

Seeds of Hope: The Church at the Service of Food Security

Concluding Remarks by Fr. Uchechukwu Obodoechina, Deputy Secretary General of SECAM (Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar)

Moved by compassion for his listeners, Jesus felt sorry for the crowd who were with him in the desert and ordered that they be given something to eat before they collapse on the way [Mt.15. 29-39]. In this way, Jesus underscored the place of food among his listeners, for their physical comfort and well-being. In imitation of the master, the Dicastery for Integral Human Development here in the Vatican has organized this important webinar on efforts at strengthening food sovereignty through faith-driven actions and sustainable local solutions. We are deeply grateful for such initiatives and strategic leadership.

One obvious challenge arising from the climate change is food insecurity and sustainable agriculture. In parts of Africa, for instance, where the effects of climate change have been devastating- desertification, loss of livelihood, land-grabbing, and loss of biodiversity, pose great difficulties to agriculture and food sustenance. Farmers, pastoralists, fish folks and indigenous communities are grappling with poverty and food insecurity across Africa. Besides the efforts of some Transnational Companies [TNCs], and some governments in parts of Africa to support large agribusiness companies against the efforts of some farmers in the communities exert enormous pressures on food sovereignty efforts and resilience agriculture in Africa. In fact, the importation of Hazardous Herbicides and Pesticides already banned in Europe into Africa makes the situation of food security in Africa more precarious.

In the light of such challenges, the imperativeness of today's webinar on efforts to strengthen food sovereignty through faith-driven actions and sustainable local solutions cannot be underestimated. We are hopeful that the fruits of today's event will provide the needed seed of hope that does not fail but guarantees fullness of life as promised us by Jesus the Lord [Jn.10.10].

Shalom