Pax Romana- International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs
(Pax Romana-ICMICA)

Presentation at the Kenya Movement of Catholic Professionals AGM
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Who are we?

• Founded in Rome in 1946, by the members of the International Movement of Catholic Students (Pax Romana-IMCS, 1921).
• Students were anxious to perpetuate their apostolic ideals into their adult lives after studies, so envisaged creating a Catholic movement of professionals.
• Together with IYCW, Pax Romana (ICMICA/IMCS) sparked the creation of International Catholic Organizations (ICOs), ICOs played a great role in the Vatican Council II.
• Various members of Pax Romana-ICMICA attended the deliberations of Vatican II (1962-65) as lay auditors or experts- Pax Romana gathered over 100 national associations of students and graduates around the world for common reflection.
• Member of the Pontifical Council for the Laity; as an NGO, it has consultative status with ECOSOC, UNESCO and the Council of Europe.
• With the support of UNESCO, organised the 1st international interfaith meeting, from Christmas to New Year in 1959-1960 in Manila, Philippine [an issue that was later picked up at the Vatican II].
• We have formed great leaders of our time- founder of EU, Gustavo Gutiérrez, Kofi Annan, Robert Mugabe, Ghana's Cardinal Peter Turkson. In Kenya- Augustine Ombati- the pioneers of St. Paul's Chaplain.
Hope and challenges of our Church Today

- The recognition of the church as the people of God, which calls forth the active participation and co-responsibility of the laity and all the baptized throughout the life of the church.
- A deeper analysis on the role of women in the church, as Pope Francis has indicated, is a major challenge for the present and future of the church.
- Special attention to the role of youth and young professions as both the future of the church, more so, as human capital for the church.
- A spirituality that integrates faith and action—coherence between church teaching (Scripture, words, theology, Catholic social teaching, etc.) and lived action (charity, advocacy, liturgy, etc.).
- A dialogical approach to those outside the visible Roman Catholic Church (inter-religious, ecumenical, and intercultural-dialogue) for social transformation and evangelisation. In Europe ‘post-Christian era’, in Africa ‘different cultures, poverty etc’
- Commitment and witness to justice within the church and in the church’s relationship in the world. The option for the poor remains a central element of this commitment— that is why we speak about human rights.
Our Identity, as Pax Romana ICMICA

• Creating an understanding of the **Church as the People of God**, promoting participation of the Laity in the life of the Church, in the spirit of **Vatican II**.

• **Being a voice and witness (of Jesus Christ)** in/out of the Church, in a **prophetic style**—that is, being in what Pope Francis calls ‘**at the periphery/margins/borders/frontiers**’, informed by the **universal (catholic) dimension**.

• **Denouncing injustices and human rights violations**, including speaking for and supporting those who have been victims of injustice, and uncovering the root causes of the violence—**a big challenge in Africa**.

• **Being an intellectual and a critical resource to society** and to the church, a role of reflection, research, animation and think-tank to the society and the Church—especially at this time of ‘**crises**’.

• **Promoting dialogue**, between faiths and cultures, as a witness to evangelisation and inculturation of the Gospel.

• **Supporting training/formation of leaders** for our mission in the world with special attention to the youth/young professionals—support youth movements.
Structure of Pax Romana ICMICA

• **Pax Romana** - IMCS (1921) & ICMICA (1946)
• **Plenary Assembly** - highest decision-making body, meets every four years, and consists of representatives from the member federations.
• **International Council** - oversees the implementation of PA decisions and the work of the International Team, consisting of International Team and Vice Presidents
• **International Team** - the executive and co-ordinating body of the Movement, which is responsible for the implementation of the decisions and takes care of the day-to-day work of the International Secretariat. Composed of the President, Secretary General, Financial Vice-President and Chaplain.
• **Vice Presidents for each Region** - Africa, N. America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Asia.
• Maintain an international office in Geneva.
Where are we in Africa?

- Team: Vice President, Chaplain, Coordinator and national federation officials.
- 19 affiliated movements
- 10 movements waiting for affiliation - Senegal, Malawi, Ethiopia, South Sudan
- Contact groups, mainly through IMCS - Egypt, Tunisia
What are we doing?

• Supporting the church: latest being our contribution to the work of the committee on Curial Reforms - here were our proposals:
  ▪ New strategies and structures, guided by the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, are needed to support efforts at the parish, national, continental and global levels.
  ▪ The reinstitution of structures of lay participation and dialogue at all levels in the church, including the organization of a Fourth World Congress of the Lay Apostolate and creation of a Pontifical Congregation for the Laity.
  ▪ Support international lay initiatives - especially initiatives concerned with training youth, students and young professionals.
  ▪ The relocation of certain curial offices from Rome to other continents, as a witness and a sign of the universality of the Catholic mission and communion.

• Capacity Building in Human Rights [A regional program]:
  ▪ Internship program for young people – almost 15 young professionals from Africa [unfortunately
  ▪ Universal Periodic Review (UPR), example in Kenya and Madagascar.
  ▪ Next cycle – Zimbabwe and Togo

• Representing and advocating for the Laity at national and regional episcopal conferences as well as in Rome.
  ▪ AMECAE, SECAM, Pontifical Council for the Laity & National episcopal conferences
What are we doing? – cont -

- Formation of the Laity- periodical meeting to discuss church documents – last meeting was a reflection on Evangelii Gaudium, mainly through google-hangouts.

- Most activities done at national/local levels. Example of activities at local levels:
  - DRC – Election observation, support to young professional formation.
  - Togo/Zambia- support to Bishops
  - Madagascar- UPR
  - Kenya- UPR/CST
Many Catholic professionals [doctors, teachers] at different levels but **not vertically and horizontally organised.** Most are **in high profile positions** - in and outside the public service.

**BUT,** Catholic professionals have not adequately **utilized our comparative strength that lies in their professional formation and numbers.**

There is need **to work together under one platform,** mainly at the national and regional level, fostered by groups like KMCP, at national level and Pax Romana-ICMICA, at regional and global level.

Be **present and feasible in the local and regional Episcopal conference,** working together with the Commissions for Pastoral and Lay Apostolates [example of Tanzania/Zambia]. **KMCP has tried but more needs to be done.**

**Support the local Bishops** - one idea: ‘map Catholic professionals’ and ‘mobilise them to support the church’, also, contribute to pastoral letters. **Can KMCP take up this role?**

**Approach Catholic professionals in high profile position to join us** - those in academia, civil service, private sector [example of Tanzania]. **Who are these people in Kenya?**

We **must be ready to donate our time, finances and human capital.**

**Oh, we must remember that we might or might not be welcomed by the Church** - but we have to keep trying!
Thank you

A short dialogue on how to sustain our movement in Kenya based on the reflections.