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The Credential Letters of the Ambassadors of Singapore, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Algeria, Sri Lanka, Barbados, Sweden, Finland and Nepal to the Holy See

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the ambassadors of Singapore, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Algeria, Sri Lanka, Barbados, Sweden, Finland and Nepal to the Holy See, on the occasion of the presentation of their credential letters.

The following is the Pope's address to the new ambassadors, and a brief biography of each one:

Address of the Holy Father

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you as you present the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your countries to the Holy See: Singapore, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Algeria, Sri Lanka, Barbados, Sweden, Finland, and Nepal. As the effects of the coronavirus continue to be felt, travelling remains difficult, and so I thank each one of you for your presence here today. I would ask you to convey to the Heads of State whom you represent my sentiments of gratitude and esteem for themselves and for their noble mission at the service of their people.

As a result of the pandemic, the social and economic crisis worldwide has become all the more severe. On a personal level, many have lost loved ones and their means of livelihood. Families in particular are facing grave economic difficulties and often lack adequate social protection. The pandemic has made us more conscious of our interdependence as members of the one human family and our need to be attentive to the poor and the vulnerable in our midst. As we seek to emerge from the present crisis, our societies are challenged to take concrete, and indeed courageous, steps to develop a global "culture of care" (cf. *Message for the 2021 World*

Day of Peace) that can inspire new relationships and structures of cooperation in the service of solidarity, respect for human dignity, mutual assistance and social justice.

Sadly, the pandemic has also made us acutely aware that the international community is experiencing “a growing difficulty, if not the inability, to seek common and shared solutions to the problems of our world” (*Address to the Diplomatic Corps*, 8 February 2021). In this regard, I think of the need to confront such pressing global issues as migration and climate change, as well as the humanitarian crises that they often bring in their wake. I think too of the economic debt that burdens many countries struggling to survive and the “ecological debt” that we owe to nature itself, as well as to peoples and countries affected by human-induced ecological degradation and loss of biodiversity. These issues are not simply political or economic; they are questions of justice, a justice that can no longer be ignored or deferred. Indeed, they entail a moral obligation towards future generations, for the seriousness with which we respond to them will shape the world we leave to our children.

In the development of a global consensus capable of responding to these ethical challenges facing our human family, your work as diplomats is of paramount importance. For its part, the Holy See, through its diplomatic representations, and its activity within the international community, supports every effort to build a world in which the human person is at the centre, finance is at the service of an integral development, and the earth, our common home, is protected and cared for. Through her works of education, charity and healthcare worldwide, the Church seeks to advance the integral development of individuals and peoples, and in this way contribute to the cause of peace.

In this regard, my thoughts turn to the events taking place these days in the Holy Land. I thank God for the decision to halt the armed conflicts and acts of violence, and I pray for the pursuit of paths of dialogue and peace. Tomorrow evening, the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land, together with their faithful, will gather to celebrate the Vigil of Pentecost in Saint Stephen’s Church in Jerusalem and to implore the gift of peace. I take this occasion to ask all the pastors and faithful of the Catholic Church to unite themselves spiritually with this prayer. May every community pray to the Holy Spirit “that Israelis and Palestinians may find the path of dialogue and forgiveness, be patient builders of peace and justice, and be open, step by step, to a common hope, to coexistence among brothers and sisters” (*Regina Coeli*, 16 May 2021).

Dear Ambassadors, with these thoughts, I now offer you my prayerful good wishes for the responsibilities you now undertake, and I assure you of the support and assistance of the offices of Holy See in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon you and your families, your colleagues and co-workers, and all your fellow citizens, I cordially invoke God’s blessings of wisdom, strength and peace.

Curriculum vitae of the new Ambassadors

Her Excellency Ms. Janet ANG Guat Har

Ambassador of Singapore to the Holy See

Born on 14 September 1959, she graduated in business administration from the National University of Singapore in 1982.

She has held the following offices, among others: since 1994 management positions with IBM in Singapore, Tokyo and Beijing; 2015 - February 2019 vice president of IBM Asia Pacific, Singapore; from 2014 to date, director of Singapore Press Holdings Limited (SPH Ltd.); from July 2019 to date, president of SISTIC.com Pte Ltd. She is currently also chair of the Caritas Board of Trustees.

Her Excellency Ms. Abigail Shonhiwa

Ambassador of Zimbabwe to the Holy See

Born on 7 June 1956, she obtained a diploma in business studies from the West Glamorgan Institute of Higher Education, Swansea, Wales, Great Britain (1983) and a Master in Business Administration from the University of Hull, Great Britain (1994).

She has held the following offices: official at the Ministry of Trade and Industry (1983-2001); official at the Multilateral Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2001-2005); principal director for Economic Planning at the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (2005-2006); minister plenipotentiary at the Embassy in China (2006-2009); permanent secretary at the Ministry of Trade and Industry (until 2018); ambassador to France (since 2019).

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His Excellency Mr. Mustafizur Rahman

Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Holy See

Born on 1 January 1966, he graduated in medicine from Sir Salimullah Medical College, Dhaka, and holds a master's degree in International public law from the University of London, as well as a post-graduate diploma in international relations and diplomacy from the *Institut International d'Administration Publique* in Paris.

He entered the diplomatic service of Bangladesh in 1993 and served in the following missions: deputy permanent representative at the United Nations in New York; minister in the Permanent Mission in Geneva; deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta, India; high commissioner in Singapore (2017-2020).

