

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLIS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 0359

Giovedì 29.05.2008

Pubblicazione: Immediata

Sommario:

- ◆ LE LETTERE CREDENZIALI DEGLI AMBASCIATORI DI: TANZANIA, UGANDA, LIBERIA, CIAD, BANGLADESH, BIELORUSSIA, GUINEA, SRI LANKA, NIGERIA
- ◆ DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE AGLI AMBASCIATORI IN OCCASIONE DELLA PRESENTAZIONE COLLETTIVA DELLE LETTERE CREDENZIALI

◆ LE LETTERE CREDENZIALI DEGLI AMBASCIATORI DI: TANZANIA, UGANDA, LIBERIA, CIAD, BANGLADESH, BIELORUSSIA, GUINEA, SRI LANKA, NIGERIA

LE LETTERE CREDENZIALI DEGLI AMBASCIATORI DI: TANZANIA, UGANDA, LIBERIA, CIAD, BANGLADESH, BIELORUSSIA, GUINEA, SRI LANKA, NIGERIA

- DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI TANZANIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. AHMADA RWEYEMAMU NGEMERA
- DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI UGANDA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. NYINE S. BITAHWA
- DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI LIBERIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. WESLEY MOMO JOHNSON
- DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL CIAD PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. HISSEIN BRAHIM TAHA
- DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL BANGLADESH PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE,

S.E. IL SIG. DEBAPRIYA BHATTACHARYA

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI BIELORUSSIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. SERGEI F. ALEINIK

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI GUINEA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. ALEXANDRE CÉCÉ LOUA

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DELLO SRI LANKA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. TIKIRI BANDARA MADUWEGEDERA • DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI NIGERIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. OBED WADZANI

Alle ore 11 di questa mattina, nella Sala Clementina del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano, il Santo Padre Benedetto XVI ha ricevuto in Udienza, in occasione della presentazione delle Lettere Credenziali, le Loro Eccellenze i Signori Ambasciatori di: Tanzania, Uganda, Liberia, Ciad, Bangladesh, Bielorussia, Guinea, Sri Lanka e Nigeria.

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

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI TANZANIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. AHMADA RWEYEMAMU NGEMERA

Your Excellency,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Republic of Tanzania to the Holy See. I am grateful for the courteous greetings and sentiments of good will which you have expressed on behalf of His Excellency, Mr Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the Republic, whom I had the pleasure of meeting. I ask you kindly to convey my gratitude and my personal good wishes to His Excellency the President, to the Government and to the Tanzanian people.

Your country, Mr Ambassador, is looked upon with respect and appreciation by people in East Africa for its stability and its climate of tolerance and peace. Tanzania is also held in esteem for the important role undertaken by its political leaders in the process of pacification of the Great Lakes Region and other international peacekeeping initiatives. The generous hospitality offered to refugees fleeing from hostilities in neighbouring countries, in spite of domestic economic difficulties, has also awakened due appreciation for the noble sentiments of the Tanzanian people. Some negative trends such as an increase in the regional traffic of arms and interruptions in important initiatives of dialogue and reconciliation have cast doubts recently on the immediate future of the peace process. It is not surprising in this regard that responsible leaders and many men and women of good will are eager to see this process sustained at all costs and brought to fulfilment. No effort should be spared in order to recreate the indispensable conditions for normal living, development and cultural advancement of the populations affected. The Holy See joins its voice to this appeal and continues to exhort all who hold responsibility in the region not to lose confidence in the value of dialogue, but to explore with an open mind and follow all possibilities that may lead to the conclusion of a lasting peace.

Tanzania can be proud of its inheritance of harmonious coexistence between different ethnic and religious groups handed down to the present generations from founding President Julius Nyerere and other important statesmen. Every generation must continue to cherish and protect this treasure. Care must be taken that the common good of all Tanzanians and the dignity and the authentic rights of all persons may prevail over the particular demands or interests of certain groups. In this regard discernment and decisive action on the part of authorities are needed to curb favouritism or initiatives that would be incompatible with a political project based on universal human rights and the rule of law, and could carry in some circumstances seeds of intolerance and violence. The Catholic Church is committed to fostering positive ethnic relations and dialogue with members of other religions as a fundamental component of her desire to give witness to God's universal love. It gives her great joy to assist society in establishing an environment of good will between all men and women based on

mutual knowledge, appreciation and respect.

Creating the proper environment and structures for the economic development of a country is one of the important goals in the task of good governance. International trust and goodwill towards Tanzania has been successfully generated not least by efforts to combat corruption, and the economy has responded with steady progress. Experience in many developing countries shows that accountability and transparency, especially in the use of public funds, not only upholds the necessary moral integrity of those in office, but is in itself an indispensable economic factor for stable progress. Great care has to be taken in order to continue along this path, together with a clear will to bring the less favoured sectors to a just and active participation in the common economic growth. As your country continues to undertake works of infrastructure and promote investments in support of agriculture and industry, it is my hope that your people will work with confidence for the good of their homeland and that Tanzania will always find openness, trust and effective support at international levels.

I am pleased to note that considerable efforts have been made to promote wider access to education in the knowledge that it is one of the most important factors in development. Training programmes have also been wisely established for teachers and for other personnel in schools and health centres since the construction of adequate facilities cannot be separated from the complementary effort to prepare qualified staff. I thank you Mr Ambassador for your words of appreciation of the service that the Catholic Church offers to the people of your country. Both in education and health services, care must be taken to provide financial resources to the different projects or institutions on the basis of pressing need or merit. Equity and transparency in this area greatly facilitate a spirit of loyal cooperation between private initiative and public agencies. In these same fields of development institutions must continue to expand and improve in quality in order to respond to the needs of the population. I am sure that Tanzanian Catholics will not fail to offer their specific contribution through the Church's institutions and initiatives, animated by Christian service of neighbour and generous love of their country.

Your Excellency, on the occasion of your presentation as the United Republic of Tanzania's representative at the Vatican, I have given expression to some of the Holy See's perspectives and sincere hopes for your country. May your mission serve to strengthen the ties existing between the Tanzanian people and the Holy See. Be assured that the various departments of the Roman Curia will be ready to assist you in your task. With my prayers and best wishes for the success of your mission, I invoke Almighty God's abundant blessings upon you and your family, and upon the people of your country.

S.E. il Sig. Ahmada Rweyemamu NgemeraAmbasciatore di Tanzania presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 12 giugno 1950.

Laureato in economia industriale (Università di Dar-es-Salaam, 1976), ha conseguito un master in amministrazione pubblica (Università di Wisconsin - Madison - Stati Uniti d'America, 1979).

Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Economista industriale presso il Ministero per l'Industria e il Commercio (1976-1988); Capo della Divisione regionale e internazionale per la cooperazione e il monitoraggio presso il Ministero per l'industria e il commercio (1988-1998); Direttore della Divisione per la pianificazione presso il Ministero per l'Industria e il Commercio (1998-2002); Segretario permanente presso il Ministero per l'Industria e il Commercio (2002-2004); Vice Segretario generale dell'*East African Community* (2004-2006).

Dal 2006 è ambasciatore in Germania, ove risiede.

Parla l'inglese e lo kiswahili

[00840-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI UGANDA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. NYINE S. BITAHWA

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uganda to the Holy See. I appreciate the greetings which you have conveyed on behalf of His Excellency Mr Yoweri Museveni, President of the Republic, and I gladly reciprocate with my own good wishes and the assurance of my prayers for His Excellency and all the people of Uganda.

The Holy See establishes diplomatic relations with States with a view to achieving mutual cooperation for the spiritual and material good of their populations. In this regard, the efforts made in your country in the struggle against poverty and its underlying causes are most encouraging. Human development, through the availability of employment, suitable housing and the extension of educational opportunities, is an indispensable factor in the economic and social progress of a nation. Much has been achieved in Uganda in the fields of education, development and health care, especially in the struggle against HIV/AIDS with dedicated attention to those affected and a successful policy of prevention based on continence and the promotion of faithfulness in marriage. True to her commitment to preach love of God and neighbour, the Catholic Church will continue to cooperate with civil authorities, especially in these areas which help to better the human condition.

Mr Ambassador, you have spoken of your people's joy at seeing the culmination of efforts to formalize peace agreements and to bring to a conclusion the long years of warfare marked by cruel and senseless violence. The Church, in view of her call to enlighten consciences, cannot but express her joy at what has been achieved, and her earnest hope that conditions of full security will soon prevail, allowing all displaced people to return to their homes and resume a peaceful and productive existence. In this regard, I wish to convey the Holy See's appreciation to all who have raised their voice against violence and hatred, and to all who have contributed to a negotiated search for peace. I encourage all involved to take part generously in the task of repair and rebuilding after so many years of turmoil and abandonment. That this task is taking place amid fears of a world-wide food shortage and rising prices should be a further stimulus to dedication and perseverance in consolidating peace, reconciliation and reconstruction. I trust that the population's strong desire for peace will inspire the Government to continue to carry out its regional responsibilities and to do all that is in its power to ensure stability and reconciliation throughout the region, where lasting peace will only be possible when all parties involved adhere to international agreements and commit themselves to full respect for national borders. Much has to be done in these years but new hope has arisen for the people of Northern Uganda and their neighbours. May Almighty God assist them in their efforts to begin life anew.

No nation today is free from the influence of globalization with its benefits and its challenges. This phenomenon facilitates trade opportunities, access to information and the communication of values. Unfortunately, it can also promote superficial lifestyles and attitudes that undermine healthy customs based on moral truth and virtue. Men and women of goodwill in Africa rightly reject destructive outlooks which are associated with greed, corruption and the many forms of personal and social disintegration. Democracy and the rule of law are not nurtured by materialism, individualism and moral relativism but by integrity and mutual confidence, especially when sustained by committed and selfless leaders who are willing to offer their service to their fellow citizens for the building up of the common good. It is my fervent prayer that the genuine benefits of contemporary culture will enrich the existence of all Ugandans in harmony with what is true and healthy in the values that have been transmitted from generation to generation.

In this regard the country you represent, Mr Ambassador, embodies many important characteristics found in African culture, such as: a respectful attitude to parental authority and a religious way of seeing important moments of human existence, promoting deep respect for the dignity of every human life from conception to natural death. This is the rich background in which generations of Africans have been educated and from which the seed of the Christian Gospel has produced abundant fruits. The Catholic Church appreciates this heritage for its own sake and because of its harmonious relationship with fundamental truths of the natural moral order and with basic tenets of the faith. I assure you, Mr Ambassador, that the Church will continue to play her part in the defence and promotion of these principles. She sees it as her mission to consolidate and complement them in the marvellous plenitude of the Gospel.

Your Excellency, I have spoken of topics of essential interest both to State and Church and areas in which undoubtedly cooperation will continue to bear fruit for a better future for all Ugandans. The various departments

of the Roman Curia will be happy to assist you in your mission as your country's representative to the Holy See. I am pleased to assure you of my prayers as you begin your mandate and I invoke Almighty God's abundant blessings upon you and your family, and upon the people of Uganda.

S.E. il Sig. Nyine S. BitahwaAmbasciatore di Uganda presso la Santa Sede

È nato a Bushenyi il 28 febbraio 1945. È sposato e ha tre figli.

Laureato in economia (*Higher School of Economics*, Belgrado 1970), ha successivamente conseguito un *master* nella stessa materia (Università di Belgrado, 1978).

Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario della Pubblica Amministrazione (1980-1982); *Tutor* per le materie economiche presso l'Istituto delle Chiese Evangeliche di Germania (1983); Consulente per l'Aiuto allo Sviluppo presso la Chiesa Evangelico-Luterana di Kiel, Germania (1986-1996); Direttore del Seminario di «Partnership» Rukararwe per lo Sviluppo Rurale, Bushenyi, Uganda (1986-1996 e 2001-2007); Membro del Parlamento Nazionale (1996-2001); Fondatore della *HEIM Company Limited* (2004).

Attualmente è ambasciatore in Germania, ove risiede.

Parla inglese, tedesco, serbo, croato, kiswahili, lugana, runyankole, rutoro e rukiga.

[00841-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI LIBERIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. WESLEY MOMO JOHNSON

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Liberia to the Holy See. I would like to express my gratitude for the good wishes that you bring from your President, Mrs Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. Please convey to Her Excellency my cordial greetings and assure her of my continued prayers for all the people of your nation.

Let me assure you, Mr Ambassador, that the Holy See values its diplomatic links with your country, and looks forward to developing them further in the years ahead. As the international community strives to fulfil its humanitarian obligations towards the people of Africa, the Holy See regards with particular concern the many citizens of Liberia who were left destitute by the violent conflict that ravaged your country for so many years. After two years of stable elected government, significant progress has been made in the immense task of reconstruction. It was with satisfaction that I learned of the decision by the International Monetary Fund last November to take steps towards cancelling Liberia's debt. This is good news indeed, and it is greatly to be hoped that recent signs of economic growth will be sustained in the years to come. After decades of war and instability, the people of your country deserve to be delivered from the poverty, food insecurity, and unemployment that have afflicted them for so long.

