REPORT OF THE INTERFAITH PEACE FORUMS PHASE II

The Role of Religious Leaders in Maintaining Sustainable Peace and Social Cohesion in Tanzania

02nd – 20th December 2013 in Morogoro, Tanga, and Arusha, Tanzania

National Committee for the Prevention of Genocide, War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity and All Forms of Discrimination

DECEMBER 2013
1.0 INTRODUCTION
From 02nd to 20th December, 2014, the Tanzania National Committee for Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities in collaboration with the UN Office of the Special Adviser for Prevention of Genocide conducted the second round in a series of proposed Workshops and activities on “Engaging the Public in Peace-building Campaign” project. These workshops were part of the Peace Forums targeting Religious Leaders as an important group in building peace and social cohesion in Tanzania.

These workshops were conducted in three regions of the United Republic of Tanzania i.e. Morogoro, Tanga and Arusha. As it was in the previous workshops in Mbeya, Mwanza in Mainland Tanzania, and Unguja in Zanzibar, the theme was “Role of Religious Leaders in Maintaining sustainable peace and Social Cohesion in Tanzania.”

2.0 Workshop Objectives
The Workshop had the following objectives:

- Create a platform to assess and deliberate on the factors which contribute to the existence of tensions in Tanzania and particularly recent religious tensions;
- Identify common ways and means to address and prevent these factors which have influenced violent inter-religious tensions in Tanzania in the past few years;
- Deliberate on and harmonise the viable and appropriate best practices for conflict prevention and mitigation in Tanzania.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Language
The language used throughout the workshops was Kiswahili. Though some of the members were very conversant in English every presenter prepared his/her presentation in Kiswahili and presented it in Kiswahili. Kiswahili is the official language. However, that is not the only reason it was used because English is also used in many official gatherings. In this case, all efforts were used to make sure the session is localized; the committee is of the view the workshop should not be seen as an academic exercise; rather everybody should be free to express oneself without language barriers.
3.2 Overall running of the workshops

The workshop was interactive thus allowing the participants to own the process right from the start. Soon after the opening ceremonies, the facilitator from the committee asked the participants to elect their chair who will moderate the sessions for the day. The participants elected their own chair from amongst themselves who managed the session according to the participants’ own house rules.

This exercise was repeated each day. In the first two regions they elected a different chair each day while in the last region they preferred to retain the same one during the whole workshop after his excellent performance on the first day.

This methodology made the participants feel very comfortable and confident to discuss their regional issues freely and transparently knowing that the committee was not there to impose anything on them but facilitate the process which permits them to understand better the various issues affecting peace and harmony in their region and in the country as a whole; as well as experience self realization which in the end brought about the various recommendations and commitments made by them.

3.3 Plenary sessions

The participants were given opportunity at the end of each presentation to discuss, raise issues, and ask questions. In most cases it was from this session that recommendations and resolutions were made. Sometimes the questions or issues raised did not exactly relate to the topic discussed; participants just took that opportunity to get to know better what goes on in the other religion’s ‘camp’ in respect to issues that are seen to be triggers of conflicts. This way the two sides developed confidence to ask that which they would not do under any other circumstances for fear of provoking the other group.

In cases where the questions posed required technical explanations which only the committee could provide, the committee sought permission from the chair to respond.

3.4 Drawing up recommendations and election of Joint Committees

As alluded to above, issues that directly fall in the category of recommendations were picked up during plenary discussions right from day one. At the end of day three the program provided time to come up with a way-forward. This was another opportunity for participants to say what they wanted to see done by various stakeholders including themselves. In all cases since the Peace Forums started; the idea of forming a joint committee emerged right from the beginning when the participants started asking what should be done if peace and
harmony are to be maintained in their region/district. It automatically dawned on them in their minds that something has to be done and somebody has to do it but definitely neither the government nor the committee. As such, by the time it came to way-forward they already knew who amongst themselves would be a suitable candidate for a joint committee which will bring them together after the departure of the committee.

During the election Christian and Muslim groups held separate election process and brought the names to the table. Some members were elected in absencia because they were viewed as the right-fit to those positions and are acceptable by both groups.

