda Episcopal Conference

Bishop Jean Ntagwarara - Chairman, Burundi Episcopal Conference

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