I am sure your people realize that a peaceful and prosperous future can only be attained if a serious attempt is made to acknowledge past failures and to heal the wounds inflicted in the course of the civil war. The "truth and reconciliation process" in Liberia, as in other African countries, is a courageous and necessary step along the path to national renewal, and if it is pursued with integrity and determination, it can only lead to a strengthening of the values on which civilized society depends. When the people of a nation have witnessed violence, mismanagement and corruption, practised with impunity at the highest levels of society, it is not easy to regain trust in the machinery of government. Indeed, it is tempting to withdraw from national life altogether, seeking only to promote one's particular interests or those of one's region or ethnic group. Such partisan attitudes must be overcome by a renewed commitment to promote the common good of all citizens, a profound respect for all members of society, irrespective of ethnic origin or political allegiance, and a willingness to contribute one's own gifts and resources so as to bring about the greater well-being and prosperity of others.

In my World Day of Peace Message at the start of this year, I underlined the importance of the family as a fundamental building block in society, one where the values essential for peaceful coexistence can be learned and then transmitted to future generations. From the responsible and definitive "yes" of a man and a woman, and the conscious "yes" of the children who gradually join the family, its members give their consent to the building up of the common good. This is what makes it possible for the wider community to prosper, locally, nationally, and even internationally (cf. *Message for the 2008 World Day of Peace*, 6). I know that the people of Africa place a high value on maintaining family bonds, and I encourage your Government to ensure that public policy continues to assist and strengthen the family in every way. Only thus will firm foundations be laid for renewing the social infrastructure that has been so badly damaged by decades of violent conflict.

You can be sure, Mr Ambassador, that the Church in Liberia is eager to contribute to the building up of family life, and to the provision of education and health care that are so sorely needed throughout the country. I greatly appreciate President Johnson-Sirleaf's words of praise for the Church's activity in these areas throughout Liberia's history, and indeed for the courageous witness of the martyrs who dedicated themselves to serving the country even at the cost of their lives. The many devoted men and women – priests, religious and lay faithful – who carry out their apostolate in your country today are no less committed to the people they serve, and to the promotion of justice, peaceful coexistence and reconciliation between the warring factions of the recent past.

The educational apostolate is perhaps their most significant investment in Liberia's future. Many of your children and young people have been traumatized by the experience of war, some of them forced to become soldiers and to abandon their education, resulting in low levels of literacy across the population. The Church in such circumstances seeks to offer the people hope, to give them faith in the future, and to show them that they are loved and cared for, to lead them, in other words, towards an encounter with Christ the Saviour of humanity. In this way, Your Excellency, I am confident that the cordial relations existing between Liberia and the Holy See will bear abundant fruit for the growth and increasing prosperity of your beloved country for many years to come.

In offering my best wishes for the success of your mission, I would like to assure you that the various departments of the Roman Curia are ready to provide help and support in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon Your Excellency, your family and all the people of Liberia, I cordially invoke God's abundant blessings.

S.E. il Sig. Wesley Momo JohnsonAmbasciatore di Liberia presso la Santa Sede

È nato a Banjor, Lower Virginia (Contea di Montserrado), il 27 maggio 1944. È sposato e ha otto figli.

Ottenuto il baccalaureato in Scienze, Amministrazione aziendale e Ragioneria nel St. Francis college (Brooklyn, New York, 1975), si è laureato in Amministrazione aziendale (Long Island University, New York, 1977) e ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Auditor dell'*Old Colony Newport National Bank* a Providence, Stati Uniti d'America (1978-1981); Console Generale di Liberia a New York (1980-1981); Membro fondatore e Vice Presidente del Partito Popolare Progressista (PPP) e del Partito Popolare Unito (UPP) (1980 e 1984); Membro dell'Assemblea Legislativa di transizione (1990-1994), Senior Partner della *Nimely & Associates, CPA, Inc.* (1994-2003); Ambasciatore in Egitto (1997-2001); docente di Amministrazione e Ragioneria presso l'Università di Liberia (AME) Zion University, United Methodist University (2001-2003); Vice Presidente del Governo Nazionale di transizione (2003-2006).

Dal 2006 è ambasciatore a Londra, ove risiede.

[00842-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL CIAD PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. HISSEIN BRAHIM TAHA

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

J'accueille avec plaisir Votre Excellence au Vatican à l'occasion de la présentation des Lettres qui L'accréditent comme Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire du Tchad près le Saint-Siège et je la remercie de m'avoir

transmis le message courtois de Son Excellence Monsieur Idriss Deby Itno, Président de la République. En retour, je vous saurais gré de bien vouloir Lui exprimer mes vœux les meilleurs pour sa personne et pour le peuple tchadien tout entier, souhaitant que tous puissent connaître la paix et la prospérité.

En effet, la recherche de la paix et de la sécurité pour tous doit être une préoccupation constante et première pour les responsables des Nations. Sans l'établissement d'une paix durable il ne peut y avoir de développement authentique. À la suite de l'appel que j'ai lancé le 6 février dernier en faveur des populations du Tchad, je souhaite donc que se réalise sans tarder une authentique réconciliation nationale et que la solidarité internationale contribue à aider efficacement les personnes qui sont dans le besoin. Que les responsables chargés de guider les peuples de cette région fassent tout ce qui est en leur pouvoir afin d'arrêter la violence et de créer ainsi des circonstances favorables qui permettront à tous de vivre dans la paix et dans la dignité ! Ma pensée se tourne aussi vers les nombreux réfugiés qui ont trouvé asile dans votre pays. Que les efforts faits pour soutenir ces familles, qui vivent dans des conditions parfois dramatiques, les aident à retrouver une situation où leurs droits humains fondamentaux soient réellement garantis.

Dans cette perspective, il est nécessaire que, grâce à une saine gestion, les ressources économiques du pays soient toujours mises au service d'un progrès social effectif qui donne à la population de voir ses justes aspirations se réaliser. Pour consolider la stabilité et l'unité de la nation, le souci du bien commun impose de répartir avec justice et équité les richesses du pays, en tenant compte plus particulièrement des personnes qui se trouvent en marge du progrès social et économique.

La qualité des relations entre les communautés religieuses qui vivent au Tchad, particulièrement entre les chrétiens et les musulmans, est un élément important sur le chemin de la paix et de la réconciliation. Chacun doit pouvoir exprimer sa foi sans crainte et suivre la voix de sa conscience dans le choix de sa religion. Je me réjouis de savoir, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, que dans votre pays, malgré les difficultés qui peuvent se présenter, les chrétiens et les musulmans cherchent à consolider des relations de respect et de compréhension réciproques. Je souhaite que ces relations contribuent au bien commun et à l'édification d'une société harmonieuse et pacifiée. Pour résoudre les incompréhensions, le dialogue doit toujours demeurer le chemin qui permet d'éviter tout recours à la violence.

