



## JESAM SOCIAL APOSTOLATE COORDINATION & THE JESUIT AFRICA SOCIAL CENTERS

### A RENEWED CALL FOR COMMITMENT TO THE SAFETY OF CREATION

In order to help “heal our broken world,” the Society of Jesus in 2011 recommended to the Jesuits and their collaborators to address the consequences of the environmental crisis on the poor and marginalized, to make sustainability the basic principle of individual and collective actions, to promote awareness and support the motivation in the field of ecology, to promote transformative education able to create responsible attitudes to safeguard creation, to encourage initiatives that create and make accessible to wider audiences tools for liturgy, homilies, catechesis, cultural and social programs, to make complex issues of ecology simple and understandable for all, to review the Jesuit formation in relation to environmental issues, to include in the apostolic plans issues of ecology, and regularly to evaluate the commitments of the apostolic body in this area.

To take part into this enterprise, the Jesuit Africa Social Centres network (JASCNET) held a training seminar on Ecology in Nairobi, from 24 to 28 November. It was led by Father Pedro Walpole SJ, the director of research at the Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines and coordinator of Environmental Science for Social Change and Reconciliation with Creation for the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific.

Attendants came from the following institutions: Agricultural and Veterinary College of Kimwenza (ISAV), Arrupe College Zimbabwe, ACE Development Office, Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESIA), Arrupe Centre for Research and Training (CARF), Development Training Centre (CEFOD), Centre for Study and Social Action (CEPAS), Centre for Agriculture and Ecology (CEPAPE), Daughters of the Heart of Mary (DHM), Eco center Malawi, Hekima College, Africa Social Centres Network (JASCNET), Jesuit Centre for Ecology and Development (JCED), Jesuit Hakimani Centre (JHC), Daniel Comboni Parish/Kindele DRC, Premicongo, Silveira House, Social Apostolate Zambia Malawi and JESAM Ecology (JECO).

In his opening speech the director of JASCNET, reminded the participants on the general objective of the JESAM Ecology working group, which is to raise awareness about the issue of ecology among Jesuits and their collaborators and to conduct advocacy through a strategic partnership with other institutions involved in this field. He mentioned the four objectives of this seminar: an increase of **knowledge**, promotion of **awareness and understanding** of the root causes of ecological problems and their consequences, and **commitment** to reduce the effects of the environmental crisis on the poor and marginalized. The facilitator added a fifth objective: linking ecological question to **values**, in order to promote and encourage **positive attitudes** to safeguard creation. In conclusion he recalled the

recommendations of the Special Report on ecology entitled "Healing a Broken World" published in Promotio Justitiae No. 106, by the Secretariat for Social Justice and Ecology.

After showing the need for interiority, the facilitator addressed the issue of the nine planetary boundaries: climate change, loss of biodiversity, ocean acidification, change in the use of land, the global use of freshwater resources, stratospheric ozone depletion, atmospheric aerosol depletion, nitrogen and phosphorus cycle and chemical pollution. He later developed themes of spirituality of the environment, lifestyle and development, social justice, environmental sustainability, sustainable development, protection of creation, ecosystem services, economic development, social inclusion, good governance, environmental mode of proceeding, etc.

During the seminar the participants were encouraged to be silent, to pray, to share and explore scientific questions of ecology.

After this training on the theological, spiritual, scientific and practical aspects of the question, the participants constituted working groups to develop four lines of action:

- Production of a toolkit on the issue of climate change,
- Writing a guide to raise awareness for various sectors of the Jesuit apostolate (schools, parishes, chaplaincies, formation houses, retreat houses, etc).
- Preparation with GIAN Ecology of the African Water Week.
- Production of a guide for an ecological retreat.

Participants pledged to finalize these tools not later than April 2015.

At the end of the training the participants were happy that they had come to understand the root causes behind the current ecological crisis. They measured the urgency to act now, especially in the promotion of backup attitudes of the planet. They acknowledge the value of living simply, and are convinced that the change will be the result of the personal commitment of men and women today.

They also suggested to the Jesuits and their collaborators to continue to build on the report "Healing a Broken World."

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