

### **The Church in Africa Marks “SECAM Day”**

The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) has observed, for the first time, its Day dubbed **SECAM DAY** at its headquarters in Accra, Ghana on July, 29, 2014.

In a speech to mark the occasion, Most Rev. Gabriel Anokye, Archbishop of Kumasi, Ghana and Second Vice-President of SECAM on behalf of the President of SECAM, Most Rev. Gabriel Mbilingi of Angola, gave brief information about the Symposium.

According to him, SECAM is a Pan-African Church organisation for organic pastoral solidarity among the Roman Catholic Bishops in Africa. It endeavours to promote collaboration and joint action and fosters communion among Episcopal Conferences of Africa in their evangelising mission and the promotion of integral human development. It was founded, exactly 45 years ago, during a meeting of the continent’s Bishops in July 1969, in Kampala, Uganda during a visit of Pope Paul VI. SECAM comprises eight Regional and 37 National Episcopal Conferences in Africa.

Archbishop Anokye said SECAM has diplomatic relations with Ghana, and was about to sign a Memorandum of Understanding for obtaining an observer status at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

He further indicated that SECAM was in the process of organising several Pan-Africa Workshops and Seminars towards the celebration of a Pan-African Year of Reconciliation which would involve other religions in Africa.

The Vice-President of SECAM, made it known that SECAM contributes to the development of Africa in the areas of social justice, governance and public policy through its Justice and Peace Commissions, Partner Agencies and other networks in various countries on the continent.

He pointed out that SECAM is currently actively involved in the Post 2015 Development Agenda being prepared by the United Nations. “ ...together with other Faith Leaders, we have developed a Position Paper and issued a common statement following the African Faith Leaders’ Summit on Post 2015 Development Agenda, held in Uganda early July 2014”, he added.

Archbishop Anokye therefore, made a passionate appeal to the Diplomatic Corps and International Development Partners for their support towards the negotiation

roundson the New Global Development Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations from September 2014 to September 2015.

In the light of the many challenges confronting that the family in Africa, the Vice-President of SECAM said that bishops of Africa were also looking forward to the Synod of Bishops on the Family that will take place in Rome in October this year.

He also announced that SECAM has given its blessing for the setting up of an independent Catholic News Agency for Africa (CANAA). This continental communication initiative of SECAM, he said, has grown out of a desire to share news and other information among the local Churches of Africa, as well as to satisfy a longing for the voice of the Church in Africa to be heard within and beyond its borders. "Indeed, CANAA is to help Africans tell their own story." He added.

In responding to a proposal of toast by Archbishop Anokye to the people of Africa; Ghana; and to all people of good will, Mr. Andrew Agyekum, a prominent Lay person in the Archdiocese of Accra noted the invaluable contribution of the Church to the African continent, and called for support to help the Church to provide more in its socio-economic, political and spiritual activities.

The SECAM DAY celebration was in the form of a Cocktail that was attended by members of the Diplomatic Corps, politicians, business people, civil society groups, the Clergy, Religious and Laity of the Archdiocese of Accra. Also present were Cardinal Philippe Nakellentuba Ouédraogo of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; the Apostolic Nuncio to Ghana, Archbishop Jean-Marie Antoine Joseph Speich. The Treasurer of SECAM and Archbishop of Accra, Most Rev. Charles G. Palmer-Buckle, who was outside the country, was represented by his Vicar-General, Rev. Fr. Francis Adoboli.

The Secretary General of SECAM, Rev. Fr. Joseph Komakoma, welcomed the guests to the celebration.

Last Sunday, July 27, during Mass in all the parishes of Archdioceses of Accra prayers were said for the success of the activities of SECAM. Indeed, according a to a decision taken by the Plenary Assembly in Kinshasa, DR Congo, in July last year, the whole Church in Africa was encouraged to celebrate/observe the Day.