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AACC - Kenya Foreign Affairs Minister Praises Church Social

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All Africa Conference of Churches
Information and Communication Desk
P. O. Box 14205
00800 Westlands
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 254 - 020 - 4441483 / 4441338/9
Fax: 254 - 020 - 4443241, 4445835
E-mail: infodesk@aacc-ceta.org
Website: www.aacc-ceta.org

Church Praised for its Social Programmes

By Mitch Odero

Kenya's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kalonzo Musyoka gave the church a pat on the back for the effectiveness of its programmes aimed at alleviating the suffering of the poor.

The Minister who was speaking at a reception hosted by St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church in Nairobi (April 13) hosted in honour of the visiting delegation from the World Council of Churches (WCC) singled out the role of the church in the war against HIV/AIDS, conflict resolution and peace building.

Recalling that WCC and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) brokered in Addis Ababa the 1972 peace pact for Sudan which lasted for 10 years, he expressed the hope that a final peace agreement for Sudan will be signed in a matter of days. Sudanese peace talks have been taking place in Kenya.

The Minister said that he hoped that churches will be active in social programmes in post war Sudan for at least next six years which will be the transitional period before a referendum in which Southern Sudanese will be engaged in determining the kind of government they would prefer. The choices will be between a North-South government of unity or self-governance for Southern Sudan.

Earlier the WCC General Secretary Rev. Dr. Sam Kobia paid a glowing tribute to the Coptic Orthodox Church noting that it was one of the founding members of WCC and continued to be an active member to date. The Orthodox Church has taught us the significance of spirituality in our lives. As we continue in the 21st century, spirituality should undergird our work such as healing, he stressed.

The General Secretary of the AACC Rev. Dr. Mvume Dandala noted that 42 per cent of health centres and hospitals in Africa were owned by churches. The fact, he noted did not seem to be appreciated by the funding agencies. The

church through its network of health-care institutions bore a heavy burden in the war against HIV/AIDS.

The host, Bishop Paul, who heads St. Marks Coptic Orthodox Church had earlier invited Rev. Kobia to officially inaugurate a new pharmacy and a private wing of the church's hospital which was newly constructed.

For further information contact
Mitch Odera
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P. O. Box 14205
00800 Westlands
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 254 - 020 - 4441483 / 4441338/9
Fax: 254 - 020 - 4443241, 4445835
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