Comme vous l'avez relevé, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, l'engagement de l'Église catholique au service de la société tchadienne, sans distinction d'origine ni de religion, recouvre de nombreux domaines, tels que la santé, l'éducation et le développement. Par ses œuvres sociales, la communauté catholique manifeste son souci de promouvoir la dignité de chaque personne. Dans cette perspective, je voudrais souligner de manière particulière l'action de l'Église en faveur de l'éducation et de la formation des jeunes, grâce notamment aux écoles catholiques, qui tiennent une place appréciée dans le système éducatif tchadien. Par ces écoles, qui sont des lieux où les jeunes de religions et de milieux sociaux différents apprennent à vivre ensemble dans le respect mutuel, l'Église entend lutter contre toute forme de pauvreté et contribuer à l'édification d'une société toujours plus fraternelle et plus solidaire.

Au terme de cette rencontre, permettez-moi, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, de saluer par votre entremise les Évêques du Tchad ainsi que tous les membres de la communauté catholique. Je les assure de ma proximité spirituelle et je les encourage à demeurer fermes dans la foi et courageux dans les épreuves qu'ils partagent avec leurs compatriotes, témoignant ainsi de leur engagement à construire ensemble une société réconciliée.

Au moment où vous inaugurez votre noble mission, sûr que vous trouverez toujours un accueil attentif auprès de mes collaborateurs, je vous offre, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, mes vœux cordiaux pour son heureux accomplissement, afin que se poursuivent et se développent des relations harmonieuses entre le Saint-Siège et le Tchad.

Sur Votre Excellence, sur sa famille et sur ses collaborateurs, ainsi que sur les Responsables et sur tous les habitants du Tchad, j'invoque de grand cœur l'abondance des Bénédiction divines.

S.E. il Sig. Hissein Brahim TahaAmbasciatore del Ciad presso la Santa Sede

È nato ad Abéché il 1° novembre 1951. È sposato e ha sei figli.

Diplomato presso l'*Institut des Langues et Civilisations Orientales de Paris* (1978), ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Consigliere presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1979-1989); Direttore di Gabinetto del Ministro degli Affari Esteri (1990-maggio 1991); Primo Consigliere di Ambasciata a Riad (giugno 1991-2001); Ambasciatore a Taipei (2001-2006).

Dal 2006 è ambasciatore a Parigi, ove risiede.

Parla francese, inglese e arabo.

[00843-03.01] [Texte original: Français]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL BANGLADESH PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. DEBAPRIYA BHATTACHARYA

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to receive you today as you present the Letters of Credence whereby His Excellency President Iajuddin Ahmed has appointed you Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the Holy See. I would ask you to convey my cordial greetings to him and to the members of the Government, together with an assurance of my good wishes for the well-being of all your fellow citizens.

Established thirty-five years ago, diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Bangladesh have been strengthened by a mutual concern for promoting goodwill in a world increasingly more connected, yet not without signs of new divisions and deeply troubling forms of violence and injustice. These phenomena present new challenges to the whole human family, eliciting an acute sense that more vigorous international cooperation is needed to ensure that the aspirations of all, especially the poor and the weak, are given full voice (cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 43). Mr Ambassador, I am confident that your country's active participation in bodies such as the United Nations Organization will contribute to the "culture of peace" which Bangladesh desires to build at home and abroad. By engaging in these conversations at the international level, your country will play a role in harmonizing the actions of the global community to attain the common objectives of peace and development (cf. *Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization*, 18 April 2008).

As Your Excellency has suggested, a robust democracy needs more than a set of rules to be sustainable; it requires citizens to embrace the underlying values which inspire democratic institutions and procedures, such as the dignity of the human person, a genuine respect for human rights, and a commitment to the common good as the guiding criterion for political life (cf. *Centesimus Annus*, 46). By striving to enhance a general consensus about the central importance of these fundamental values, the leaders of your nation will pave the way for stable governance and the harmonious coexistence of all who call Bangladesh their home. As your country prepares to hold general elections within the current year, I am confident that its citizens will reflect upon and renew their appreciation for the moral underpinnings which make authentic democracy possible. Social advancement and cohesion requires all – individuals, families, elected officials, civil servants and professionals – to embrace willingly their responsibility to contribute to community life with integrity, honesty and a sense of service (cf. *Pacem in Terris*, 55; *Centesimus Annus*, 46). In particular, those running for public office must be willing to set aside personal interests to safeguard the common good of the people whom they represent and serve. Your Excellency has pointed to the challenge of rebuilding representative institutions which have deteriorated despite the country's observance of democratic processes in selecting recent governments. This crucial task of restoring confidence in these and other democratic institutions will call for strong leadership on the part of men and women who are trustworthy, fair and competent. No doubt the people of Bangladesh will look for these qualities in their candidates as they exercise the right to vote in a polling process that itself reflects the very values upon which democracy depends (cf. *Centesimus Annus*, 46).

A vibrant educational system is essential to strong democracies. Both the State and the Church have respective

roles in helping families impart wisdom, knowledge and moral virtue to their children, so that they will come to recognize the dignity common to all men and women, including those belonging to cultures and religions different from their own. The Church seeks to contribute to this end by establishing schools that attend not only to the cognitive development of children, but the spiritual and moral as well. Insofar as these and other faith-based schools perform the public service of training young people in tolerance and respect, they should therefore receive the support they need, including financial assistance, so as to benefit the entire human family.

Yours is a country that has made significant strides in economic growth over the last several years. Yet this has not always translated into a proportionate alleviation of poverty and an increase in opportunities for employment. Long-term stability in the economic sector is organically linked to other spheres of civic life, including public institutions and a well-functioning educational system. The former promotes the efficiency and transparency that foster economic growth (cf. *Centesimus Annus*, 48), and the latter is "society's most valuable tool for furthering development and economic progress" (*Populorum Progressio*, 35). For this reason, a nation's economic goals must always be placed within the broader horizon of its moral, civil and cultural growth (cf. *Centesimus Annus*, 29). Furthermore, lasting economic development occurs as a result of the dynamic interaction between private initiative, public authority and the support of international organizations (cf. *ibid.*, 10; 32; 49). For her part, the Church, in her constant solicitude for the integral good of the human person, echoes mankind's aspirations to secure the material goods necessary for corporal and spiritual well-being (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 14). Indeed, she is firmly convinced that development is ultimately a question of peace, "because it helps to achieve what is good for others and for the human community as a whole" (*Message for the 1987 World Day of Peace*, 7).

Mr Ambassador, as you begin your service, I renew my good wishes for the success of your mission. I assure you that the various offices of the Holy See stand ready to assist you in fulfilling your duties. Upon you, your family and all the people of Bangladesh, I cordially invoke God's blessings of strength and peace.

