



PRESS RELEASE AT the end of exchange visit of REBAC TO REPAM IN BRASILIA (BRAZIL)

Brasilia, November 18, 2017

INTRODUCTION

From 16 to 18 November 2017, in Brasilia, Brazil, a 2-day meeting between the Ecclesial Network on the Congo Basin Forest (REBAC), the Pan Amazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM) and REPAM Brazil took place.

Those who attended the event on behalf of REBAC are: HE Msgr. Louis Portella Mbuyu - Bishop of Kinkala, Episcopal Conference of Congo Brazzaville; HE Msgr Sebastien Muyengo - Bishop of Uvira, President of the Episcopal Commission on Natural Resources in the DRC; Father Samuel De Jesus Paquette - 2nd Secretary of the Justice and Peace Commission of Episcopal Conference of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM); Fr Félicien Mavougou - Executive Secretary of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Episcopal Conference of the Central African Region & Executive Secretary of REBAC; Mr Henri Muhiya - Executive Secretary of the Episcopal Commission on Natural Resources in the DRC & the Executive Secretary of REBAC; R. P. Rigobert Minani - Coordinator of the Jesuit Social Centers Network in Africa (JASCNET); Ms. Cecilia Iorio - Country Representative CAFOD, Brazil; Mr Symphorien Mande - Head of Programs CAFOD DRC.

On behalf of REPAM: His Eminence Cardinal Claudio Hummes, ofm, Archbishop Emeritus of São Paulo, President of REPAM and President of the Episcopal Commission for the Amazon, HE Most Rev. Leonardo Ulrich Stainer, Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference of Brazil, HE Msgr. Roque Paloschi, Archbishop of Porto Velho and President of the CIMI (Missionary Indigenist Council), His Excellency Erwin Krautler, Bishop Emeritus of Altamira / Xingu, Vice President of the Episcopal Commission for the Amazon and President of REPAM Brazil, HE Most Rev. Mario Antonio da Silva, Bishop of the Diocese of Roraima, His Excellency Archbishop Philip Dickmans, Bishop of Miracema do Tocantins, Mr Mauricio Lopez, Executive Secretary of REPAM and Sr. Maria Irène Lopes, Coordinator of REPAM / Brazil. About thirty REPAM delegates from the different states of Brazil took part in the Brasilia meeting.

After the meeting of the officials, the African delegation flew to Porto Velho to meet the indigenous people. This field visit to Porto Velho made it possible for the delegation to meet several communities affected by the construction of the dam and who also have land issues.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE MEETING

The main objective of the meeting was to exchange experiences between the two networks and consolidate the synergy between REBAC and REPAM on the advocacy for the safeguarding of the Amazon Basin and the Congo Basin, and to learn from REPAM how to interact with national, regional and international partners operating in different contexts and legislative environments.

For REBAC, a network born after REPAM, the meeting had three specific objectives:

- Understand and draw on the experience of REPAM, particularly on the structuring of this network, the areas of intervention, the role and involvement of the Bishops of the Amazon Church in the work of REPAM, the relations with political and economic institutions, resource mobilization, engagement at the local, national, regional and international levels.
- Identify areas of collaboration between REBAC and REPAM, as well as common advocacy topics
- Visit the REPAM partners on the ground.

CONTENT OF EXCHANGES

The exchanges focused on the following points:

- Presentation of REPAM and its various activities as well as its axes of intervention;
- Listen to field experiences from different angles and different structures of REPAM;



- Analysis of the similarities and specificities of the contexts, the challenges of REPAM and REBAC;
- Presentation of REBAC and its evolution;
- In-depth exchange of views on the issues of organization, operation of REPAM and legal representation as well as the financing of activities;
- Identification of common challenges and common advocacy actions;
- Possibility to organize a visit of REPAM delegates during a meeting of Bishops of REBAC.

SECTORS OF COLLABORATION AND COMMON ACTIONS OF ADVOCACY

Areas of collaboration and actions for joint advocacy have been identified, including:

- The protection of the Amazon and Congo forests, the issues of energy and climate change;
- The need to approach South Asia for a valuation of the forest there;
- Advocacy for the respect of human rights by multinational companies that exploit minerals, hydrocarbons, water, land and other natural resources;
- Dialogue with public institutions at different levels for a common vision and concerted action on the identified challenges;
- The exchange of experiences on alternatives to fight against hunger and poverty in the face of the harmful exploitation of nature (water, forests),
- Exchange of experiences on contents and training methods;
- Reflection on an alternative model of development taking into account not only the environment threatened by consumerism, but also the situation of the person living in the spaces to be conserved;
- The adaption of pastoral care and evangelization to tackle this new challenge of humanity and the planet, inspired by the encyclical *Laudato Si*.

COMMITMENT

Both networks are willing to continue collaborating. The President of REPAM, HE Cardinal Claudio Hummes and the Executive Secretary of REPAM, Mr. Mauricio Lopez were invitation to Africa to share their experiences directly with the bishops of the Congo Basin.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR REBAC

- The return of the mission to the Episcopal Conferences of the Congo Basin region and SECAM;
- The formalization of the national REBACs and the delimitation of the scope of REBAC actions by specifying the lines of action;
- The dissemination and popularization of *Laudato Si*;
- Preparation of a tool for popularizing REBAC issues;
- Training of REBAC members;
- Mapping actors and potentialities;
- Identification of the major problems of the Basin.

APPRECIATION

The REBAC delegation thanked REPAM for the warm welcome and for the fruitful exchanges. It also thanked REPAM for accepting the invitation of REBAC. REBAC also thanked the Episcopal Conference of Brazil.

The delegation of REBAC also thanks CAFOD for financially supporting the exchange mission.



For REBAC, the head of the delegation:

HE Mgr Louis Portella Mbuyu Bishop of Kinkala

For REPAM, the head of the delegation:

HE Cardinal Claudio Hummes, ofm
Archbishop Emeritus of São Paulo
President of REPAM and President of
Episcopal Commission for the Amazon

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