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*"We can't row the canoe fast with one paddle"
(African proverb)*

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Dear Fellow Coordinators, Here is the latest UPDATE I sent to our Major Superiors. It's for us too.

We join the Kenya (KEN-TAN) province in celebrating their 25th foundation anniversary and pray for a brighter future. Next month there will be a series of meetings and one workshop. Your interest beyond the bounds of your province, region or mission is what binds us together!



Kenya. It was in 1984 that the SVD came to Kenya to start a mission in Garba Tulla, a small town in northern Kenya responding to the invitation of the bishop of Isiolo *Silas Njiru*. From there our presence expanded to the other parts of the country and to Tanzania in 2000. I quote the Editorial of JAMBO issued in May: "*Silver deeds*. This is the theme of our jubilee celebration. Silver, because it has been 25 years since our mission and presence in Kenya was begun. Deeds, because despite the difficulties and the challenges, we continued to labour for God's Kingdom, falteringly in lots of ways, but soldier on we did".

Chad. Once again the Chadian rebels succeeded in attacking the capital creating panic among the government soldiers. However the sudden attack was followed by a sudden retreat! It's difficult to find out the reasons behind. This chain of political violence started in 2005 when the Constitutions were modified to allow the president to run for office indefinitely.

Togo. Last May 25, Fr. Marian Schwark handed over his responsibilities as General Secretary of the National Organization of Caritas for an Integral Development (in French OCDI) after serving this office for 15 years! It is a special organization of the Episcopal Conference of Togo and member of the Caritas Organization. We thank our confrere for his valuable service to the Church of Togo and to our confreres in the province. We wish him success in the new responsibility entrusted to him.

Angola-Congo. Mgr Antonio Jaca, bishop of Caxito made a memorable visit to D. R. Congo where he spent part of his youth, as a Novice in Bandundu and as a student of theology in Kinshasa. He celebrated a thanksgiving mass at the Arnold Janssen House of formation together with the confreres and blessed the ground floor of the new building in the 15th Street destined for renting, in view of the self-sufficiency program. We thank him for being with the confreres and for giving ample time to talk to the young confreres in formation. We could think of the saying: "I was what you are, you might be what I am". Then, together with the provincial he proceeded to Bandundu, the place where he entered into the religious life as an SVD. On one of his talks he mentioned his getting together with Bishops Gaspard Mudiso (CNG) and Frank Nubuasah (BOT) in Angola. The SVD AFRAM bishops are increasing.

South Africa. Our confreres of the LUMKO team Fr. Gabriel Afagbegee and Godefroid Manunga helped in facilitating the ongoing formation of 10 young members of the BOT Province "under six". A talk was given on the "Changing situations in Africa" and a session was consecrated for accounting and budget preparations. Also much appreciated was the sharing of personal experiences, struggles, etc. We see that Fr. Sunny Vattaparayil, the Mission Secretary of BOT is putting into concrete terms one of the four propositions made by the Mission Secretaries of AFRAM, the ongoing formation. He is the district superior of South Africa and the organizer of the "under six" session.

Africa-Lisbon. Two African confreres Constantin Buapale and Clément Kilabi were admitted to perpetual vows in Lisbon, Portugal where they are studying Philosophy (May 12). Congratulations.

Ghana. Pope Benedict XVI declared the year of Saint Paul starting from June 2008 to June 2009. In view of this the SVD Biblical Pastoral Ministry organized a 5-day Bible Seminar (May 18-23) under the theme, "Life and Teaching of St. Paul". It was done in collaboration with the Biblical Centre for Africa and Madagascar (BICAM) and the office of the Biblical Apostolate of the National Catholic Secretariat. There

were 38 participants, priests, religious brothers - many of whom were SVDs, sisters and lay people.

Botswana. The outgoing Bishop of Gaborone Diocese, Boniface Tshosa Setlalekgosi bade farewell to the SVDs during the concluding mass of the BOT provincial assembly (May 19-21). He was the one who welcomed our pioneers in Botswana and saw our congregation growing and spreading to other countries, in Zimbabwe, Zambia and South Africa. Many years ago I was told that when he attended feasts he was often among those who arrived first and who left last. The new Bishop is Valentine Tsamma. The confreres spent together three days to “pray, share and celebrate”!

Rome – from the Generalate. Every year the Generalate invites the Four Zonal Coordinators (AFRAM, ASPAC, EUROPE and PANAM) to a meeting in Rome. Fr. General’s letters of May 20 sent us the Agenda for the June 18-20 Meeting. (1) Zonal Reports, (2) Update on the General Assembly on the Brother Vocation, (3) Update on the implementation of Resolutions and Recommendations of the 16th General Chapter: Human trafficking, Common Orientation and Guidelines for SVD Education, Migrant and Refugee Apostolate and Update on the renovation of Nemi International Centre, (4) Preparation for the 17th General Chapter: Venue and Initial preparations, (5) AJSC: Questionnaire on the future direction and Workshop for 30-Day Retreat Directors, (6) VIVAT International, (7) General Visitations – EUROPE and PANAM and (8) Information: on Database on higher educational qualifications and SVD Devotional books. I will give you some highlights of the issues at an opportune time.

Ghana Workshop. Very soon the AFB Workshop and Meeting will be held in Nsawam, Ghana (June 8-13). All preparations are well done and everybody is ready.

Execom. The Executive Committee Meeting will follow in June 14-15 in Accra. In our April UPDATE I have given you some points of the Agenda.

AFRAM Website. The Area Coordinator for Communications, Fr. Mirek Wolodko is efficiently posting the latest news happening in AFRAM. Visit www.svdafram.org and try to take a look at your “section”. You may help enriching it by sending more news, pictures and articles to him. Please encourage your communications coordinators too. Thanks

Please pray for the good outcome of the meetings and workshop. God bless us all.

Fraternally yours in the Divine Word,

Fr. Xene A. Sanchez, SVD
AFRAM Zonal Coordinator