

Bishop Nathan Kyamanyara – 09/09/2015

Short Introductory to Justice and Peace

Topic at the Bristol: Faith in the Future, Sustainable Development Goals

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Church of Uganda is the 2nd biggest church in Uganda after the Roman Catholic church.

Buyoro-Kitara Diocese is one of the 36 dioceses in the country. We are located 230km from Kampala City.

Our long term plan is our effort to put right what has gone wrong in the past five decades, where we have witnessed the degradation of the environment particularly our forests and landscape, largely due to activities like agriculture and uncontrolled cutting down of forests, driven by disregard of the laws, corruption and greed.

Lately there is the phenomenon of oil and gas industry going on in the Albertine area where we operate; there is going to be a lot of gases that require to be outbalanced through planting of more trees, otherwise, the climate will likely change so drastically. These two major phenomena alone, if not addressed, are bound to cause a lot of injustices and undermine peace – indeed injustices are already taking place .e.g. displaced people where the refinery is going to be constructed. The unfair and corrupt compensation process of building roads and power lines are already causing outcries among people. Furthermore, due to the appreciation of land in the Albertine area, many many people are rushing into the area. The people from other areas with money are buying off the naïve and poor families cheaply and after they finish off the money, they have no home, no education for their children, leading to redundancy, drug abuse and prostitution. Our project, therefore is set to mitigate the effects of the two phenomena above as our contribution and we see climate change as an entry point to help us implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals. I will give a few examples.

In fact the SDGs are not re-inventing the wheel, but they help us to focus and thematize in broad categories. Climate change is a life reality, which will not be addressed in isolation from the other aspects of life. As I have pointed out above, climate change is an entry point.

Examples:

1. tree planting: we established seedlings manned by the Mothers Union Groups who then charge a nominal fee to meet optional costs – this entry alone is addressing SDGs 15, 7 & 5, concerning gender and SDG 1 about poverty. Life is the interconnectedness of the different aspects
2. Coffee plantation in Wambabya SDGs 15 & 1, we use the proceeds to do well for drier areas, SDG 6
3. Youth doing bricks: this creates employment for the youths and it sucks garbage from the city – but it also undermines tree felling but provides an alternative – bricks.

All these and much more. This is a demonstration that climate change projects should be designed to address more than one life aspect to restore the dignity of man. “When divinity is removed from humanity, human beings become commodities”.

An Ethiopian proverb says “when spider webs combine, they can entangle a lion”, in other words, if we each 'do our part', this climate change 'lion' will be entangled. Issues which lead to injustice and lack of peace are: water, land energy, food, security – etc. If we work together then we should live in harmony.

Thank you.