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Holy See Press Office Communiqué: Audience with the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Today, 17 January 2020, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, His Excellency Mr. Félix Antoine Tshilombo Tshisekedi, who went on to meet His Eminence Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, accompanied by His Excellency Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States.

During the cordial discussions, the good existing bilateral relations were evoked, as was the satisfaction at the ratification of the Framework Agreement between the Holy See and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on matters of mutual interest. In this context, the contribution of the Catholic Church in the democratic process, and in promoting the common good and integral development of the nation, especially in the fields of education and healthcare, was highlighted.

Attention then turned to the country's current situation, with particular reference to the sufferings of the population in the eastern provinces, due to persistent armed conflict and the spread of the Ebola virus. Finally, mention was made of the urgency of collaboration and cooperation at national and international level, to protect human dignity and to promote civil coexistence, starting from the many refugees and displaced persons who are facing a grave humanitarian crisis.