Project Evaluation

REINFORCING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S INFLUENCE IN AFRICA TOWARDS GOOD GOVERNANCE, JUSTICE AND PEACE

Good Governance Project Phase V: 2021-2024

(Project Nr. 100-900-1664 ZG)

Clients:
Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM)

&

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ABBREVIATIONS

AACC	All Africa Conferences of Churches
ACEAC	Association des Conférences Episcopales de l'Afrique Centrale
ACERAC	Association des Conférences Episcopales de la Région de l'Afrique Centrale
ACRL–RfP	African Council of Religious Leaders – Religions for Peace
AHCE	Assemblée de la Hiérarchie Catholique d'Egypte
AMECEA	Association of Member Episcopal Conference of East Africa
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
ARBE	Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment
CCEE	Consilium Conferentiarum Episcoporum Europae
CEDOI	Conférences Episcopales de Madagascar et de l'Océan Indien
CELAM	Latin American Episcopal Conference
CENCO	Conférence Episcopale Nationale du Congo
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel–Saharan States
CERNA	Conférence Episcopale Régionale du Nord de l'Afrique
CIDO	Citizens & Diaspora Directorate
CIDSE	Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité
COMECE	Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CPLO	Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Offices
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CYNESA	Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEAS	The European External Action Service
FABC	Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
CGLTE-OA	Convergence Globale des Luttes pour la Terre et l'Eau-Ouest Africaine[1]/
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
IMBISA	Inter-Regional Meeting of Bishops of Southern Africa
JPDC	Justice, Peace and Development Commission
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
OLOL	Our Land is Our Life
REBAC	African Ecclesial Network for the Congo Basin Forest
RECOWA	Reunion of Episcopal Conferences of West Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SECAM	Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar
SIMI	Scalabrini International Migration Institute
SCAIF	Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

[1] Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggles - West Africa

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2007, Misereor and its partners have supported SECAM – the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar - with its network of regional and national episcopal conferences to carry out continent-wide good governance, justice, peace, and development interventions that seek to raise the presence and visibility of the Catholic Church in Africa as the voice of the voiceless in advocating for policies, programs, and practices that serve the common good. A more visible and active engagement of the Church with the African Union (AU) and its five regional blocs would enable the church to advocate on issues of concern to the poor and marginalized that often get crowded out of public decision-making forums. In furtherance of this, the Governance, Justice, Peace, and Development Commission (JPDC) of SECAM, which has been the implementing wing of the interventions for the church's JPDC work, successfully established a liaison office of SECAM with the AU in Addis. It has also been working with CARITAS Africa, and the National Episcopal Conferences to initiate advocacy and other forms of actions that advance the church's agenda to promote just, transparent, and peaceful policies, programs, and practices to impact the lives of the 1.3 billion citizens of Africa directly and indirectly. SECAM derives its mandate from the Gospel and the social teaching of the Catholic Church which enjoins it to work for justice, advocate and work for authentic and holistic development, and promote actions that transform conditions that serve the needs of people, especially those in marginalized communities.

The SECAM and Misereor partnerships have run on a three-year project cycle since 2007. The current Phase V project which started in January 2020 will close in December 2024. The Phase V project was designed to close critical gaps in the implementation processes of previous project cycles. Critically, it responded to the calls in the Phase IV evaluation report for a stronger presence and voice of the Catholic Church at the AU and other regional and continental institutions. The call came from evaluation participants from the AU, Civil Society groups, and other faith-based actors engaging with the AU who cited the moral voice, contextual relevance, and legitimacy the Church brings to discussions at the AU and other bodies because of its broad and deep geographical presence and penetration that gives it a vertical and horizontal connection with people and networks that most state and civil society agencies do not have. Accordingly, Phase V interventions sought to leverage these unique strengths to amplify the church's voice to influence high-level decision-making on the continent in four priority areas to i) promote good governance and peaceful elections: ii) address issues of migration and human trafficking, iii) advance land governance and the protection of natural resources against unbridled exploitation, especially in the extractive sectors; and iv) address issues of environment and climate change.