4.0 OPENING CEREMONIES

4.1 Morogoro

The workshop was officiated by the District Commissioner of Morogoro, Mr. Said Ally Amanzi. Prior to his opening speech, introductory remarks were made by Ms. Felistas Mushi, the chair of the Committee who introduced the committee, its origin, mandate and activities so far carried out in Tanzania. She reiterated the fact that the establishment of the committee is not a political agenda as some people might infer, but rather, it is an implementation of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Protocol on Prevention of Genocide and a response to a global move towards Responsibility to Protect.

She urged participants to make good use of the three-day meeting which would explore the viable and appropriate ways for conflict prevention and mitigation in Morogoro in particular and Tanzania generally.

On his part, the guest of honor welcomed participants to the workshop thanking them for their attendance. He explained that despite the fact that Tanzania has never experienced genocide, preventive measures should be put in place to curb occurrence of genocide atrocity crimes. He cited the recent conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in some districts of Morogoro Region which claimed lives on both sides and destruction of properties, as one of the issues that should be addressed and a permanent solution found. The participants were thus urged to make good use of the opportunity availed through the workshop to strategise on how to solve their local problems and bring sustainable peace and cohesion amongst all groups in the society.

4.2 Tanga

The Chief Guest, Tanga District Commissioner - standing in for Tanga Regional Commissioner - Honorable Halima Dendegu, officially opened the workshop and welcomed participants to the workshop.
She explained that despite the fact that Tanzania has never experienced genocide like some countries in the Great Lakes Region, preventive measures should be taken to curb occurrence of genocide and/or atrocity and related crimes.

Honourable Dendegu urged participants to meet on regular basis to discuss strategies to promote peace in Tanzania taking into account that the foundation for sustainable peace had been laid by our Founders of the nation. Peace has been sustained for 52 years in Tanzania.

On behalf of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, she thanked religious leaders for their efforts to maintain peace in the country.

She concluded by urging participants to have positive discussions and come up with recommendations on the best way to sustain peace in the country.

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4.3 Arusha

The Guest of Honour, Arusha District Commissioner, representing the Arusha Regional Commissioner, Honourable John Mongela, officially opened the meeting and welcomed participants to the workshop on Role of Religious Leaders in Maintaining sustainable peace and Social Cohesion in Tanzania.
He explained that despite the fact that Tanzania has never experienced genocide like some countries in the Great Lakes Region, preventive measures should be taken to curb atrocity crimes and genocide. He told participants that Arusha Region has witnessed violent actions and conflicts for quite some time now. All Religious leaders have been tirelessly raising their voices against such acts and making efforts to prevent their occurrence in future.

He added that Tanzania is made up of many different tribes and religious beliefs. Discrimination on the basis of religion, tribe or politics is a new phenomenon that has to be stopped at this early stage. Honourable Mongela told participants that he believes the meeting would come up with recommendations on how best peace building efforts, stability and mutual respect will be strengthened. He urged Religious leaders to deliver on their respective divine promises and stand firm against political maneuvers.

Concluding, he implored participants to come up with appropriate recommendations and called upon religious leaders to work in collaboration with his office for sustainable peace in Tanzania.
5.0 TOPICS COVERED

- Strategies and Opportunities to Prevent Genocide in Tanzania
- Separation of Politics and Religion for peace-building in Tanzania
- Efforts to build interfaith relations for peace-building in Tanzania
- Uncovering Scriptural Revelations on Peace
- Role of religious leaders in peace-building
- Role of Trustees in Preventing Intra-religious Conflicts

5.1 Strategies and Opportunities to Prevent Genocide in Tanzania

The presentation traced the origin of the word “genocide” from Raphael Lemkin to 1948 Convention and describes the difference between the words War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity.

The facilitator, Dr. Khoti Chilomba Kamanga, illustrated various cases and gave examples of circumstances that may fall in these categories of crime.

He went on to cite cases of genocide in Rwanda where around 1,000,000 people were killed and about 2,500,000 fled the country. The genocide was caused by various factors including actions of religious leaders of instilling hatred in their followers: participating in killings and destruction of churches. For instance in 1994 Rwanda Genocide, people were found killed at Ntaram’s Roman Catholic Church.