S.E. il Sig. Debapriya Bhattacharya Ambasciatore del Bangladesh presso la Santa Sede

È nato nel 1956. È sposato e ha una figlia.

Laureato in economia presso il *Plekhanov Institute of National Economy* (Mosca), si è successivamente specializzato nella medesima materia presso l'università *Queen Elizabeth* (Oxford), presso il *Centre for global development* (Washington DC) e presso altri Istituti in Europa e in Asia.

Ha collaborato con diverse organizzazioni internazionali, quali: *World Bank*, *Asian Development Bank*, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, UNCTAD, ILO, *World economic forum*.

È stato direttore della *Janata Bank* (1996-2000), *Senior research fellow* presso il *Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies* (Bids) e direttore esecutivo del *Center for Policy Dialogue* (CPD).

È stato anche membro delle seguenti istituzioni: comitato consultivo di politica macroeconomica presso il Ministro delle Finanze; *Task Force* per gli aiuti internazionali (1991) e del Piano Quinquennale presso il Ministero per la Pianificazione (1997-2002); Comitato per la definizione della Politica Industriale presso il Ministero dell'Industria (1999); Comitato nazionale per l'utilizzazione del gas presso il Ministero dell'Energia; Comitato *Vision 2020* presso l'Ufficio del Primo Ministro; Comitato consultivo sul *World Trade Organization* (WTO).

Attualmente è rappresentante del Bangladesh presso l'ufficio delle Nazioni Unite a Ginevra, ove risiede.

[00844-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI BIELORUSSIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. SERGEI F. ALEINIK

Your Excellency,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters of Credence by which you are

appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the Holy See. I wish to express my gratitude for the message of greeting which you bring from President Aleksandr Lukashenko, and I ask you to convey to him my own good wishes and the assurance of my heartfelt affection for the people of your country.

Mr Ambassador, I am grateful for the kind words which you have shared with me concerning the progress that has been made in Belarus. In this regard, I am also appreciative of the many encouraging signs and challenges that are present in the country today. Please be assured that the Holy See will continue to support your nation in her efforts to affirm proper and legitimate aspirations for freedom and in her labours to foster the democratic process as a part of the great family of free and sovereign European nations.

For decades now Europe has actively sought to construct a future of peace and progress by removing walls of separation and overcoming painful divisions. This noble project, motivated by a sense of shared responsibility for the common destiny of European peoples, is of enormous value. Achieving such an ambitious goal is not easy; in fact, it requires all the parties involved to engage in constant, frank and reasonable dialogue, based on genuine solidarity and respectful of the legitimate aspirations, historical circumstances and diversity of others. To this end, every nation on the continent, Belarus included, is called to contribute to the construction of a common European home in which borders are seen as places of encounter and not as lines of division, or worse, as insurmountable walls. Indeed, the history, the spiritual and cultural roots and the geography of Belarus give her an integral role to play in this process. That which unites the nations of Europe is far greater than any political, economic and cultural factors that divide them. To give new impetus to its own history, Europe must "recognize and reclaim with creative fidelity those fundamental values, acquired through a decisive contribution of Christianity, which can be summarized in the affirmation of the transcendent dignity of the human person, the value of reason, freedom and democracy, the constitutional state and the distinction between political life and religion" (*Ecclesia in Europa*, 109).

The newfound independence of your country and the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with the Holy See have resulted in the development of a good working relationship between the institutions of the State and those of the Church. These relations are marked by the openness of both parties towards strengthening and improving these bonds, which in turn encourage the well-being and prosperity of the country. I am grateful for Your Excellency's kind words regarding the Church's activity in your country, and I am certain that the Government of Belarus will continue to assist the Catholic Church in addressing her needs. This year the Catholic Church in Belarus will mark two significant Anniversaries: the two hundred and twenty-fifth Anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese of Mohylev and the two hundred and tenth Anniversary of the Diocese of Minsk. In this regard one must acknowledge with gratitude the recognition your country has already given to the Church's spiritual, cultural and historic contribution to the life of the nation.

Church and State, in their own particular ways and in the light of their specific missions, are at the service of mankind. It is necessary therefore that they cooperate with one another, always respecting the autonomy and competence of each, in ways that will assist men and women in obtaining both material and spiritual prosperity. Such cooperation can only contribute to the strengthening of ever more dynamic democratic institutions. Considered as an integral part of the life and destiny of Belarus, the Catholic Church for her part looks forward to continuing to exercise her role in society through her various structures and institutions (such as the Episcopal Conference, dioceses, parishes and religious communities). These entities seek only to serve men and women and all of society through the transmission of universal values inspired by the Gospel. In this regard the Catholic Church in Belarus, from both the Latin and Byzantine Traditions, does not ask for special privileges but only to contribute to the growth and development of the country. All she requests is the freedom to be able to fulfil serenely the mandate received from the divine Founder in service of his creation. In this same spirit and with the same sense of mutual responsibility, the Catholics of Belarus are committed to moving forward in the area of ecumenical dialogue, especially with the Orthodox Church in your country. It is my prayer that ecumenical contacts will continue to develop in peace, harmony and fruitful dialogue, contributing in this way to an ever greater social harmony.

Mr Ambassador, as you begin your mission to the Holy See, I offer you wholehearted good wishes, and I assure you of the readiness of the offices of the Roman Curia to assist you. Upon yourself, your co-workers, your family

and all the beloved people of Belarus I invoke abundant divine blessings.

S.E. il Signor Sergei F. Aleinik, Ambasciatore di Bielorussia presso la Santa Sede

È nato a Minsk il 28 gennaio 1965. È sposato e ha due figli.

Laureato in lingue straniere presso il *Minsk State Pedagogical Institute* (1986), ha successivamente conseguito un dottorato presso l'accademia diplomatica del Ministero degli Affari Esteri d'Austria (1993).

Ha ricoperto, tra gli altri, i seguenti incarichi: Terzo Segretario presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1992-1993); Capo Sezione del Dipartimento consolare del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1993-1994); Vice Capo del Protocollo presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1994-1995); Console e Incaricato d'Affari a.i. presso l'Ambasciata a L'Aia nonché Rappresentante della Bielorussia presso l'Organizzazione per la proibizione delle armi chimiche (1995-1999); Capo del Protocollo presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1999-2002).

Dal 2002 è Rappresentante Permanente presso l'ufficio delle Nazioni Unite a Ginevra, ove risiede.

Parla il tedesco e l'inglese.

[00845-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI GUINEA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. ALEXANDRE CÉCÉ LOUA

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

Je suis heureux de vous accueillir alors que vous présentez les Lettres qui vous accréditent comme Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire de la République de Guinée près le Saint-Siège. Je vous remercie des salutations cordiales que vous m'avez exprimées de la part de Son Excellence Monsieur Lansana Conté, Président de la République. Vous voudrez bien lui transmettre mes vœux les meilleurs pour sa personne ainsi que pour le peuple guinéen tout entier, à qui je souhaite de vivre dans la concorde et dans la paix, afin que toutes les familles connaissent une vie digne et prospère.

