

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

[February 2024]

The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (PCPM)
Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA)



PARTIES

The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors

and

The Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa

- i) Whereas the Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium*, in Article 78, §1 establishes the ministry of safeguarding as a specific and permanent activity of the Roman Curia;
- ii) Whereas the Supreme Pontiff enumerated to the Commission “I urge you to assist the Conferences of Bishops – this is very important: to assist and oversee in dialogue with the Conferences of Bishops – in establishing suitable centres where individuals who have experienced abuse, and their family members, can find acceptance and an attentive hearing, and be accompanied in a process of healing and justice” (Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Commission, 29 April 2022);
- iii) Whereas the Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium*, in Article 78, §2 establishes the Commission’s mandate to “assist diocesan/eparchial bishops, Episcopal Conferences and Eastern Hierarchical Structures, Superiors of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life and their Conferences in developing appropriate strategies and procedures, through Guidelines to protect minors and vulnerable persons from sexual abuse”;
- iv) Whereas the Supreme Pontiff, explicitly instructed the Commission “on an annual basis, to prepare a report on the Church’s initiatives for the protection of minors and vulnerable adults.” (Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Commission, 29 April 2022);
- v) Whereas the Supreme Pontiff outlined that “This report will be a factor of transparency and accountability and – I hope – will provide a clear audit of our progress in this effort. Without that progress, the faithful will continue to lose trust in their pastors, and preaching and witnessing to the Gospel will become increasingly difficult.” (Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Commission, 29 April 2022);
- vi) Whereas the Motu Proprio *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, in Article 2, §1 provides “for institutions or offices that are easily accessible to the public for the submission of reports.”;
- vii) Whereas to “propose better methods to enable the Church to protect minors and vulnerable persons and to assist the healing of survivors, in the recognition that justice and prevention are complementary” (Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Commission, 29 April 2022);
- viii) Whereas the Mission of AMECEA is “To inspire and empower God’s family in AMECEA to a credible and prophetic witness to Christ, by promoting unity, justice, peace, and solidarity”;

- ix) Whereas the Mandate of AMECEA is of a pastoral nature and includes... "to promote human rights, justice and peace, freedom of religion, advocacy for the oppressed, and good governance";
- x) Whereas safeguarding forms a critical part of the AMECEA mid-term strategic plan;
- xi) Whereas the 20th AMECEA Plenary of Bishops resolved that all levels of the church shall develop and implement safeguarding guidelines based on agreed criteria and which shall consider the realities/sensitivity of the local context for protection of minors and vulnerable adults in line with the New Apostolic Constitution, Praedicate Evangelium;
- xii) Whereas the 20th AMECEA Plenary resolved that 'dioceses shall establish stable and easily accessible public systems of reporting abuse', coordinate annual reports from Dioceses on safeguarding of minors and vulnerable adults;
- xiii) Whereas the 20th AMECEA Plenary resolved that Conferences shall allocate and mobilize resources to establish national centers for implementation of safeguarding requirements with liaison officers at diocese level;
- xiv) Whereas the 20th AMECEA Plenary resolved that AMECEA shall domesticate and facilitate dissemination of the New Apostolic Constitution, *Motu Proprio Vox Estis Lux Mundi* in the region and continually support formation and training of key personnel on safeguarding of minors and vulnerable adults;
- xv) Whereas the 20th AMECEA Plenary resolved that all church structures within AMECEA shall Safeguard children and youth from exposure to an environment that corrupts morals and impedes character formation;

Establish by this Memorandum of Understanding a collaboration in which they agree to jointly pursue the realization of the following goals and activities:

- *Accompany the local Churches in safeguarding capacity building through the Memorare Initiative*

Both parties support AMECEA's safeguarding office, established in 2019, as a central body through which to coordinate, promote, measure and improve safeguarding standards and activities for the protection of minors and vulnerable people within Catholic Church institutions in the AMECEA region. This support includes identifying and promoting the human and financial resources required for the following areas of safeguarding: policy development, implementation and review, professional safeguarding formation for pastoral agents, provision of assistance services for people impacted by abuse where lacking, and the establishment of education and awareness raising programs for Catholic communities.

- *Accompany victims and survivors*

Welcoming the Holy Father's call for the Church to be a place of healing and spiritual repair for anyone who has experienced abuse, particularly those who have been abused in the Church, and in adherence to *Vos estis lux mundi*, Art. 2, both parties agree to work to promote the establishment of services at a local level to support access to justice and assistance for anyone who comes forward to a pastoral agent with a complaint. Acknowledging the social, cultural and institutional factors that often inhibit the disclosure and prevention of abuse, both parties will work towards strengthening and promoting response procedures and mechanisms to give voice to individuals, families and communities impacted by abuse that mirror the respect and kindness of God Himself.