Violent conflicts in Kenya between 2007 and 2008 caused approximately 1300 deaths of innocent civilians and 6000 people were left homeless. The deaths occurred following general elections in Kenya after which the main political factions fought over presidential election results.

Genocide hit Yugoslavia from 1990 to 1995, where around 8,000 Bosnians were killed and/or raped. Dr Kamanga pointed out that like Tanzania; Yugoslavia was made up of several states, having many religious faiths. The main reason for the conflict was the aim of some rulers to eradicate Islam out of Yugoslavia.

Religious conflicts provoked genocide in Iraq in October 2013 where 1000 people were killed.

Presence of new social conflicts, genocide casualties, widows, orphans, abandoned family members, fear and mistrust, decline of productive manpower and death, is testimony to the genocide and atrocities committed in these countries.
He went on outlining possible preventive measures against similar crises in the context of Tanzania as follows:

- Religious leaders to instill unto their followers the immeasurable value of human life and the need to protect it at all times.
- Accepting existence of different religious faiths in Tanzania
• Interreligious cooperation, interactions and peaceful coexistence between different religious faiths in peace time
• Genocide crime should be domesticated by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania
• The media should be encouraged to work according to their professional ethics with the purpose of building national unity, social cohesion and sustainable development
• Children and youths should be raised on the basis of peace loving at family level
• Poor families should be helped to overcome economic, social and globalization challenges
• Political and governance systems should be built on the principles of transparency, accountability and timely justice
• Nepotism, discrimination and injustice in national institutions should be eliminated
• Provision of equal rights and equitable opportunities in the distribution of national resources
• Deliberate measures should be taken to command respect and tolerance among different religious faiths in the country

Dr. Kamanga concluded by stating that genocide is the most heinous international crime human beings can commit. He also observed that Tanzania has signed the Genocide Convention of 1948 and the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region with the Protocol on Prevention and Punishment of Crime of Genocide in 2006; this should be domesticated and be part of the laws of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Plenary Discussions

The plenary discussion evolved into a question-and-answer session as documented hereunder:

Question: Why was the court [Tribunal] for prosecution of Rwandan genocide established in Tanzania while the crimes took place in Rwanda and who bears the cost of running the court [Tribunal]?

Answer: Having no capacity to prosecute criminals of genocide on its own soil, the Rwandan Government requested the UN to intervene. In response the UN established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Tanzania. Running costs of the Tribunal are provided in accordance with the UN convention. The criminals of genocide serve their sentences in prisons situated in countries which are signatories to the convention.

Question: Killings of innocent and unarmed civilians took place in Meru, Morogoro etc, and currently are taking place in Syria. In South Africa many people were victims of one form or another of killing during the apartheid era; are all these killings genocide?

Answer: In the case of Tanzania, one cannot say that the killings amount to genocide; it is murder as defined in the Penal code. The crime of genocide as
explained has some components which have to be fulfilled for it to be genocide; as stated, not all killings are genocide even if they are seen to be mass killings. As for Syria and South Africa, it is obvious that the killings amount to genocide crimes linked to political and religious conflicts.

**Question:** Are there any other early warning signs; more subtle, but may lead to genocide?

**Answer:** As said earlier there are many early warning signs that may culminate in genocide. These include but are not restricted to:

- Hate speeches
- Unresolved Historical conflicts
- Fanatical Ethnicity and nationalism perception
- External Economic Pressures [e.g. IMF]
- Mis-conceptions relating to Multi-party systems
- Mis-managed Constitutional review exercise
- Bad governance
- Federal form of Government if perceived unfair

**Question:** In the case of Tanzania, which early warning signs may lead to genocide?

**Answer:** In Tanzania early warning signs which could lead to genocide include but are not restricted to:

- Bad economic situation of the country to the level that people are no longer capable to meet their basic needs
- Existence of clear social classes (gross inequalities)
- Domination and discrimination of some people or group of communities
- Existence of political parties with religious or ethnicity ideologies
**Question:** What is the role of religious leaders in preventing genocide?