Comme vous l'avez souligné dans votre discours, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, le dialogue entre les cultures et entre les religions est un objectif important, et je me réjouis de savoir que, dans votre pays, la qualité des relations entre les musulmans et les chrétiens permet une collaboration habituelle, notamment pour les questions qui concernent le bien commun de la Nation. De plus, la solidarité entre tous les citoyens est une condition nécessaire et primordiale pour que la société puisse bénéficier des fruits d'un progrès réel et durable. Toutefois, pour préserver la paix sociale, il est du devoir de l'État d'assurer, par son engagement effectif, une gestion juste et équitable des biens matériels, dans le respect des droits légitimes de chacun, et de favoriser la bonne entente entre toutes les communautés humaines du pays.

En cette année où nous célébrons le sixantième anniversaire de la *Déclaration universelle des Droits de l'Homme*, il est particulièrement opportun que la solidarité se manifeste aussi, de manière efficace, entre les nations et que « tous les responsables de la vie internationale agissent de concert et soient prêts à travailler en toute bonne foi, dans le respect du droit, pour promouvoir la solidarité dans les zones les plus fragiles de la planète » (*Discours à l'ONU*, 18 avril 2008). Dans cet esprit, je souhaite qu'après les douloureuses épreuves qu'a connues votre région, une coopération active consolide sa stabilité et encourage la fraternité entre les peuples, formant aussi le vœu que la communauté internationale soutienne les efforts des pays concernés.

D'autre part, pour accéder aux aspirations légitimes des individus et des familles, le développement intégral de la Nation doit s'inspirer des valeurs morales universelles, qui permettent de ne pas perdre de vue l'origine et la finalité des biens matériels, et de réaliser une société toujours plus juste et plus solidaire. Dans cette perspective, il est nécessaire d'accorder une sollicitude particulière aux personnes qui connaissent de nombreuses formes de pauvreté ou de fragilité. Le devoir de respecter le droit de toute personne à vivre dans la

dignité est fondé sur la volonté même du Créateur, qui a donné à tous une commune dignité transcendante.

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, je voudrais aussi vous assurer que l'Église catholique veut contribuer au développement intégral de la société par ses œuvres d'éducation, de santé et de promotion sociale, que je sais appréciées de la population. Vous savez en particulier l'attention de l'Église à la promotion des personnes par l'éducation de la jeunesse. De même, il importe d'être attentif à la santé de chacun, notamment par une formation et une information sur les pandémies liées aux comportements des individus. Par cet engagement, la communauté catholique entend travailler au bien commun, à la fraternité et à la consolidation de la paix dans la justice. Je souhaite que, grâce à des relations toujours plus confiantes entre l'Église et l'État, ces œuvres soient soutenues avec toujours plus de générosité, au bénéfice de tous les Guinéens, sans distinction d'origine ni de religion.

Je profite de cette occasion pour vous demander de saluer très chaleureusement la communauté catholique de Guinée rassemblée autour de ses Évêques. Je l'encourage à être toujours dans la société guinéenne un ferment de réconciliation et de paix, afin que tous puissent vivre dans la convivialité et développer des liens de collaboration toujours plus fraternels.

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, vous inaugurez aujourd'hui la noble mission de représenter votre pays auprès du Saint-Siège. Veuillez accepter les vœux très cordiaux que je forme pour son heureuse réussite et soyez sûr de toujours trouver auprès de mes collaborateurs la compréhension et le soutien nécessaires!

Sur vous-même, sur votre famille, sur vos collaborateurs, sur tous vos compatriotes et sur les dirigeants de votre pays, j'invoque de grand cœur l'abondance des Bénédiction divines.

S.E. il Sig. Alexandre Cécé Loua, Ambasciatore di Guinea presso la Santa Sede

È nato a Zérékoré (Conakry) nel 1956. È sposato e ha tre figli.

Laureato in Legge (Università di Conakry, 1980), dopo alcuni anni dedicati all'attività di magistrato e di docente universitario, nel 1986 è stato nominato Capo della Divisione Affari Legali presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri, ricoprendo successivamente i seguenti incarichi: Direttore nazionale per gli Affari giuridici e consolari presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri, con rango di Ambasciatore (1994-1996); Ambasciatore in Jugoslavia (1996-1998); Consigliere di Gabinetto presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1998-2001), Ambasciatore in Sud Africa (2001-2007).

Attualmente è Ambasciatore a Berlino, ove risiede.

Parla francese, inglese, guerzé, malinké e susu.

[00846-03.01] [Texte original: Français]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DELLO SRI LANKA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. TIKIRI BANDARA MADUWEGEDERA

Your Excellency,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to the Vatican today and to accept the Letters of Credence whereby His Excellency President Mahinda Rajapaksa has appointed you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the Holy See. I thank you for the greetings you have extended on his behalf, and I ask you to assure His Excellency of my prayers for the peace and well-being of the entire nation. Our meeting today is a propitious occasion for me to affirm my deep respect for the people of Sri Lanka and its rich heritage, as well as my desire to strengthen further the diplomatic ties between your country and the Holy See.

Mr Ambassador, I am grateful for the appreciation you have expressed on behalf of your fellow citizens for the Catholic Church's ongoing charitable activity in your nation. In particular, you have highlighted the Church's contribution to the relief efforts after the devastating tsunami struck your nation in 2004. Such action is a concrete example of the Church's willing and prompt response to the mission she has received to serve those most in need (cf. *Lk 10:25-37*; *Deus Caritas Est*, 29). I wish to assure your Government that the Church will continue in her efforts to reach out with compassion to all, and I commend any future measures which will help guarantee that Catholic hospitals, schools and charitable agencies can continue to care for the sick, the young and the vulnerable regardless of ethnic or religious background (cf. *ibid.*, 30)

Catholics in Sri Lanka, together with other Christians, are united with many Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims in the ardent longing for lasting peace in the country and a definitive end to long-standing grievances. Sadly, violence continues to take its toll on the populace, causing grave concern to the Holy See and the international community. Frank and sincere negotiations, regardless of the investment of time and resources they require, are the only sure means to achieving reconciliation and addressing problems that have long hindered peaceful coexistence in Sri Lanka. In particular, acts of terrorism are never justifiable and always constitute an affront to humanity (cf. *Message for the 2002 World Day of Peace*, 4). Indeed, arbitrary attacks fail to give effective voice to the interests of the various groups on whose behalf they are purportedly carried out. They can regrettably provoke indiscriminate reactions that similarly place the innocent in harm's way. Such cycles of violence obfuscate the truth, perpetuate a volley of accusations and counter-accusations, and leave people disillusioned and despondent. For this reason, the struggle against terrorism must always be carried out with respect for human rights and the rule of law (cf. *Message for the 2004 World Day of Peace*, 8). I exhort all parties to spare no effort in creating a climate of trust, forgiveness and openness by listening to one another and showing reasonable respect for each other's legitimate aspirations.

