Dear FECCLAHA newsletter readers,

It is my utmost pleasure to invite you to FECCLAHA newest adventure in which we hope to get your support as subscribers, readers, contributors and partners.

It is our hope that the newsletter will provide a forum for our members, ecumenical partners, colleagues and associates to share perspectives on issues of common concern with regards to peace, justice and reconciliation in the Great Lakes region and Horn of Africa.

As it will become evident in this newsletter, FECCLAHA has and continues to make a significant contribution towards the transformation of this region. However, our activities are not always shared with you, who directly or indirectly add value to our work. It is in this light that we have decided to revive our newsletter which will be available every two months.

I invite you therefore as our stakeholders to spare sometime, reading on the latest breaking news from our work, your work, your region, on some of the issues (gender, small arms, Tamar campaign and many others) that we have committed ourselves to see through their success.

The highlight in this issue remains the interfaith (Muslim-Christian) leaders meeting in Dar-es-Salaam that focused on the conflict in Somalia and the Horn of Africa.

We invite your suggestions on how to improve this newsletter, as well as your contributions (articles).

Welcome!

Celine Siro
Regional Communication Coordinator
E-mail: celine@fecclaaha.org

Editorial

Message from the Executive Director

Comparative advantages of faith based institutions

At the heart of FECCLAHA is the simple and powerful premise to truly demonstrate that we are children of God by seeking peace for all everywhere.

The words of Jesus Christ that “blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called children of God” are at the core of FECCLAHA’s work.

Indeed the potential of faith communities’ like FECCLAHA, to make a difference in a conflict situation is considerable. Our proximity to the grassroots, our relationship with local communities, our access to the top government policy makers and global networks of related organizations provide us with a strategic advantage which, if well utilised can play a significant role in conflict transformation.
STATEMENT BY CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON PEACE BUILDING

The Christian-Muslim leaders meeting on Somalia and the Horn of Africa at large was officially opened by His Excellency Retired President Ali Hassan Mwinyi of Tanzania. Below is the integral statement of the conference outcome signed by all delegates.

We, the Christian-Muslim Religious leaders from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Main land Tanzania, Uganda and Zanzibar meeting in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania on 3rd-4th February 2007, to deliberate on Peace Building and Reconciliation in the Horn of Africa;

Acknowledging the mercies of the Almighty God on us as we spent time together, sharing our thoughts with each other and developing bonds amongst us;

Having reflected and shared extensively for the past two days on a wide range of issues relating to the conflicts and instability in the Horn of Africa within the context of inter-faith relations in the region;

Deeply concerned about the endemic conflicts and persistent insecurity caused or aggravated by economic stagnation and poverty, mistrust and suspicion between governments and political players, massive violation of human rights and other policies of exclusion and marginalization, use of violence for acquiring and conserving power, illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, illicit trade in...
STATEMENT BY CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON PEACE BUILDING (cont)

