



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

TO HIS EXCELLENCY Mr ANTOINE ZANGA

NEW AMBASSADOR OF CAMEROON TO THE HOLY SEE*Monday, 16 June 2008

Mr Ambassador,

I welcome you with joy, Your Excellency, at the moment when you are inaugurating your mission as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Cameroon to the Holy See, acknowledging the fact that you are the first Ambassador of your Country to reside in Rome.

I thank you for your kind words conveying the good wishes of President Paul Biya. I would be grateful if you would reciprocate them by expressing to him my cordial greetings and best wishes for his lofty mission at the service of all his compatriots. I also extend my good wishes to the State Authorities and to all Cameroonians, especially the faithful of the Catholic Church; they are called to be an increasingly active part of the *res publica*, with all their brothers and sisters, and to make the fundamental human and Christian values visible in the management of social life for the development of the Nation and the well-being of all.

Your Country, like many others, especially on the Continent of Africa, is suffering more particularly from the current economic situation which affects numerous families that do not have the minimum to provide for their most basic needs and this does not promote national growth. However, there are internal elements which can also redirect this growth. Every nation must seek economic and social stability, ceaselessly striving to organize itself with its own means and in the framework of its own institutions. It is every nation's task to promote micro-projects that employ men and women locally, as well as to effectively combat illegal trade and the phenomena of corruption. Therefore, I invite all Cameroonians to have an ever fuller awareness of the common good. It is to be hoped moreover that the international community, by means of well-targeted and appropriate assistance and likewise by an economic policy on a world scale, will help to break the vicious cycle of underdevelopment and extreme poverty; it is also right to take into account various phenomena which have a negative effect on the populations, such as natural disasters, global warming, pandemics, wars and terrorism. I can only hope that the International Institutions with which the National Authorities are working, with a view to agreements that aim to decrease or cancel the debt and to ensure a fairer division of wealth, will enable your beloved Nation to recover a new economic and social impetus for the good of all the inhabitants and to give the young people fresh

hope for a better future.

Your Country is currently facing an increase in the number of refugees from neighbouring countries. While appreciating the attention given to people who are often obliged to leave their homeland because of the armed conflicts taking place there, I can only ask the nations in the region to respond ever better to the requirements of security and peace, in order to face the various hotbeds of violence to which the entire innocent population and the Church herself often, unfortunately, fall prey. How can we forget the tragic death of Mons. Yves Plumey, of the Jesuit Father Engelbert Mveng and, more recently, the German Claretian, Bro. Anton Probst? One of the fundamental duties of political leaders is without any doubt to offer to their fellow-citizens a peaceful situation and harmony and to endeavour to put an end to the tension and discontent that regularly spark conflicts, to make dialogue and respect for the legitimate cultural diversity prevail between social and ethnic groups, in order to build and to unify the nation. Likewise, I appeal to all those involved in the trade or trafficking of arms, often with very lucrative interests, to question themselves on the consequences of their conduct. May the international community be involved alongside the local Authorities in this domain and intervene so greater peace can come about daily in all countries.

I am delighted with the attention that the Cameroonian Authorities are giving to the place of the Church and her work, especially in the context of education and health care, knowing likewise that her work is also deeply appreciated by the population. You may be certain that the local ecclesial communities, missionaries and Catholic charitable institutions present on the territory are seeking first and foremost the good and the development of individuals, and that they are concerned about their health. In this spirit, the Church does not fail to pay attention to all that regards tropical diseases and the pandemic of AIDS, seeking with all the means at her disposal to provide proper education on these matters. Moreover, subsequent to the agreement on the recognition of university degrees awarded by the Catholic University of Central Africa, signed on 17 August 1995 by the Holy See and the Authorities of Yaoundé, which can only be a cause of rejoicing, the possibility of a more organic Agreement between the Holy See and Cameroon will be able to encourage the development of ecclesial activity for education and the health-care of all, with the support and assistance that the Government can contribute in this sector.

At the end of our meeting, Mr Ambassador, when you are inaugurating your mission, I offer you my most fervent good wishes for the noble task that awaits you. Be assured that you will always find at the Secretariat of State the support and the attentive welcome you may need. I invoke the Blessings of the Almighty upon you, Your Excellency, upon your loved ones, upon the Members of your Embassy, upon the Authorities and upon all your Compatriots in the beloved Nation of Cameroon.

**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English* n. 27 p. 11.

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