



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr Andrew Mhando Daraja,
AMBASSADOR OF TANZANIA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Saturday, 11 January 1997

Mr Ambassador,

As you come to the Vatican to present the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Republic of Tanzania to the Holy See I am pleased to offer you a cordial welcome. The visit in November of President Benjamin Mkapa and your own presence here today rekindle the joyful memories of my [Pastoral Visit to your country in 1990](#) when I was so warmly and enthusiastically received. I ask you to convey my good wishes to the President and members of the Government, and to assure them of my prayers for the well-being of all your fellow citizens.

Referring to your country's commitment to work for the cause of peace, you have also recognized the Holy See's efforts in this same area. Indeed, the Church has been entrusted by her Divine Founder with a religious and humanitarian mission, different in nature from that of the political community, but open nonetheless to many forms of co-operation and mutual support. In accordance with this mission, the presence of the Holy See in the international community is directed solely to seeking the good of the human family: working for the cause of peace, for the defence of human dignity and human rights, for the integral development of peoples. This is a duty which derives necessarily and perennially from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and is a responsibility shared by all Christians.

As peoples and nations co-operate in the task of fostering understanding and advancing the cause of peace and justice, there remains a problem which, despite its global proportions, has a relatively weak hold on worldwide public opinion: the tragic situation of millions of refugees and displaced persons. Some of these people are the victims of natural disasters, but many more are suffering the consequences of ethnic conflict, power struggles or inadequate social and economic development. There is no question that much is being done, especially by voluntary aid organizations and by the international community, but much more is still needed. Your own country has been an example in welcoming refugees

and seeking to provide assistance for them, even at the cost of using its own badly needed resources. Tanzania's activity in this regard is praiseworthy and one hopes that it will be matched by a generous and prompt response from other nations.

In the case of Africa, a concrete commitment to the continuing democratization of society is to be encouraged. The challenge is to increase the participation of all groups in a representative and juridically safeguarded ordering of public life. This requires a constant improvement of the quality of education at all levels, which will enable more and more people to play a responsible role in the economic, social and cultural development of their country. It also entails the promotion of a clearer consciousness of human rights and human dignity. Dialogue and negotiation must replace conflict in the resolution of tensions. This need is especially urgent in the Great Lakes region, where violence and bloodshed continue to cause untold suffering and claim countless victims: neither Africa nor the larger family of nations can turn a deaf ear to the cries of the men, women and children whose lives are being destroyed in these fratricidal conflicts. In this respect, it is to be hoped that the recently inaugurated Secretariat for East African Co-operation will prove to be an effective vehicle for dealing with the difficulties and problems which your area must face, and that, at the same time, it will provide an infrastructure for more effective collaboration and mutual assistance in all areas of social development.

The Catholic Church, of course, will always be a willing partner in the quest for integral human development, and will continue to make its own contribution to the building up of Tanzanian society. In this regard, your country's guarantee of the right of religious freedom, the cornerstone of harmony and stability in any democratic system of government, enables Catholics to work for the spiritual and material progress of society.

Mr Ambassador, I am confident that your mission will serve to strengthen the existing ties of friendship and co-operation between Tanzania and the Holy See. As you assume your new responsibilities I offer you my prayerful good wishes, and I assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia will be ready to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon yourself and the beloved people of Tanzania I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of almighty God.

**Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. XX, 1 p. 69-71.*

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