...drugs, proliferation of armed groups and, organized crimes;
Gravely troubled about the humanitarian and social consequences of the crises and armed conflicts especially the violations of human rights of women, children, the elderly, the disabled and youth, the denial of refugees access to safety and security as they flee the war zones, the recruitment and use of child soldiers in armed conflicts, the sexual violence and exploitation of girls and women, the destruction of basic services, especially health and education infrastructures and food insecurity;
Bearing in mind the sub-human and abhorring conditions under which many of our people in the Horn of Africa live, either in the internally displaced persons camps or refugee camps;
Mindful of the fact that the existence of hostilities in the form of propaganda, stereotyping, provocative statements, arbitrary arrests, and use of offensive weapons by the parties in conflict is detrimental to the current efforts aimed at building peace in the region;
Aware of the powerful role the media has in influencing and shaping public opinion, we urge the media to report in an objective and responsible manner that contributes to peace building and harmony in the region.
Recognising that the Somalia crisis has a regional impact that could adversely affect the peace and security in the Horn of Africa, and that it may be manipulated and transformed into an inter-religious conflict between Christians and Muslims with the real possibility of this becoming true;
Convinced of the fact that religious and traditional leaders have a role in contributing towards peace and reconciliation process in Somalia and the Horn of Africa and that the issue of peace and reconciliation need not be considered as the responsibility of governments only but also a mandate of religious leaders;
Noting the role-played so far by the Government of Kenya, the Government of Sudan, Inter-
Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union (AU) the Arab League, the International Contact Group on Somalia, the European Union, the United Nations (UN), and other players towards the Somalia peace process and other peace processes in the Horn of Africa;
Expressing our appreciation for the focus given towards the stability of Somalia by the just ended Africa Union Summit and the announced TFG plans to have an all-inclusive reconciliation conference as a step towards stabilizing the country;
We the Muslim and Christian Leaders do hereby make this statement and recommendations to ourselves and all stakeholders for consideration and action:
On Somalia:
1. To sustain and intensify our prayers for the people of Somalia and the grave conditions they find themselves in.
2. To ensure that the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) continues with the ongoing dialogue on power sharing, leading to a broad based inclusive transitional government including leaders from the Union of the Islamic Courts (UIC).
3. To facilitate a phased and voluntary process of disarmament and demobilization rather than a forced one.
4. To advance the process of national reconciliation and facilitate the review and implementation of Transitional Federal Charter, that will lead to democratic elections.
5. To ensure the withdrawal of the Ethiopian and other external forces from Somalia and their replacement by a neutral peace keeping force acceptable to all stakeholders in Somalia.
6. To urge all actors in the Somalia and the Horn of Africa arena to practice maximum restraint and to exert all pressure on the belligerent parties to cease any further escalation in the already volatile environment.
On Ethiopia and Eritrea:
7. We appeal to the UN and AU to fast track a peaceful resolution to the border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia.
8. We appeal to the Eritrean and Ethiopian leaders to exercise restraint in the intervening period and avoid all actions directly or indirectly that lead to violence and loss of life.
9. We commit ourselves to support peace initiatives between these two countries using the infrastructure of the religious leaders in the region.
We, the Christian and Muslim leaders together with the institutions we represent do here by commit ourselves to undertake, a series of actions to bring fruition to the work that we have done in the last two days. In this regard, we have resolved to:
1. Actively continue engaging in sincere Christian-Muslim dialogue and collaboration for peace in each of our countries and in the region.
2. Remain committed to the cause of peace, healing, and reconciliation in Somalia/the Horn of Africa.
3. Seek to do everything within our capacity to reduce further escalation of violent conflict in the Horn of Africa.
4. Organize solidarity, fact-finding and support visits to troubled areas and countries in our region.
5. Pay a visit to the AU and IGAD to get first hand information on their current peace building processes in the region, with the aim of strengthening genuine partnership and collaboration in our peace building missions.
Finally, with the help of the Almighty God and inspiration from our people, we make a joint and firm commitment towards the journey of building peace in the Horn of Africa and invite all the people of goodwill to join us.
International Conference on the Great Lakes

The idea of an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes Region has been on the agenda of the United Nation’s Security Council since the 1994 Rwanda genocide. The first concrete steps to organize the conference were taken when former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan instructed his Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region to consolidate the views of the regional leaders regarding the proposal. This proposal to hold the conference was prompted by the recognition that the problem of conflict in the Great Lakes Region can only be comprehensively and effectively addressed within a regional framework. Consultations with the governments in the region were set in motion and the process now referred to, as the "International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (IC/GLR)" was birthed.

The overall purpose and aim of the process was to bring together the leaders of the countries in the Great Lakes Region together with stakeholders, to reach an agreement on a set of principles and to launch programmes of action to end the cycle of conflict and violence and ensure durable peace, stability, security, democracy and development in the whole region. The objective of the process was to establish a regional framework that will facilitate the adoption and implementation of a Security, Stability and Development Pact around four main thematic areas, namely:

2. Democracy and Good Governance.
3. Economic Development and Regional Integration.

The conference has consisted of several stages and has been more of a process than a one-time conference. It culminated in the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government on 14-15 December 2007, in Nairobi, Kenya, which was preceded by a Ministerial Meeting. This Summit’s main objective was the adoption and signing of the Pact. The Declaration, Programmes of Action, Protocols, Projects and other mechanisms constitute the Pact on Security, Stability and Development.

The Summit agreed to have the Great Lakes Region Secretariat, which will take over from the Joint AU/UN Secretariat, in Burundi. The Summit agreed that Ambassador Liberata Mulamula, who has been the Tanzania National Coordinator for the process, will be the first Executive Secretary to the Conference Secretariat. The Conference Secretariat will follow-up the implementation of the Protocols and Programmes of Action and coordinate activities related to the IC/GLR.