**Answer:** As the theme of this workshop denotes, religious leaders play an important role in preventing genocide. Let me mention few preventive measures they can pursue:

- Religious leaders must respect each other/learn to respect each other
- Religious leaders should advise the Government on proper moral and ethical behaviour
- Religious leaders should establish peace forums to discuss issues uniting them
- Religious leaders should inspire an attitude of tolerance and mutual respect to their followers
- Religious leaders should preach and live by example the principles of their respective beliefs

5.2 Separation of Politics and Religion for peace-building in Tanzania

This topic was presented by Sheikh Thabit Norman Jongo from Committee of Religious Leaders for Peace and Tranquility Zanzibar.

Sheikh Jongo defined the world ‘politics’ as an art of influencing peoples’ opinion. In Islam, politics is viewed from two angles:

1. Religious politics, This when a person is convinced and attracted to believe and join the right way and away from evil doing

2. State or power politics. This is subdivided in two categories: clean and dirty politics.

Sheikh Jongo classified the politics of the day as ‘dirty’ because essentially three basic tools are deployed to ensure success.
- corruption, deception and personal interest [ego-center]

Islam says “he is cursed who gives and who receives bribes” according to Sheikh Jongo. Sheikh Jongo also observed that many political leaders gain power by corrupt means; unfortunately some religious leaders also join state politics and fall victim to the same dirty game. He recommends that religious leaders remain in their primary domain and preach the Word of God and lead people to observe righteous deeds as per the Holy Books. They should leave state politics to others. He noted that dirty politics, tribalism and ethnicity are enemies of our country. There is need to be vigilant and fight ideologies which might provoke outrage in our country, he added. He cautioned against politicians who try to use religious gatherings for their not-so-noble objectives. He appealed to religious leaders to refuse to provide political support to those seeking public office rather they should guide people spiritually and leave politicians to campaign on merit.

Sheikh Jongo informed the participants about the Interfaith Committee established in Zanzibar. The Interfaith Committee holds regular peace meetings and/or round-table-discussions with Zanzibar Government officials; political party leaders; as well as top leaders of Zanzibar and Tanzania Mainland. Government officials acknowledge the role played by religious leaders in maintaining peace and contributing to social development in the country.

He stated that it is this Committee which initiated the idea of a coalition government after meeting with political leaders from CUF and CCM impressing upon them the need to rule “living people and not corpses”.

Sheikh Jongo cited the Senegalese case whereby an Interfaith Council works hand-in-hand with the Government. All development programmes have to be approved by the Council before implementation. The Government enjoys the advice of the Council on planning issues before it goes public.

Sheikh Jongo urged Religious leaders to join hands in peace building initiatives and to advise the Government on issues of national interest. He said that though it is not illegal it is advisable that religious leaders refrain from going into politics wholesale because they have followers who are easily influenced by their decisions which can even create a rift amongst them on the basis of party alliances. Moreover, once deep into politics, religious leaders cannot use their positions to denounce evil practices by politicians.

Sheikh Jongo concluded by urging Morogoro religious leaders to establish Interfaith Committees and support peace-building-initiatives as well as advise the Government on issues of national interest.
5.3 Efforts to build interfaith relations for peace-building in Tanzania

This topic was also presented by Sheikh Norman Jongo drawing experiences from various committees working in Zanzibar and out of Tanzania. He said that building interfaith relations needs devotion and tolerance. Christians and Muslims are spiritually sons of Abraham according to the Bible and the Quran. The difference is in practice of religious teachings of these faiths. What is important in this situation is observation of discipline in preaching each religious teaching.

He cited Verses from Quran which show that Muslims are urged to live amicably with non-Muslims. In one instance, he said, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) directed his followers to leave Madina for Ethiopia as they were maltreated due to their belief. Ethiopia was ruled by a Christian King then and he accepted to live with Muslims in his kingdom without interference in their belief in Islam.

He pointed out that there is no faith without peace. The issue of peace is everybody’s responsibility; religious leaders and followers, business-people, politicians, farmers. No church or mosque can be open for prayers in a conflict-prone country. All of us should go back to the teachings of our respective religions in order to promote peace in the country.