- *Present the steps taken and progress made by local Churches in the Annual Report on Safeguarding in the Catholic Church, as requested by the Holy Father*

Welcoming the Holy Father's call to furnish a reliable account on what is presently being done in the protection of minors and vulnerable people on the ground and what needs to change, so that the competent authorities can act to prevent abuse, both parties agree to establish a data collection and dissemination infrastructure through the AMECEA safeguarding office. This data infrastructure, housed in AMECEA's safeguarding office, will regularly report to the Commission. The purpose of the information exchange is to better analyze current trends and challenges in safeguarding on the ground in the AMECEA region. The aim of this is to ensure continuous quality improvement in the safeguarding services that are provided, and to provide an account on the progress made by the local Churches in the AMECEA region, to the Holy Father, as part of the *Annual Report on Safeguarding in the Catholic Church*. This report will be a factor of transparency and accountability and will provide a clear audit of progress in this effort.

- *Mobilizing new resources for safeguarding*

Welcoming the Holy Father's insistence on addressing inequalities within the Church, with regards to safeguarding, both parties agree to collaborate on mobilizing new resources for safeguarding. AMECEA is uniquely positioned to coordinate, produce and submit grant proposals, owned by the local Churches within the region, and therefore respecting the principle of subsidiarity. The Commission's review and endorsement of these grant proposals will provide oversight while also promising greater grant approval rates. Additionally, AMECEA's own grantmaking, for all of its various activities – be they safeguarding specific or not - should always include a safeguarding provision.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

1.0 The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (Commission) will:

- Provide expert advice and oversight, in revision and in promotion of AMECEA's regional safeguarding Guidelines, Tool Kit, and formation courses.
- Provide specialized materials, advice and oversight from its expert Members, for the various Memorare Initiatives within AMECEA countries.
- Screen and certify candidates from the region, for the position of Memorare Advisor (MA), at the level of the local Churches.
- Facilitate regional conferences and safeguarding training courses across the borders of AMECEA countries.
- Promote and facilitate a dialogue and cooperation at the regional level between bishops and religious to support and encourage a "One Church" approach to safeguarding.
- Collect and highlight the experiences and testimonies from AMECEA's outreach to victims and survivors of abuse, to include in the Commission's Annual Report.
- Support the enhancement of the data collection infrastructure in AMECEA's safeguarding office to monitor and report on current trends and challenges in safeguarding in the AMECEA region – data which will be including in the Commission's Annual Report.
- Provide AMECEA with good practices and oversight in the promotion of response procedures and mechanisms, compliant with *Vos estis lux mundi*, Art. 2.

- Accompany AMECEA with information and resources about good practices in the various conferences' safeguarding practices and procedures.
- Consider the possibility of providing funding to AMECEA, from the Commission's Memorare Fund, consistent with this MoU.

2.0 The Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) will:

- Submit AMECEA safeguarding Guidelines, Tool Kit and formation curriculum, for the Commission's review.
- Share safeguarding trends, good practices and challenges with the Commission, to be included in the Annual Report.
- Support and promote Memorare Initiatives within AMECEA countries, by introducing and endorsing the Memorare Initiative, and accompanying the Commission in its introductions and dialogue with local Church leadership.
- Encourage and help facilitate a "One Church" approach to safeguarding, between bishops and religious.
- In collaboration with National Conferences Map and convey the names of potential candidates to the Commission, for the position of Memorare Advisor (MA), at the level of the local Churches, in AMECEA countries.
- Organize and host regional conferences and safeguarding training courses across the borders of AMECEA countries.
- Compile and transmit to the Commission, the experiences and testimonies received from AMECEA's outreach to victims and survivors of abuse, to include in the Commission's Annual Report.
- Enhance the data collection infrastructure in AMECEA's safeguarding office to monitor and report on current trends and challenges in safeguarding in the AMECEA region – data which will be transmitted to the Commission's Annual Report Team, to be included in the Commission's Annual Report.
- Produce targeted grant proposals to specific benefactors, for safeguarding activities in AMECEA countries, and submit them to the Commission for its review and endorsement.
- Require a safeguarding provision in all grant making that AMECEA provides its Members.
- Use any Commission funding exclusively in the spirit of this MoU, and any subsequent documents agreed to.

SIGNED BY:

The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors

Signature *+ Seán O'Malley*

Name: H.E. Cardinal Seán O'Malley

Date _____

Signature *Andrew Small OMI*

Name: Rev. Fr. Andrew Small, OMI

Date _____

The Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa

Signature *+ Charles Sampa Kasonde*

Name: Rt. Rev. Charles Sampa Kasonde

Date 09/02/2024



Signature *Anthony Makunde*

Name: Rev. Fr. Anthony Makunde

Date 09/02/2024