As a stakeholder who has been actively engaged in the process, FECLLAHA congratulates the Heads of State and Government for adopting and signing the Pact, and calls upon them to ratify it as a matter of priority.

FECLLAHA looks forward to actively participating in the Implementation Phase as well, to ensure that our constituency’s priorities are effectively addressed. Not only do we plan on being part of the implementation in some areas, but we also plan on monitoring the ratification and implementation of the Pact as a whole, as well as some of the Protocols in partnership with other stakeholders.

The IC/GLR process and Pact provide a unique opportunity for the region to launch out into a new season that could propel the region to become the great region it can be based on all the resources (from natural to human) it has. The process has already proved beneficial in confidence building. The atmosphere of good neighbourliness that has developed as the process progressed cannot be underestimated and must be upheld by all the stakeholders. We must all play our part for posterity and leave a heritage of peace, security, stability and prosperity. Working together with unity of purpose it will be possible to realise the vision that the Heads of State and Government envisioned for this region.

By: Warigia Kamau
Advocacy & Research Coordinator
Breaking the silence-Tamar campaign

Familiar to many but still unknown to some, one of FECCLAHA’s newest movements in the area of advocacy and justice is the Tamar Campaign, based on incestuous rape of Tamar in 2nd Samuel, by her half-brother Amnon.

Officially launched in 2005, the campaign seeks to acknowledge the existence of Gender-Based Violence in our society, with particular focus on sexual and domestic violence, and challenges the Church to address the problem. The Church is uniquely placed and has the moral authority, responsibility and capacity to minister to the needs of those who have been abused, as well as deal with the perpetrators. It is with this in mind, that FECCLAHA, in partnership with St. Paul’s United Theological College and the World Council of Churches, organized the Tamar Campaign in Kenya and have been encouraging its growth since. We are excited to announce that the campaign has officially been launched in Rwanda and is gaining strength in other regional church bodies.

For more information regarding the Tamar Campaign and ways you can get involved, please check out our website at http://www.fecclaha.org.

By Taryn Montgomery

The Eastern Africa Action Network on Small Arms- EAANSA is a network of civil society organizations supporting the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi protocol. Its members consist of national networks of NGOs and regional bodies including development agencies, humanitarian workers, women’s groups, human rights activists, religious organizations, in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa.

Discussions to form EAANSA were initiated in 2002 by a group of NGOs in the region during a meeting to review the progress made in the implementation of the Program of Action and the Nairobi Declaration by the governments in the Great Lakes Region and Horn of Africa. The need for a regional civil society grouping was noted and with support from the International Action network on Small Arms (IANSA), EAANSA was formed as a regional chapter in 2003. The network embraced the structure of IANSA with members being chapters of national networks of NGOs.

The mission of EAANSA was envisioned to be that of coordinating action aimed at enhancing human security in Eastern Africa and to contribute to a just and violence free environment in which sustainable peace, development and respect of human rights can be achieved.

A working group that serves as a technical committee of EAANSA was formed and is made of Africa Peace Forum, Association of Members Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA), FECCLAHA, Norwegian Church Aid and Pax Christi Netherlands.

On behalf of the Working Group, FECCLAHA is coordinating an assessment of civil society efforts in addressing small arms concerns. The work involves three components as follows:
- Understanding Contextual Trends and Dynamics that affect small arms action
- Assessing the Eastern Africa Action Network on Small Arms (EAANSA)
- Benchmarking the progress made by National Focal Points

In terms of evaluating EAANSA, the commissioned assessment spearheaded by FECCLAHA will:
- Assess the extent to which the network has managed to implement the activities and outputs foreseen
- Gain an understanding of how a representative sample e.g. national chapters, NGO’s and government officials view the network, its relevance and achievements
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the project management structure of the network in implementing its work
- Analyse the composition/constituency base of the various national chapters
- Gain an understanding of which national chapters function better and why

News from the FECCLAHA Small Arms Desk

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Regional Advocacy on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Following FECCLAHA active involvement throughout the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (IC/GLR), it was decided to pick certain key issues to focus on in the implementation phase of the process. One of the issues of focus is advocacy around the implementation of the Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence Against Women and Children that is part of the legal framework under the Humanitarian and Social Issues Cluster of the Conference. FECCLAHA will be seeking to engage in advocacy of this particular Protocol and another on the Property Rights of Returning Populations in Burundi to begin with.

