

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 200117e

Friday 17.01.2020

Entry into effect of the Framework Agreement between the Holy See and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on matters of mutual interest

Today, 17 January 2020, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, His Eminence Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, and His Excellency Mr. Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, exchanged the instruments of ratification of the Framework Agreement between the Holy See and the Democratic Republic of Congo on matters of mutual interest, signed in the Vatican on 20 May 2016.

The solemn event was attended by:

on behalf of the Holy See: His Excellency Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, secretary for Relations with States, His Excellency Archbishop Ettore Balestrero, apostolic nuncio to the Democratic Republic of Congo; His Excellency Archbishop Marcel Utambi, president of the National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO); Msgr. Mislav Hodžić, nunciature counsellor at the Secretariat of State; and Don Donatien Nshole, secretary general of CENCO.

on behalf of the Democratic Republic of Congo: Her Excellency Ms. Marie Tumba Nzeza, minister of State and minister of Foreign Affairs; Mr Fortunat Biselele, private advisor to the Head of State; Mr Pacifique Kahasha, Head of State's mission officer; His Excellency Jean-Pierre Hamuli Mupenda, ambassador to the Holy See.

The Framework Agreement entered into force on the same day in accordance with Article 21 § 1 of the Agreement. Taking note of the respective independence and autonomy of the Church and the State, the Document establishes the legal framework for mutual relations. In particular, it enshrines the freedom of the Church in apostolic activity and in the regulation of matters falling within her competence. It also regulates various areas, including Catholic educational institutions, the teaching of religion in schools, the charitable and welfare activities of the Church, pastoral care in the Armed Forces and in penitentiaries and hospitals, the patrimonial and fiscal regime, and the obtaining of entry visas and residence permits for religious personnel. It provides for application agreements between the Episcopal Conference and the State on certain matters of common interest.

