

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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Signing of Framework Agreement between the Holy See and the Republic of Benin

On Friday 21 October 2016, at the seat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation in Cotonou, Benin, the *Accord-Cadre entre le Saint-Siège et la République du Bénin relatif au Statut Juridique de l'Église Catholique au Bénin* (Framework Agreement between the Holy See and the Republic of Benin on the legal status of the Catholic Church in Benin) was signed.

The Agreement was signed on behalf of the Holy See by Archbishop Brian Udaigwe, apostolic nuncio in Benin, and on behalf of the Republic of Benin by His Excellency Mr. Aurélien Agbenonci, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

The solemn act was attended by:

on the part of the Holy See: Bishop Eugène Houndékon of Abomey, vice-president of the Episcopal Conference of Benin; Bishop François Gnonhossou, of Dassa-Zoumé; Bishop Aristide Gonsallo of Porto-Novo; Rev. Fr. Paschal Guezodje, secretary general of the Episcopal Conference; Rev. Fr. Axel Chékété, assistant to the Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference; Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Michodjehoun, local collaborator at the apostolic nunciature;

on the part of the Republic of Benin: Ambassador Eric Franck Saïzonou, director of Legal Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; Ambassador William Comlan, director of the Cabinet of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ambassador Saturnin Tonoukouin, director of State Protocol; Bienvenu Hougbedji, adjunct director of Legal Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; Nelly Awouilhoua, technical advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; Ghislain Agbozo, special assistant to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

The Framework Agreement, made up of a Preamble and 19 articles, guarantees to the Church the possibility of carrying out her mission in Benin. In particular, the legal personality of the Church and her Institutions is recognised. The two Parties, while safeguarding their mutual independence and autonomy, undertake to collaborate for the moral, spiritual and material wellbeing of the human person and for the promotion of the common good. The Framework Agreement shall enter into force with the exchange of the Instruments of

Ratification.
