

SYMPOSIUM DES CONFERENCES
EPISCOPALES D'AFRIQUE ET
MADAGASCAR



SIMPÓSIO DAS CONFERÊNCIAS
EPISCOPAIS DE ÁFRICA
E MADAGÁSCAR

SYMPOSIUM OF EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES OF AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR

PRESS STATEMENT BY SECAM ON THE 7th AU–EU SUMMIT IN LUANDA

Luanda, Angola, 20 November 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1. Introduction: Why the Church's Voice Matters

As the AU–EU Summit convenes in Luanda, the Catholic Church in Africa, represented by the **Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM)**, reaches out to all people of goodwill with a message of concern, truth, and hope. We speak as a Church deeply embedded in the daily lives of the African people, sharing in their joys and hopes, as well as their griefs and anxieties, particularly for the poor and afflicted (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 1). Our moral responsibility is informed by lived experiences throughout the continent, through our schools, universities, clinics, parishes, and communities.

2. The Significance of the Year 2025

The year 2025 holds particular significance, as the African Union has declared it the Year of “**Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations**” and will launch the **Decade of Reparations (2026-2036)**. The Catholic Church's **Jubilee Year** calls for truth, renewal, and reparatory justice. Following **COP30 in Belém**, where voices from Churches in the Global South underscored the urgent need for ecological justice, climate finance, and respect for Indigenous and local communities, the AU–EU Summit must not only negotiate but also listen, remember, and address longstanding injustices.

3. Concerns Over Restricted Civil Society Participation

SECAM is compelled to highlight the restrictions imposed on civil society organizations in the official Summit process. Numerous African civil society organizations, including those willing to self-finance their participation, have been excluded. This includes faith-based organizations with a long-standing presence on the ground, humanitarian and justice networks linked to the Church, women's and youth associations, farmer and Indigenous organizations, local development movements, and peacebuilding and reconciliation bodies. This exclusion raises a critical moral question: How can a summit focused on Africa's future exclude those who support African communities daily?

4. The Parallel Peoples' Summit in Luanda

In response to the official Summit's inability to accommodate African civil society, a Parallel Peoples' Summit has been organized at the Catholic University of Angola in Luanda on 19–20 November. This is not an act of rebellion; it is a necessary response to insufficient participatory channels, a lack of transparency, technocratic top-down processes, and an imbalance of power between institutions and communities.

5. Historical Responsibility and the Call for Reparatory Justice

The Church in Africa expects the AU–EU Summit to demonstrate honesty about history and a genuine commitment to reparations, acknowledging the ongoing impact of the Transatlantic slave trade, slavery, colonialism, neocolonialism, economic domination, and resource extraction as matters of

historical fact and moral responsibility. We are deeply concerned that the European Union has not fully committed to reparatory justice for Africans and people of African descent, despite the fact that key members benefited from the Transatlantic slave trade and colonization. The legacy of this exploitation persists today in an unfair trade system and the transgenerational trauma suffered by Africans and people of African descent.

6. People-Centered Development

Guided by the Church's social teaching principle of the primacy of the human person over systems, SECAM advocates for a people-centered development model. The joint SECAM–COMECE–Caritas–CIDSE statement warns that many AU–EU initiatives risk perpetuating extractive patterns; development must serve communities, not geopolitical interests. Reparatory justice is essential, encompassing both structural fairness and restorative healing.

7. Economic, Debt, and Ecological Justice

Economic and debt justice are crucial, as Africa's debt burden—rooted in historical injustice—requires serious reform as a matter of justice, not pity. Following COP30 in Belém, ecological responsibility must be upheld, recognizing that ecological justice cannot be separated from social justice. Africa's forests, water sources, mineral resources, biodiversity hotspots, and vulnerable communities must never again be sacrificed for profit, geopolitics, or external interests. Respect for African sovereignty and the sovereignty of its people is vital; African sovereignty belongs not only to governments but also to its citizens.

8. Conclusion: Toward a Strengthened AU–EU Partnership

The Church in Africa hopes for a renewed and strengthened AU–EU partnership. However, this requires inclusion rather than exclusion and transparency rather than opacity. A partnership that listens to the people will endure; a truly inclusive summit will foster trust, and a dialogue rooted in justice will have the power to heal historical wounds. The Church in Africa stands ready to accompany Africa and Europe toward a future of justice, peace, and human dignity.

Contact:

Rev. Fr. Uchechukwu Obodoechina

Director of SECAM - Justice, Peace and Development Commission
secamjpcdirector@gmail.com
Tel: +233 55 733 7871

Rev. Fr. Louison Emerick Bissila Mbila, C.S.Sp.

SECAM Liaison Officer at the African Union
secamauliaisnonoffice@gmail.com
Tel: +251 900 485 018

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