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AFRICA

Regional office for Africa seeks to contribute to peace and development discourses

In Brief:

- The Addis Ababa Office of the Bahá'í International Community is participating in a number of discourses relating to peace and sustainable development in Africa.
- One thread of its participation is a stress on the importance of applying spiritual values, such as ethics, duty, honesty and justice, in meeting challenges.



ADDIS ABABA ? The Addis Ababa Office of the Bahá'í International Community has delivered statements to and cosponsored several side events at major UN conferences in 2015.

In July, at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD), the Office cosponsored a side event convened by the African Interfaith Initiative on the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

Held on 14 July 2015 at the Grand Yordanos Hotel, the event brought together policy makers and faith leaders, including Sheikh Abdallah Mangala Luaba, Grand Mufti of the Democratic Republic of Congo; Bishop Abraham Desta, Apostolic Vicar of Meki Vicariate, Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar; and Iteffa Gobena Molte, Ecumenical Envoy to the African Union, All African Conference of Churches (AACC).

Techeste Ahderom, Resident Representative of the BIC office in Addis, delivered closing remarks to the meeting, stressing the importance of applying spiritual principles ? such as ?ethics, values, duty, honesty, and justice? ? to the issues of financing for development.

In September, the Office cosponsored an event in New York during the UN Sustainable Development Summit on ?Agenda 2063 ? The Africa We Want.? Cosponsored with the South African Institute of International Affairs,? the event addressed the question of how to end conflict in Africa.

?The goal of ending all conflict in Africa within five years is highly ambitious, but speaks to the unparalleled role peace plays in development efforts,? said Mr. Ahderom. ?This is a burning issue for the continent.?

In November, the Office released a statement on the occasion of the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Paris. The statement addressed the issue of climate change and African agriculture, discussing, among other things, the importance of involving women farmers and religious leaders in efforts to both improve agriculture and ameliorate climate change, which are linked.

One such challenge that afflicts communities in Africa is the marginalization of girls and women, the statement said. This situation will only be aggravated by environmental changes as women are largely responsible for securing food, water and energy for cooking and heating. Scarcity of resources arising from climate change intensifies the woman's burden and leaves less time to earn an income, attend school or care for the family.

The Addis Office of the BIC works in collaboration with governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental agencies operating on the African stage. Prominent among its efforts is participating in discourses that contribute to the well-being and progress of African populations. It seeks thereby to lend impetus to the advancement of world peace and the spiritual and material advancement of a global civilization.

The Office maintains strong ties with the African Union, which traces its roots to the founding of the Organization of African Unity in Addis Ababa in 1963.

The Office is committed to all efforts that advance the prosperity, peace and security of Africa, including the realization of the African Union Development Agenda 2063.