FECCLAHA was recently invited to explore the possibility of getting involved in a regional advocacy around the IC/GLR Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Protocol (Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence Against Women and Children) with other organisations such as ACORD, Amani Parliamentary Forum, CARE, OXFAM, International Alert and International Rescue Committee (IRC), under CARE’s Coordination.

The group met and agreed to focus advocacy in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda, where most of the organisations already have similar activities and members/partners/networks that will facilitate the envisaged collaboration. Working together like this could mobilize a wide range of local partners from Parliamentarians to Church Leaders to various non-governmental organisations.

The group also agreed that it was pertinent to engage in advocacy for the ratification of the Pact by eight member states for it to come into effect, though this should not hinder the group from pushing for the implementation of the draft model legislation that was developed for this Protocol in consultation with national and regional experts, a
process that FECCLAHA participated in.

As national ownership is a principle that the group would like to adhere to, it was agreed that all organisations present would contact their members/local partners/networks prior to the next meeting to share information on the Protocol and process to see if they are interested in advocacy around the Protocol at the national level.

The modalities for the collaboration are yet to be fully explored and this will be done at the next meeting, which is scheduled in March 2007.

The group has already began to share relevant resources and also been invited to be a part of a scheduled Inter-Agency Mission to Bujumbura in May by the Regional Inter-Agency GBV Taskforce, bringing together United Nations Agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This Mission’s objective is to launch the Regional GBV Strategic Framework and to meet with the newly established Conference Secretariat. It will also serve as an opportunity to focus on the SGBV Protocol.

By: Warigia Kamau
Advocacy & Research Coordinator

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Regional Advocacy on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (cont)

“By working together, we’ll facilitate the envisioned collaboration & mobilize Parliamentarians and Church Leaders.”

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Partnership Networking Opportunities

Norwegian Church Aid Global Strategic Forum
In January, the Executive Director Mr. Fred Nyabera attended the Norwegian Church Aids Global Strategic Forum in Norway. As a member of the NCA Partners Advisory Group he added value to the proceedings by representing the interests of the NCA Partners in the Eastern part of Africa.

Meeting on Sudan, Chad and Central African Republic held in Nairobi - January 2007
The focus of the above meeting was to brain storm on possible peace building Initiatives in Chad, Sudan - Darfur and Central African Republic. The meeting was attended by the representatives of AACC, FECCLAHA, Bread for the World, Norwegian Church Aid, delegations from Chad, Central Africa Republic and Sudan. During the meeting FECCLAHA was nominated to be part of a task force mandated to make the issues discussed actionable.

Horn of Africa Advocacy Reflection Meeting - February 2007 in Nairobi
The need for coherency and coordination of the advocacy efforts in the Horn of Africa is one of the issues that necessitated the above mentioned meeting. Given that the representatives of many of the agencies were participating in the General Assembly launch of ACT Development in Nairobi, a brief meeting was convened to share reflections on Advocacy in the Horn of Africa. FECCLAHA was represented in this meeting by the Chair Person Rev. Canon Grace Kaiso and the Executive Director Fred Nyabera. The meeting tasked the AACC’s Director of Programmes Mr. Arthur Shoo to convene a meeting of AACC, FEC-CLAHA and the Ecumenical Accompanier to discuss an advocacy instrument and priorities for advocacy works.

Other meetings.
In January and February, 2007 FECCLAHA held different meetings with The Church of Sweden, Life and Peace institute, Bread for the World, and the Canadian Embassy in Nairobi. The discussions revolved around an exchange of ideas, information and strengthening of collaboration between the institutions and FECCLAHA.
1. Regional Inter-Agency GBV Taskforce, to be held in Bujumbura (Burundi)-May 2007;

2. UN Peace building Commission seminar with religious leaders to be held in Bujumbura (Burundi) on March 14th, 2007. This seminar has been organized conjointly with the World Conference on Religious for Peace (WCRP) and the Catholic Relief Services (CRS);


4. Nairobi People Consultation on Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), March 14th;


Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa

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