Citing instances of destruction of properties belonging to churches and mosques that happened in Ghana some time ago, Sheikh Jongo called upon religious leaders to take the lead in resolving interfaith conflicts to prevent eventual massive destruction of properties and lives. The recent tensions which saw destruction of some church buildings and properties in Mbagala, Dar es Salaam in 2012 should be condemned by all religious leaders.

He pointed out that the coming of these religious faiths in Tanzania was smooth because the preachers were wise and used peaceful means of convincing people. He explained that there is no doubt that all religions have one goal, which is converting the others into their own. He said principally this is not bad; but then, it should be done in accordance with what the respective religious Books prescribe. So religious leaders should preach to their followers to live according to their true religion because all religions preach peace.

5.4 Reflecting on Scriptural Revelation about Peace and social relations

The world has been witnessing commission of atrocities in the name of religion. While the perpetrators of these crimes believe that they are backed up by their religious beliefs; there had been contrary views from within the same religion which deny any religious connotations in such crimes.

This being a religious leaders’ forum; this topic was specifically meant to have participants reflect on their respective
religious teachings and weigh what they say about peace and social cohesion.

Participants were divided into two groups; A Muslim group a Christian group. Each group held its discussion separately digging deep into their teachings and come up with citations on peace. Then each group appointed one presenter who presented in the plenary.

It was revealed that the word “Asalam aleykum” means “peace be upon you” and Muslims are urged to use the word in interactions with other people.

Several revelations in the Quran were cited to show that Prophet Muhammad was directed by Almighty Creator to be merciful and kind to people. The Prophet was also urged to save both the oppressed and oppressor and ensure that the oppressor is stopped from oppressing others.

It was explained that wrong definition and translation of the Word of God account for provoking hatred between Christians and Muslims. Nowhere, for instance, in the Quranic revelations the right to life is denied for non-Muslims. According to the Quran, every human being has the right to live regardless of his or her belief. Islam emphasizes tolerance among people.

Illustrating this, it was cited as an example that Prophet Muhammad directed his followers not to kill anyone as they were entering Mecca, the country of heightened opposition to Islam and Muslims.

When he was in power, Prophet Muhammad called upon Muslims to pay tithe as it was a religious requirement for social development and non-Muslims to pay tax to help the Government to pursue its business.

On the other hand, it was explained that the holy Bible revealed that the world and all creatures in it belong to God. That Ten Commandments lay down two levels of relations, namely relation between God
and human beings on one hand; and relation amongst human beings on the other hand. Loving God without loving each other is never to be.

The holy Bible says that loving people you know is not enough. Love should be extended beyond people you know.

The Bible calls upon people to work for peace with all people. The Bible demands ‘to-love-thy-neighbour’ if the believer wishes to enter Paradise.

Further, the Bible says that “I leave you my peace …” These revelations remind us to live in peace with all fellow human beings in the world just like Jesus Himself did.

5.5 Role of Trustees in Preventing Intra-religious Conflicts

During Phase One of the Peace Forums which were held in Mwanza, Mbeya and Unguja in Zanzibar concerns were raised that many incidences of religious tensions are instigated by the so called extremist groups from both Christian and Muslim faith.

The presentation underscored the role of Trustees in preventing intra-religious conflicts in the country. The facilitator explained to the participants the functions of the Registration Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency (RITA). The major functions of RITA are management of information on key life events; incorporation of trustees; safeguarding properties under trust - of deceased persons, insolvents, and minors to enable the law to take its course. Trustees can apply for incorporation through the procedure known as Trustees' Incorporation. This is the procedure under which social groups, political parties, and religious institutions can be registered. A group can have two to ten members to be registered.

Registration requirements include the following:

- Personal particulars of the trustees
- Passport size photographs
- Annual fee of Tshs. 100,000
- Copy of the constitution and rules of a trust
- Recommendation letter from the respective District Commissioner
- Recommendation letter from higher authority for religious institution
- Submission of business reports

The Does and Don’ts of Trustees

- To lead the trust according to the Trust Deed
- To submit business reports once annually
To inform the Administrator General of any amendments of the Trust Deed
To be aware of his/her responsibility and to keep the properties of the trust in appropriate manner
To prevent conflicts in the trust

To provide information related to trust
To protect the trust
Not to acquire any interest in property belonging to the trust
Not to acquire land without prior permission of the chief leader of the trust

