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WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE ARCHBISHOP ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Your Holiness, we the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) are pleased to join our Catholic brethren and the entire Christians and faiths fraternity in Kenya to extend warm hand of Welcome. We are greatly honored by your choice of our homeland as the point of entry to Africa and your presence will be an encouragement to all our Christians to follow our lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in lives of faithful discipleship.

We are grateful for your recent Encyclical Letter urging all nations to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them- as one way of counteracting the throwaway culture which affects the entire planet.

We are also grateful for your Church's historic commitment to the apostolic faith. We commend your leadership in convening the Synod on Family in October 2015, re-affirming the sanctity of life; the wholeness of marriage and the necessity of family, at a time when some of these principles are being called into question. As African Christians we cherish family, as taught in scripture.

But now Africa is at a spiritual crossroads. We have many nominal Christians, but not as many committed ones. We are threatened by what you yourself have described as the 'ideological colonialism' of secularist lifestyles. So it is my prayer that all our churches will work together in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, to kindle the hearts and minds of all believers anew.

Your holiness, it is our deep conviction, one which I am sure we share, that the transformations we long to see in this world are most likely to come about when our Christians are focused not on earthly utopias, but live as sojourners to whom the hope for heaven is real, founded on the faith we affirm in God Almighty, Creator of everything visible and invisible; in Jesus Christ; in the Holy spirit, in the Communion of Saints; in forgiveness of sins and in life everlasting.

Your Holiness, in the recent past as a nation we have witnessed increased activities of terrorism and radicalism, threatening peaceful coexistence and integration within and across faiths and communities in Kenya. As faith leaders representing our members we have endeavored to promote peaceful coexistence. In your messages you have been reminding all people of goodwill that Peace is essential for the life in abundance that the Gospel proclaims. We shall continue to cooperate and collaborate as faith leaders in promotion of Peace and national cohesion.

Your Holiness, I would also like to mention that as faith leaders of our respective denominations we strive to practice interdependence instead of unhealthy competition in provision of spiritual leadership to our congregations. I laud the cordial existence between most denominations and religions in Kenya. Our hope and prayer is that this interdependence and collaboration will be sustained.

Your Holiness, during the past decade Kenya and several other African nations have made great economic progress, through responsible management of our natural and human resources with which God has endowed us. However, the gap between the rich and poor is worrying and needs to be narrowed- with deliberate emphasis on compassionate, equitable distribution of resources.

Your Holiness, as I conclude allow me to appeal that through your efforts and those of other leaders, there is great necessity for African nations to be assisted to unlock their potential through improvement of their economic and governance capacity. Africa as a continent is endowed with many resources, which ought to be effectively managed for the benefit of her people.

Your Holiness, the search for the lost values in the world today requires an ecumenical approach. You have reminded us in the Encyclical Laudato Si "we must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it."

We, the faith leaders, see the Papal visit to Africa to Africa within this prism, both across religions and across denominations. We rededicate ourselves to our apostolic and prophetic calling, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen



The Most Rev. Dr. Eliud Wabukala, EBS
ARCHBISHOP OF KENYA &
BISHOP OF ALL SAINTS CATHEDRAL

Dated this 26th November 2015, Nairobi Kenya.