Your Excellency has also drawn attention to the disturbing trend of recruiting children to engage in combat or in terrorist activities. Such practices must be condemned at the outset, for they inevitably stunt the moral development of children, leaving scars that last a lifetime (cf. *Message for the 1996 World Day of Peace*, 3) and tearing the moral fibre of society itself. Jesus admonished men and women to avoid causing scandal towards these "little ones" (cf. *Lk 17:2*), even instructing adults to imitate their virtue and purity (cf. *Mt 18:2*). I implore leaders in your country and throughout the world to remain vigilant so that no compromise will be made in this regard. Children and adolescents must receive a solid formation in moral values today which will strengthen the social fabric of your country tomorrow. Indeed, an appreciation of these values and an attitude of respect for others are just as important as any technical skills young people may acquire in view of their professional vocation.

Initiatives aimed at achieving peace need to be rooted in a proper understanding of the human person and the inviolability of his or her innate rights. As I recently remarked, the "universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights all serve as guarantees safeguarding human dignity" (*Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization*, 18 April 2008). Your Excellency has pointed to new mechanisms which have been set in motion to monitor human rights and redress humanitarian issues in Sri Lanka. In this regard, it is encouraging to note your Government's decision to set up a special Commission of Inquiry for the purpose of investigating cases where there seems to have been a disregard for justice and human rights. It is hoped that every effort will be made to ensure that the Commission completes its work expeditiously so that the truth about all of these cases may come to light. I think in particular of Father Jimbrown and his assistant, whose whereabouts are still unknown, almost two years after their disappearance. The Government's interest in these cases reflects the responsibility of political authorities to guarantee an ordered and upright community life based on the principles of justice and directed towards the attainment of the common good (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 74).

Mr Ambassador, as you assume your new responsibilities, I offer you my good wishes for the successful fulfilment of your mission, confident that the bonds of friendship which exist between the Holy See and Sri Lanka will be further strengthened in the years to come. I assure you that the various offices and departments of the Holy See are ready to offer their resources in a spirit of collaboration. Upon Your Excellency, your family and the people of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

S.E. il Sig. Tikiri Bandara Maduwegedera, Ambasciatore dello Sri Lanka presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 22 ottobre 1948. È sposato e ha due figli.

Laureato in filosofia (Università di Ceylon, Peradeniya, 1972), è stato docente presso la medesima Università come *Assitant Lecturer* in Filosofia (1973-1975). Entrato nella carriera diplomatica nel 1975, ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario (1975-1976) e successivamente Consigliere del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1976-1979); Terzo Segretario di Ambasciata a Pechino (1979-1980); Primo Segretario di Ambasciata a New Delhi (1980-1983); Vice Direttore presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1983-1985); Vice Capo del Protocollo del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1985-1987); Ministro Consigliere di Ambasciata a Mosca (1987-1991); Direttore presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1991-1993); Ministro di Ambasciata a Riyadh (1993-1997); Ambasciatore in Oman (1997-2000); Capo del Protocollo del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (2000-2002); Ambasciatore in Sud Africa (2002-2006); Segretario aggiunto del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (2006-2007).

Attualmente è Ambasciatore a Berlino, ove risiede.

Parla l'inglese e il francese.

[00847-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI NIGERIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. OBED WADZANI

Your Excellency,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Vatican and to receive the Letters of Credence that accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the Holy See. I thank you for the courteous greetings and sentiments of good will which you have expressed on behalf of His Excellency, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, President of the Republic. I gladly reciprocate them, and I ask you kindly to convey my personal gratitude and good wishes to His Excellency, to the civil authorities and to the Nigerian people.

It is not only a humanitarian duty, but a source of real joy to come to the aid of those in need. Indeed, assisting others in a spirit of respect, integrity and impartiality is a rich, formative experience both for individuals and societies. In this regard, the size, population, economic resources and generosity of your people make Nigeria one of the most influential countries on the continent and give her a unique opportunity to support other African countries in achieving the well-being and stability they deserve. The nation has contributed to the many efforts to bring social reconciliation to other lands through its peacekeeping forces, material aid and diplomatic efforts. I encourage Nigeria to continue to use her considerable human and material resources in ways conducive to the peace and prosperity of neighbouring countries. Indeed, when this assistance is provided with both integrity and sacrifice it brings honour to a country's citizens and government.

In this same spirit, support must be given at home and abroad to all who seek to alleviate human suffering through research and practical assistance. The Church is confident that the services she provides in the sectors of education, social programmes and health care will continue to have a positive impact on the struggle against poverty and disease. She is a constant advocate for life from conception until natural death. As you are well aware, the Church takes seriously her part in the campaign against the spread of HIV/AIDS by fostering programmes which emphasize fidelity within marriage and abstinence outside of it. Catholic personnel, doctors, nurses, assistants and educators will continue to remind all men and women, and especially young people, to reaffirm family values, and to act with moral courage, based in faith, in the struggle against this disease and related conditions. At the same time she is already assisting on a practical level countless people suffering from this affliction on your continent and throughout the world.

Mr Ambassador, the people of Nigeria desire a vibrant democracy and you have mentioned some of the priorities that your country has identified as necessary steps on her way to significant growth and sustained development. These include democratic governance and the rule of law, internal security, and the efficient

administration of justice. As Your Excellency is well aware, good governance requires that elections are clearly seen to be free, fair and transparent. It also depends on internal security, always founded in the democratic ideal of respect for individual rights and the rule of law. To implement properly this building block of democracy requires public officials to address first of all the root causes of social unrest and second to form the populace in the virtues of respect and tolerance.

I am aware that, in the past, friction between different groups has given cause for concern. Conflict of this kind can often be traced to a variety of factors, including errors of administration, isolated grievances or ethnic tension. In this regard, I am pleased to note that in the last few years tensions appear to have eased. This can be seen as a true indicator of progress and a sign of hope for the future. In the promotion of understanding, reconciliation and good will among different groups, the Church continues to encourage a community spirit by working to eradicate prejudice and supporting openness towards all. She is especially interested in fostering interreligious dialogue, in the hope that a strong attitude of solidarity among religious leaders will progressively become embodied in popular nationwide expressions of peaceful acceptance, mutual understanding and cooperation.