The facilitator pointed out that many conflicts occur in the trusts when:

- Leadership change takes place too often
- Followers do not receive timely development reports of the trust
- Leaders behave unconstitutionally e.g. not calling constitutionally regulated meetings; not being inclusive; etc. Funds are embezzled

- The trust lacks a conflict resolution machinery

It was stated that a religious institution which is full of internal conflicts cannot preach peace between people of different faiths. It was reiterated that it is important for peace to start within the institutions themselves so that they all speak with one voice. Instances where conflicts within religious denominations have given rise to
split into divergent and opposing groups were cited. These opposing groups most of which are the ones now termed as extremists and which are causing a lot of religious conflicts in many areas of the country.

**Plenary Discussion**
The plenary discussion evolved into a question-and-answer session where participants wanted further clarification on the registration procedures; disciplinary actions for opposing groups and the role of RITA in solving intra-religious conflicts.

*Plenary discussions in progress; Arusha & Morogoro*

**6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS & RESOLUTIONS**

As described above; the committee drew up recommendations from participants’ contributions during plenary sessions. These were validated by participants during the recap session on Day 2 and 3 where the previous day’s minutes were read over.

Furthermore recommendations and resolutions were drawn up during the last session of Day 3 which was set aside for that purpose. The committee displayed the drawn up recommendations by way of projector for the participants to validate the contents before the final version was read over to the District Commissioner who closed the workshop by the chair of the session.

Below are recommendation and resolutions in the order of the regions covered chair of the session:

**6.1 Morogoro**

1. The Workshop suggested that the Government should cooperate with
Religious leaders to strengthen and ensure that peace-building and promotion efforts are harmoniously conducted. In that regard:

(a) Religious leaders should therefore, advise the Government

(b) The Government, on its part, should work on the advice from Religious leaders

2. The Workshop suggested that Religious leaders should advocate for importance of tolerance and mutual respect among and between followers of different faiths. Religious preaching and lectures of one faith should not provocatively interfere with other religious issues.

3. Religious leaders should neither be manipulated by politicians nor should they allow politicians to use houses of prayers for political campaigns.

4. The Workshop resolved to establish a forum for peace dialogues in Morogoro that will be composed equally of twelve members from all religious faiths

5. The Government should promote justice and rule of law in order to sustain peace in the country.

6. The Government and Religious leaders should emphatically promote national ethics education and leadership principles
6.2 Tanga

1. The Workshop recognized contribution and the role played by Religious leaders in peace building, inspiring mutual understanding.

2. reconciliation and tolerance to their followers and the society in general.

3. It was a general consensus that the nation witnesses the fast-growing early warning signs that could lead to mass atrocities. Religious leaders recommend that genocide crime should be domesticated by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania so that no one should feel that he/she is immune from punishment for lack of national legislation.

4. The Workshop suggested establishment of a forum for peace dialogues that will bring together Religious leaders. To that end they resolved to establish a joint committee for peace that will help them to identify common ways and means to address and prevent factors which have influenced tensions and conflicts.

5. The Workshop revealed some sources of hatred in society to be religious preaching and lectures that don’t conform to religious principles. Therefore, the Workshop suggested that Religious leaders should advocate for tolerance and mutual respect among and between followers of different faiths. Religious preaching and lectures of one faith should not provocatively interfere with other faiths.

6. Religious leaders should emphasize unity in different religious faiths operating in the country.

7. Religious leaders should avoid political fanaticism and should neither campaign for politicians nor allow them to use houses of prayers for political campaigns.

8. In registration of religious institutions the government should consider the prior consent of regional religious authorities. The said institutions should seek permission from respective religious authorities at regional level before seeking Government permit. This will prevent possible violence and chaos provoked by multiplicity of lower-level religious authorities in the region.

9. The Workshop made it clear that some religious leaders are involved in perpetration of conflicts in society. The Government is advised to take stern measures against such leaders.

6.3 Arusha

1. The Workshop recognized contribution and the role played by Religious leaders in peace building, inspiring mutual understanding, reconciliation and tolerance to their followers and the society in general. It was suggested that the Government should cooperate with Religious leaders to strengthen and ensure that peace-building and
promotion efforts are harmoniously conducted.

