

Joint Interreligious Declaration on Peace Building, Democracy and Development

Preamble

Cognizant of the current interreligious situation in our region and mindful of the role religion plays in public life,

We, religious leaders of Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania, including invited political leaders from Tanzania, met in Dar es Salaam, 5—8 May 2014, under the auspices of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and Mission EineWelt, in cooperation with the National Muslim Council of Tanzania (BAKWATA), the office of the Mufti of Zanzibar, the Tanzania Asian Development Association (TADA), under the theme “*Peace-Building, Democracy and Development: A Call for Active Citizenship in Sub-Saharan Africa.*”

Deliberated on:

- National constitutions and the freedom of religion in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Current complex developments in Christian Muslim relations in Africa
- The contribution of religious leaders to political democracy and good governance
- Poverty alleviation as a precondition for peace and development.

Received examples of successful interreligious initiatives and discussed the creation of an infrastructure for peace.

Acknowledged that religion and religious differences have been misused and that this misuse has led to the destruction of peace and the loss of life and property.

Recognized and accepted the fact that as religious and political leaders, it is our responsibility to build and uphold the principles of democracy.

Admitted that we have not always affirmed human dignity and fulfilled our responsibility to promote peace

Affirmed our solidarity with one another in the process of building peace, promoting democracy and ensuring the sustainable and environmentally friendly development in our sub-region and in Africa in general.

Committed ourselves to

- Inspire people to become active in building peace, democracy and development and promote gender equity in our communities
- Encourage the members of our communities to build bridges of understanding among religious people and to engage in interreligious relations
- Cooperate with political leaders to work for socio-economic justice as a prerequisite for peace building and to address religious tensions before they become violent
- Resist all attempts by any individual or group to misuse religion and/or politics for personal or partisan political benefit
- Identify and/or condemn all violent acts against any community or society
- Demand governments and all stakeholders to respect the letter and spirit of the constitutions and guarantee freedom of religion
- Assume our role as religious leaders in advocating good governance
- Build and sustain interreligious platforms at all levels to foster peace building, democracy, development and poverty alleviation
- Promote interreligious awareness in the formal training for religious leaders
- Promote continuous and consistent interreligious engagement and hospitality.

Recognizing the fact that peace building is a crosscutting issue; and in order to promote peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and sustainable development; we call on all stakeholders, including governments, civil society organizations, politicians, academicians and society in general, to

- **Respect** religious differences and diversity as a gift and not as an obstacle to peace
- **Adhere** to and respect democratic principles and processes to guarantee the rights of everyone
- **Support** interreligious initiatives geared toward peace and democracy for national cohesion
- **Refrain** from the misuse of religions and religious leaders to advance their partisan political agenda
- **Work** against sectarian and religious conflicts.