He served at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in various roles and mainly as director general of the section for the United Nations.

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His Excellency Mr. Lazhar Soualem

Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to the Holy See

Born on 19 September 1959, he holds a diploma in corporate management from the Trade Institute of Algeria (1982) and the National School of Administration/Diplomatic Section, and attended specialist courses in international humanitarian law certified by the San Remo Institute (2018).

He has held, among others, the following positions: third secretary at the Directorate of International Political Affairs (1988 - 1991); second secretary at the Embassy in Bulgaria (1991 -1992); first secretary and later counsellor at the Permanent Mission in Geneva (1992 - 1995); attaché at the Cabinet of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1995 - 1997); deputy director at the Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Section of the MFA (1997 - 2000); minister - counsellor, deputy permanent representative, and later interim chargé d'affaires at the Embassy in Austria (2000 - 2002); minister - counsellor, deputy permanent representative at the Permanent Mission in Geneva (2002 - 2004); minister plenipotentiary at the General Secretariat for Human Rights Issues (2004 - 2005); director in charge of Human Rights, Sustainable Development and International Social and Cultural Affairs (2005 - 2007); director in charge of Human Rights, Social Development and International Cultural, Scientific and Technical Affairs (2007 - 2009)

ambassador to Zimbabwe and Zambia, and representative to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, COMESA (2009 - 2015); director in charge of Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs, Social and Sustainable Development and International Cultural, Scientific and Technical Affairs (2015 - 2017); director in charge of Humanitarian Cultural, Scientific and Technical Affairs International (2017 - 2019); director general in charge of Multilateral Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019 - 2020); ambassador, permanent representative to the Office of the United Nations and International Organisations in Switzerland, Geneva (from 2020).

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His Excellency Mr. Candauda Arachchige Priyantha Prasanna

Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the Holy See

Born on 1st February 1964 in Sri Lanka, he holds a degree in economics, political science and English (University of Peradeniya, 1986) and a Master's degree in Japanese studies (University of Colombo, 1999).

He has held the following positions: journalist / editorial assistant - *Christian Worker Magazine* (1987); researcher at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (1988 - 1989); political correspondent for *The Island* newspaper; assistant secretary - Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (1990 - 1993); director of personnel and administration - Central Industries Ltd. (1993 - 1994); resource person - Ranjan Wijeratne Academy for Political Education (1994 - 2002); permanent representative to the United Nations in Geneva (since 2020).

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His Excellency Mr. Milton Inniss

Ambassador of Barbados to the Holy See

Born on 25 March 1963 in Bridgetown, Barbados, he holds a degree in Quantity Surveying from the University of Reading, UK.

A member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and other professional associations, he worked in the construction industry for 34 years, specialising in the areas of project management, finance, contract management and dispute resolution.

He has also held positions on the Board of Directors of the Royal Schools of Music and other cultural and civic institutions in Barbados. He has served as high commissioner in London since 2018.

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His Excellency Mr. Andrés Jato

Ambassador of Sweden to the Holy See

Born on 11 June 1970, he holds a Bachelor's degree in economics (Uppsala University 1994), a Master's degree in peace and conflict research (Uppsala University, 1996), and a Master's degree in international political economy (London School of Economics, 1997) and pursued higher studies in peace and conflict research (Uppsala University, 2000).

He has held the following positions: lecturer and researcher at the Department for Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University (1997 - 2000); minute writer, Department for Africa at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2000

- 2002); first secretary, Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2002 - 2005); minute writer, Department for Security Policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2005 - 2007); deputy director, special assistant to the director general for Political Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2007 - 2010); deputy director, head of unit and European correspondent at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2010 - 2013); director, head of department and European correspondent at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013- 2015); ambassador for the Arctic (2015-2017); and deputy director general, head of department for Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Export Control at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2017 - 2021).

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His Excellency Mr. Kalle Kankaanpää

Ambassador of Finland to the Holy See

Born on 25 December 1968 in Helsinki, he graduated in political science in 1998 from the University of Turku, Finland. He speaks English, French and Swedish.

He has held the following positions: official at the Secretariat of the EU Presidency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1998-2000); minute writer at the Asia and Oceania Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2000-2001); Diplomatic Training Course at Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2001-2002); deputy head of Mission, Embassy in Lithuania (2002-2005); COLAT delegate, permanent representation of Finland to the European Union (2005-2007); COWEB delegate, permanent representation of Finland to the European Union (2007-2008); team leader, Regional Cooperation Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2008-2012); national expert, regional cooperation, European External Action Service, Brussels (2012-2013); team leader, deputy director, Russia Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013-2015); director for Northern Europe, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2015-2021); Ambassador to Croatia (2021).

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His Excellency Mr. Ram Kaji Khadka

Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal to the Holy See

Born on 16 January 1973, he holds a Master's degree in English literature (2000) and a Master's degree in public administration (2002) from Tribuwan University - Kathmandu.

He has held, among others, the following positions: section officer, Ministry of Public Administration (2003 - 2004); section officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2004 - 2007); second and first secretary, then deputy head of mission of the Embassy in Qatar (2007 - 2011); undersecretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2011 - 2013); counsellor, and then minister at the Embassy in Denmark (2013 - 2017); deputy secretary and, then, director general of the Passport Department - Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2017 - 2020); ambassador to Germany (since 2020).