2. The Workshop suggested establishment of a forum for peace dialogues that will bring together Religious leaders. That being the case, they resolved to establish a Regional Interfaith Peace Committee that will make sure that Arusha regains its peace and stability which has been eroded by political conflicts for the past years.

3. The Workshop made it clear that some religious, political leaders and media are involved in perpetration of conflicts in society. The Government is advised to take stern measures against such groups. Either,

4. It was a general consensus that the nation is witnessing the fast-erosion of national values and ethics which pose the threat to lasting peace, stability and development in the country. This is manifested through foreign culture introducing foreign values [such as of wearing half naked clothes], television airing programmes loaded with foreign values sometimes at logger-head with traditions, involvement in corruption and unaccountability of some civil servants etc. It was therefore suggested that observing the national values and ethics should be a matter of priority.

5. It was suggested that procedures and requirements of holding political campaign and demonstration, and religious protest marches and demonstrations should be transparent to help the public avoid to be implicated in illegal gatherings.
7.0 WAY FORWARD

As pointed out above, the workshops ended up with establishment of Joint Peace Committee comprising of all religions represented. These Committees’ main function is to create a platform for further collaboration amongst religious leaders for the common goal of maintaining peace and social cohesion in their respective regions and eventually in the country as a whole.

The committees constituted themselves and elected chair from both sides, vice chair, secretary and members. In all cases the names of the committee members were presented to the District Commissioners of the respective regions who promised to collaborate with the committee in their activities.

Listed below are the names of the elected members of the Joint Committees:

7.1 Morogoro

Christian Leaders
1. Elibariki Makundi
2. Fr. Kuitfrid A. Makyeso
3. Samson Olombae
4. Prophet Aram Mwantyala
5. Pastor Lucas Mboya
6. Ms Joyce Bosco

Muslim Leaders
1. Sheikh Ally Omar Ngarama
2. Sheikh Hamad Msahama Masoud
3. Sheikh Khalid Omary
4. Sheikh Haji Mustapha
5. Sheikh Ramadhan Rashid
6. Sheikh Abrahaman

7.2 Tanga

Christian Leaders
1. Bishop Dr Antony Banzi
2. Bishop Dr Maimbo W.F Mndolwa
3. Bishop Dr Stepphen Monga
4. Rev. Amasia Kaoneka
5. Father Odillo Shedafa
6. Fadher Dominick Singano

Muslim Leaders
1. Sheikh Ali Juma Luhchu
2. Sheikh Mohamad Hariri
3. Sheikh Ramadhani Mabruk
4. Sheikh Salim Hemed Salim
5. Sheikh Samir Sadik
6. Sheikh Mohamed O. Riyami
7.3 Arusha

**Muslim Leaders**
1. Sheikh Shaban Juma
2. Abdallah Masoud
3. Al-Hajj Ghullamhussein
4. Sheikh Abdulrazak Amir
5. Fatuma Abebe
6. Zamzam Ramadhan

**Christian Leaders**
1. Bishop Josephat Lebulu
2. Rev. Fr. Paul Raia
3. Bishop Julius Laizer
4. Bishop Oral Sosy
5. Bishop Stanley Hotay
6. Reverend Andrew Kajembe

*UNDP were kind enough to handle the financial disbursement part of the activity on behalf of the OSAPG.*

*Above, Ms Renalda, UNDP Accountant ready to pay participants their DSAs*
8.0 CONCLUSION

Religious leaders play a very big role in building peace and social cohesion in any society. They are at the core of the morals of the society which in turn determines the behaviors of the people they lead, their perception towards other religious ideologies, shapes their followers’ loyalties and the way they interact with others in the society. As such; religion can be both a negative and a positive determinant for peace in the society. As the world and particularly the Great lakes region is now witnessing, religion, slowly and deliberately is being exploited for political ends. Those who do so know exactly what they are doing; they hide behind the veil of religion to fulfill their political interests and desires. Back in the years of colonialism Africa has witnessed divide and rule being used by colonial regimes to advance their economic and political interest. Today; the language used is different, yet, the motive is still the same; political ambitions have never been sympathetic to its victims; they can use anything; and religion and ethnicity seem to be their best weapon. This is a threat to any country which has different religious beliefs; especially where two of them feature out as majority; same to ethnicity.

