

# AFRICAN FAITH COMMITMENTS FOR A LIVING PLANET

## BUKOPA CATHOLIC DIOCESE, TANZANIA Long-term plan on the environment – summary

### INTRODUCTION

The Lake Victoria region is home to approximately one third of the population of East Africa and takes in the environmentally challenged areas of Kenya and Tanzania. The Bukoba Diocese of Tanzania sits on the banks of Lake Victoria.

The Catholic Church has 32 parishes in the Bukoba Diocese and 59% of the 860,000 population are Catholics. The Church owns seven nursery, one primary, three secondary and three high schools in the diocese as well as a teachers' college, four seminaries, four vocational colleges, a university and several health facilities, hotels and restaurants, press and printing houses. It runs an active Catholic Women's Union and the Catholic Youth's Union in almost all parishes in the diocese. These diocesan facilities cater for people from all walks of life regardless of faith especially the needy and less privileged.

Since it was formed 120 years ago, Bukoba Catholic Diocese has participated in environment protection work by planting trees on about 2,500 hectares in different parishes and by establishing farming plots in all education institutions owned and run by the Church. These plots have provided food for use at all the church-run institutions but have also been used to demonstrate sustainable land management for other farmers in the neighbourhood.

The Diocese has developed a three-year project "to make faith and the Word of God engines for restoration of nature and poverty eradication".

The project targets women, men and young people who are farmers living in households that cultivate land holdings of two hectares or less and who live within groupings popularly known as small Christian communities (Jumuia Mdogondogo) and Catholic faith organisations and Catholic farmers' organisations. It aims to work in five Catholic parishes and include at least one third of farming households.

### THE THREE-YEAR PROJECT AIMS TO:

- Expand training programmes on the environment and agro-forestry for small Christian communities, farmers' organisations and educational institutions, and establish a 'Lake Victoria Conservation and Food Security Programme Academy' for advance training in restoration and conservation of nature;
- Set up a demand driven advisory service for farmers;
- Investigate and initiate a programme for carbon sequestration based on its own forestry development and conservation model;
- Set up a programme for the documentation of stories and tales of cultural heritage;
- Develop improved energy sources among smallholder households;
- Develop a programme for the establishment of botanical gardens in all Catholic parishes;
- Map and survey and establish a data base for all church forests and establish the gradual replacement of exotic tree species with indigenous species;
- Expand the activities of young people in environment issues;

- Create farmers' associations at the local level;
- Work with local government institutions to connect the government with local farmers.

#### THE PROJECT WILL PROMOTE:

- Agroforestry, especially the production of nutritious food.
- Work with young people's Christian clubs and organisations (60% of the population is below 19 years of age) and encourage the formation of youth groups and clubs involved in agriculture for income generation and environmental protection;
- Work with 100 primary and secondary schools to teach knowledge and skills of agroforestry;
- Establish school tree nurseries and tree planting and fruit gardens;
- Integral to the programme is a one year fish farming project for Kashozi parish in the Bukoba diocese. Here members will be trained in fish farming which is part of the commitment to restore nature, promote nutritional food supplies and eradicate poverty within the area.

Suggested partners are the East African Community and the governments of Sweden, France, Norway and the East African Development Bank who recently entered into a long-term partnership on the promotion of sustainable development of the Lake Victoria Basin.

*This long-term plan as been drawn up by Bukoba Catholic Diocese and endorsed by the Ordinary of the Diocese, Rt. Rev. Nestor Timanywa, and his Vicar General, Rev. Fr. David Mubiligi.*

This plan was launched at ARC's Many Heavens, One Earth, Our Continent celebration held in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2012