

# **Pontiff: World Needs to Hear Africa's Voice**

## **Urges Namibia to Contribute to Development**

VATICAN CITY, JUNE 2, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The needs of Africa must be presented in the international scene from an African perspective, Benedict XVI is affirming.

The Pope stated this Friday in a written address he gave to Namibia's new ambassador to the Holy See, Neville Melvin Gertze. The Holy Father that day received in audience and addressed eight new ambassadors, giving each a written statement afterward. The envoys present represented Mongolia, India, Benin, New Zealand, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Namibia and Norway.

The Pontiff noted how "Africa presents a varied panorama of political, social and economic realities. Some of these are success stories, other have not met the expectations of the peoples that such initiatives were meant to serve."

In this context, Namibia has "a relatively short history as a member of the family of independent nations," he recalled. Namibia gained independence in 1990.

"As you continue to strive towards a balanced distribution of wealth that will offer greater possibilities of improvement for those who are less fortunate, I encourage the nation to continue along the path of strengthening the common good by consolidating democratic institutions and practices and seeking justice for all," the Bishop of Rome added.

He went on to affirm the Holy See's confidence that the southwest African nation can "contribute to positive developments" on the continent and in the international community.

The Pope explained: "Because of its history of peaceful independence and integration, its unity in diversity, and its responsible management of natural resources, Namibia can offer an example for the development of other countries. It is important furthermore that the voice of Namibia be expressed in international meetings since the present needs and aspirations of the people of your continent must be presented objectively and from an African perspective, and not solely in accordance with the interests of others."

The Holy Father also lauded that in Namibia, the Church "is pleased to exercise her mission in a climate of religious freedom."

And he mentioned that one of the nation's priorities is caring for those with HIV/AIDS.

"In this area the Church will continue to offer its assistance willingly," the Pontiff affirmed. "She is convinced that only a strategy based on education to individual responsibility in the framework of a moral view of human sexuality, especially through conjugal fidelity, can have a real impact on the prevention of this disease. The Church is pleased to cooperate in this task especially in the field of education where new generations of young people are formed as active and responsible members of society."

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