A disturbing reality that is present in many countries today is criminal violence. Homicide, kidnapping for extortion, and the exploitation of women, children and foreign workers are some of the worst manifestations of this intolerable practice. Insecurity, distress and aggressiveness caused by family breakdown, unemployment, poverty or despair are some of the social and psychological factors behind this phenomenon. An already fragile situation is compounded by a pervasive materialistic mentality and a loss of reverence for the human person. At times, the feeling of hopelessness can lead people to search for a deceptively simple solution to their problems. Young people in such circumstances must be given every possible encouragement to seek improvement through education, extracurricular activities, voluntary assistance to others and, ideally, opportunities for employment. Corruption can follow in the wake of violent crime and has the effect of discouraging enterprise and investments, and undermining confidence in the political, judiciary and economic institutions of the nation. The dynamism Nigeria has introduced into the struggle against corruption and crime and the strengthening of the rule of law is extremely important and must be sustained and applied with equity and impartiality. I pray that politicians and social workers, professional people in the fields of economy, medicine and law, police officers and judges, and all involved in combating crime and corruption will work together diligently for the protection of life and property, supported by the loyal cooperation of all citizens. The Church will not fail to make her specific contribution by offering an integral education based on honesty, integrity and love of God and neighbour. She strives to create opportunities for young people in difficult circumstances, always reminding them that "all serious and upright human conduct is hope in action" (*Spe Salvi*, 35).

Mr Ambassador, I wish you every success in your mission and assure you of the willing cooperation of the Departments of the Roman Curia. I recall with appreciation the warm reception my predecessor, Pope John Paul II, was given on the two occasions he visited Nigeria. I pray that the fond memory of this messenger of Peace will continue to unite and inspire the Nigerian people. May Almighty God bestow upon Your Excellency, your family and the nation you represent, abundant and lasting blessings of well-being and peace!

S.E. il Sig. Obed Wadzani, Ambasciatore di Nigeria presso la Santa Sede

È nato a Lassa il 25 settembre 1960.

Laureato in Legge (*Ahmadu Bello University*, Zaria, 1984), si è specializzato in Diritto (*Nigeria Law School*, Lagos, 1985). Avvocato (*Barrister and Solic*

Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Docente presso la *Askira/UBA Local Government* (1979-1980); Consulente legale del *Nysc Secretariat* a Maiduguri (1985-1986); Avvocato presso la *Ngilari & Co.* a Maiduguri (1986-1988); Partner della *Messrs A. Ismail Gadzama & Co.* a Maiduguri (1988-2007); Consulente della *Obed Wadzani & Co.* a Maiduguri (2007-2008).

Attualmente è ambasciatore a Madrid, ove risiede.

[00848-02.01] [Original text: English]

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

Pubblichiamo di seguito il discorso che il Santo Padre Benedetto XVI ha rivolto agli Ecc.mi nuovi Ambasciatori presso la Santa Sede, al termine dello scambio delle Lettere Credenziali con ciascun Ambasciatore:

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE

Excellences,

Je suis heureux de vous accueillir au moment de la présentation des Lettres qui vous accréditent comme Ambassadeurs extraordinaires et plénipotentiaires de vos pays respectifs: la Tanzanie, l'Ouganda, le Libéria, le Tchad, le Bangladesh, la Biélorussie, la République de Guinée, le Sri Lanka et le Nigeria. Je vous remercie des paroles courtoises dont vous vous êtes faits les interprètes au nom de vos Chefs d'État. Je vous saurais gré de leur exprimer en retour mes salutations déférentes et mes souhaits les meilleurs pour leurs personnes et pour la haute mission qu'ils accomplissent au service de leur nation. Mes salutations s'adressent aussi à toutes les Autorités civiles et religieuses de vos pays, ainsi qu'à tous vos compatriotes. Votre présence aujourd'hui me donne également l'occasion d'exprimer aux communautés catholiques présentes dans vos pays mes pensées affectueuses et de les assurer de mes prières, pour qu'elles continuent avec fidélité et dévouement à témoigner du Christ, par l'annonce de l'Évangile et par leurs multiples engagements au service de tous leurs frères en humanité.

Dans le monde actuel, les responsables des Nations ont un rôle important, non seulement dans leur propre pays, mais dans les relations internationales, pour que toute personne, là où elle vit, puisse bénéficier de conditions d'existence décentes. Pour cela, la mesure primordiale en matière politique est la recherche de la justice, afin que soit toujours respectés la dignité et les droits de tout être humain, et que tous les habitants d'un pays puissent avoir part à la richesse nationale. Il en va de même sur le plan international. Mais, dans tous les cas, la communauté humaine est aussi appelée à aller au-delà de la simple justice, manifestant sa solidarité envers les peuples les plus pauvres, dans le souci d'un meilleur partage des richesses, permettant notamment aux pays qui ont des biens dans leur sol ou dans leur sous-sol d'en bénéficier en premier lieu. Les pays riches ne peuvent pas s'approprier, pour eux seuls, ce qui provient d'autres terres. Il est un devoir de justice et de solidarité que la Communauté internationale soit vigilante sur la distribution des ressources, dans une attention aux conditions propices au développement des pays qui en ont le plus besoin. De même, au-delà de la justice, il est nécessaire de développer aussi la fraternité, pour édifier des sociétés harmonieuses, où règnent la concorde et la paix, et pour régler les éventuels problèmes qui surgissent, par le dialogue et par la négociation, et non par la violence sous toutes ses formes, qui ne peut qu'atteindre les plus faibles et les plus pauvres d'entre les hommes. La solidarité et la fraternité relèvent en définitive de l'amour fondamental que nous devons porter à notre prochain, car toute personne ayant une responsabilité dans la vie publique est appelée à faire avant tout de sa mission un service de tous ses compatriotes et plus largement de tous les peuples de la planète. Pour leur part, les Églises locales ne manquent pas de faire tous les efforts possibles pour apporter leur concours au bien-être de leurs compatriotes, parfois dans des situations difficiles. Leur désir le plus cher est de poursuivre inlassablement ce service de l'homme, de tout homme, sans discrimination aucune.

Vos Chefs d'État viennent de vous confier une mission auprès du Saint-Siège qui, pour sa part, est particulièrement attentif au bien des personnes et des peuples. Au terme de notre rencontre, je tiens à vous adresser, Messieurs les Ambassadeurs, mes souhaits les meilleurs pour le service que vous êtes appelés à accomplir dans le cadre de la vie diplomatique. Que le Très-Haut vous soutienne, vous-mêmes, vos proches, vos collaborateurs et tous vos compatriotes dans l'édification d'une société pacifiée, et que descende sur chacun l'abondance des bienfaits divins.

[00849-03.01] [Texte original: Français]

[B0359-XX.02]
