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Briefing by the Director of the Holy See Press Office, Greg Burke, on the 23rd meeting of the Council of Cardinals with the Holy Father Francis

At 13.00 today, the director of the Holy See Press Office, Greg Burke, gave a briefing on the 23rd meeting of the Council of Cardinals with the Holy Father Francis.

The Council of Cardinals met for three days: Monday 26, Tuesday 27 and Wednesday 28 February. All the members of the Council were present except His Eminence Cardinal George Pell. His Eminence Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, on the other hand, arrived only on Monday evening following the cancellation of his flight owing to bad weather. The Holy Father was absent this morning due to the General Audience.

The work sessions were held in the morning from 9.00 to 12.30 and in the afternoon from 16.30 to 19.00, and various topics were addressed, including the theological status of the episcopal conferences, human resources and the containment of costs in the Holy See, and finally, protection of minors. In addition, the Cardinals studied the Dicasteries for Promoting Integral Human Development, for the Oriental Churches and for the Evangelization of Peoples.

The reflection on the theological status of the Episcopal Conferences proceeded from paragraph no. 32 of *Evangelii Gaudium*: "... a juridical status of episcopal conferences which would see them as subjects of specific attributions, including genuine doctrinal authority, has not yet been sufficiently elaborated. Excessive centralization, rather than proving helpful, complicates the Church's life and her missionary outreach.

It is a re-reading of the *Motu proprio* "Apostolos suos", in the spirit of healthy decentralization that the Pope often speaks of, reaffirming that it is always he who safeguards unity in the Church.

The Cardinals listened to S.E. Msgr. Jan Romeo Pawłowski on the progress of the Third Section of the Secretariat of State recently established for the selection and training of the diplomatic staff and chaired by him.

His Eminence Cardinal Reinhard Marx presented to the Council of Cardinals the theme of human resources in presenting the work of the Council for the Economy, which is studying proposals to outline the competences of a "control room" for human resources.

Cardinal Marx also reported on the positive progress in the areas of the presentation of financial statements, the containment of costs and the reduction of the deficit of the Holy See.

In this context, the Council for the Economy has decided to draw up guidelines for the institutions of the Holy See with the aim of reducing costs.

The Cardinals also discussed various options for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to process cases of child abuse within a short time.

In addition, the Cardinals listened to the Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, regarding the progress of the dicastery, and made further reflections on the Congregations for the Oriental Churches and for the Evangelization of Peoples.

The next meeting of the Council of Cardinals will take place on 23, 24 and 25 April 2018.
