

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

[April 2025]

The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (PCPM)

and

**The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar
(SECAM)**



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The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (PCPM)

and

The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM)

- 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, Bishops 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 requires “one or more public, stable and easily accessible systems for submission of reports, even through the institution of a specific ecclesiastical office”;

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- 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 complimentary” (Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Commission, 29 April 2022); establish by this Memorandum of Understanding a collaboration in which they agree to jointly pursue the realization of the Canonical, spiritual, pastoral, and human rights requirements, surrounding the protection of minors and vulnerable adults.

INTRODUCTION

The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (Commission) hereby sets out to establish a Memorare Initiative (MI), in collaboration with the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), partially financed by the Commission’s Memorare Fund.

This MI is designed to:

- Provide outreach to victims and survivors (V/S) of abuse and receive them in a safe environment, by providing material and human resources in a stable and accessible structure. In this pursuit, it will listen and care for persons who have experienced abuse, facilitating reporting in a non-judgmental and discrete environment.
- Assist the needs of V/S, their family and community by offering pastoral, medical, legal and informational support to persons impacted by primary and secondary abuse. This assistance will be offered through providing referral services, for professional treatment, free of charge for V/S. As such, the MI might help V/S access local resources and professionals, while also monitoring the effectiveness of these services.
- Enhance and facilitate access to reporting systems for V/S, consistent with Article 2 of the *Motu Proprio Vos Estis Lux Mundi*. Promote and oversee follow-up communications, after the submission of a report to afford V/S information on the status of their reports.
- Provide advanced formation courses to specialized staff, focusing on safeguarding practices and philosophy, while still considering locally, personally, and culturally sensitive aspects of the material. The primary objective of these courses will be to train safeguarding practitioners in the local church, to lead the creation of a safe environment for all involved. It will also form Church authorities on their engagement and communications with survivors.

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- Provide basic formation courses to the wider Church community, especially all clergy, religious, lay movements, Catholic school teachers, Catholic hospital operators, etc. The primary objective of these courses will be to train the whole local church on the safeguarding paradigm so as to promote an integral culture of protection.
- Commemorate the experiences of V/S to elevate social consciousness and promote healing, to recognize, acknowledge, and honor their experiences without stigmatization.
- Develop tools and initiatives to spread understanding of the existence and extent of the phenomenon of abuse, to facilitate protective measures, and to publicize these initiatives by the Church.

KEY PARTIES

**The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (Commission)
The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar
(SECAM)**

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

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

- i) Promote and facilitate a collaboration among the actors in this MoU
- ii) Provide the MI with information about good practices formulated by the Universal Church in the protection of minors and vulnerable adults
- iii) Screen and certify candidates for the position of Memorare Advisor (MA), responsible for the mapping and designing of the MI
- iv) Administer the Memorare Fund (MF) to:
 - I. Provide the Bishops' Conference with initial grant money to fund:
 - a. A consultancy contract for a Memorare Advisor (MA) to:
 - i. Map safeguarding programs and stakeholders in members of SECAM
 - ii. Develop customized training curriculum and materials

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- iii. Develop a Memorare Plan, detailing all cost and revenue streams, proposing cost sharing models as appropriate
 - iv. Recruit, nominate and train all qualified personnel to work in the MI
- II. Provide additional grant funding, based on the needs outlined in the Memorare Plan, produced by the Memorare Advisor.

2.0 The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) will:

- i) Submit potential MA candidates to the Commission, for pre-approval
- ii) Promote and facilitate a collaboration among the actors in this MoU, and subsequent Memorare Initiative (MI), by negotiating and signing onto a collaborative partnership with the Religious
- iii) Support the faithful workings of Memorare Initiative
- iv) Commit to reporting requirements to the Commission

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SIGNED BY:

The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors

Signature + Luis Mburua Di U

Name Secretario PCTU.

Date _____

The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM)



Signature: _____

Name: H. E. Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo

Date: 30th June 2025