Tanzania is not immune to this fact. The interfaith peace forums so far conducted in 7 regions of Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar has brought to surface that which some would not wish to admit; that there are religious tensions and discontents, both amongst same religious denomination and between Christians and Muslims. The interesting thing however, is that fact despite their pulpit and Mosque statements accusing each other, when they meet in the forums as they did, they find a common enemy, whom they believe to be the government and politicians.

The committee has embarked on harnessing the positive potentials embedded in religious leaders so as to avoid the power mongers misusing them for their selfish gains. It is quite evident that what triggers conflicts and tensions between Christian and Muslim is not what one party does or say, but rather; what the other party thinks was wrongly favored to the other party by the government. At the end; an attack against the other party comes as revenge. This is one of the lessons learnt during the forums.

On the other hand, one of the lessons the religious learnt is that they can actually come together and shape the society, politicians included. They learnt that they do have a lot more commonalities than differences and that they can use their commonalities to strengthen their relations for their social cohesion and economic empowerment on one hand, while other hand using their differences as challenges to deepen their spiritual relationship with God whom they both believe in.

This latter part is what triggered the resolve to constitute joint committee’s in all the regions. Having been made to
understand their important role in building peace and social cohesion, and the fact that with violent conflicts all of them regardless of their religion. In Tanzania the situation is even worse because as admitted by all participants; intermarriages between Christian and Muslim is so common that no one family will be immune if one religion attacks members of the other.

Hence, Religious leaders set up their own platform where they can meet and deliberate on issues threatening peace amongst religious communities and in the society as a whole. The joint committees will be their platform for communicate with the government in matters of concern to them.

The challenge that the national committee for Prevention of Genocide is faced with now is twofold. One; how to deepen these existing joint committees, and two, widen the forums in the sense of expanding the scope of forums so as to have more Districts on board. The deepening area requires that the committees do not fall into slumber once established; rather, they develop clear goals translated into action plans so that they put into practice what they resolved to do. In that regard, the Joint Committees will be able to mobilize resources for their activities. Further; the committees need to be strengthened to be able to reach out into the local levels so that at the end of the day there is a clear structure from the national committee down to the local levels.

Although both areas are necessary to fulfill the national committee’s objectives under the Protocol for Prevention of Genocide; it is clear that we need to evaluate what has been done so far so that we do not forge ahead leaving behind Joint committees which are not functional. It is thus hoped that the deepening aspect will receive equal attention as we plan for further activities with the government and our partners.

This report will not be complete without giving due credit to our partners. The Swiss Embassy in Tanzania through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has taken much interest in the work of the national committee and is supporting peace forums involving Political and Local Government leaders as well as sensitization programs through the media. The Agency went further to send their Governance Adviser to accompany the national committee in the Interfaith Peace Forums. This noble gesture is very much appreciated and encouraged. It goes a long way in building not only a solid working relationship but also the committee’s credibility.

On the other hand, the Office of the Special Adviser for Prevention of Genocide invested time, expertise, human and financial resources in these forums. The national committee is humbled and will not cease to express its appreciation to this support and encourage other national committees in the region to harness the resources that the OSAPG has so kindly put at their disposal so that at some point all Member States can speak the same language in as far as the implementation of the ICGLR Protocol for Prevention of Genocide is concerned.
As we reflect on the issues coming out of the interfaith peace forums and the security situation in the Great Lakes Region; let us remind ourselves of the Statement by the Special Adviser during the commemoration of the anniversary of the Genocide Convention in 2012 which remains true in our region and elsewhere in the world:

“At the heart of the Convention is the protection of groups defined by their identity, ...Thousands of lives continue to be lost as a result of conflicts rooted in tensions between and discrimination against different national, religious, ethnic and racial groups; these are lives that could have been saved if action had been taken earlier to address these tensions, prevent discrimination, promote human rights protection for all and respect for the rule of law.”

(Mr Adama Dieng, Special Adviser of the Secretary -General on the Prevention of Genocide, New York, 6 December 2012)