Purpose of Evaluation: This end-of-phase evaluation was commissioned to establish the outcomes and impact of SECAM's Phase V governance, justice, peace, and development activities, using the OECD criteria to document verifiable evidence of SECAM's contribution to changes in the target activity areas at the national, regional, and/or continental levels through its efforts "to strengthen collaboration and social action among 4 Episcopal Conferences of Africa and the Islands through the promotion of justice, peace and integral human development across the continent"[2] as captured also in Appendix 1. Specifically, the objectives of the evaluation are: i) establish the relevance and effectiveness of the strategies SECAM is using for the implementation of the project; ii) establish evidence of changes SECAM has contributed to at AU, Regional Episcopal conferences, and other international platforms as a result of the project; iii) establish the extent to which SECAM directly contributed to observed changes as a result of the interventions made by the project iv) based on the findings, recommend the appropriate strategy that Phase VI of the project should adopt in order to achieve desired results in the lobby and advocacy efforts increase the influence of the Church in Africa; and v) recommend focal areas that the project could scale up in the next phase of implementation[3].

[2] SECAM. (2024). Terms of Reference for Evaluation of the Justice, Peace and Development Commission 5th Phase Project. Accra: SECAM.

[3] SECAM. (2024). Terms of Reference for Evaluation of the Justice, Peace and Development Commission 5th Phase Project. Accra: SECAM.

Methodology: Using qualitative approaches that comprised desk reviews and interviews with key stakeholders, the evaluation collected data that permitted the conduct of a summative and formative evaluation in parallel. The summative component allowed the evaluation to take stock of outcomes, potential impact, and sustainability of the project interventions to date, using the planned interventions, performance outcomes, and impact indicators as the yardstick. The formative component focused on assessing the coherence, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the structures, systems, and procedures SECAM used to implement the Phase V project.

Key Findings: The evaluation finds that under the Phase V project SECAM has realized several important changes and results than in previous phases, despite the existence room for improvement in different segments. Under its institutional ***Governance mechanisms,*** SECAM has new leadership in the Standing Committee and the General Secretariat. This has led to important decisions that have facilitated the revamping of efforts for the JPDC section of SECAM. The AU liaison office has reopened, and a new Liaison Officer is in place at the AU Liaison Office. The Standing Committee was also able to engage in the emerging destabilization in the Sahel with the issuance of statements. However, the Standing Committee remained centered on church leaders (Cardinals, Archbishops, and bishops) with no participation of technically competent lay people or women religious to provide technical and thematic guidance in the deliberations and decision-making of the Committee. Additionally, because members of the Committee are busy people in their main domains of work, they tend to rely largely on presentations at meetings for decision-making. As such, a full appreciation of contexts before deliberations is a challenge.

For instance, evaluation participants believed the Committee may have failed to approve management's request for increased staff strength for program effectiveness because they did not fully appreciate the need and potential benefits of the request. The decision leaves the JDPC Secretariat still handicapped in its ability to effectively champion SECAM's activities with other partners across the continent.

On Management Performance, Phase V witnessed very active engagement of JPDC staff with partners at different levels to increase SECAM's visibility and participation in advocacy initiatives. This included SECAM's participation in key advocacy events with the AU, the European Union, and the United Nations. Management also took steps to address internal communication issues. However, management needs to work harder to improve its communication with external stakeholders, including officeholders at the level of national and regional episcopal conferences who indicated they have little to no information about SECAM's activities within their respective territories.

With respect to project design and implementation, the JDPC demonstrated commitment to change in ensuring that the design of the Phase V project complied with the recommendations from the Phase IV evaluation. Contrary to the previous phases, the Phase V project had a clearly articulated theory of change and a logical framework to guide its design and implementation. Recommendations of realigning staff capacities at the AU Liaison officer were taken up and implemented in Phase V. Phase V design included verifiable indicators for each component of the project strategies. The clear evidence of transfer of learning that has yielded demonstrable evidence in the outcomes of the Phase V implementation demonstrates the benefits of continuity in staff between project cycles. However, evaluation participants lamented how the limitation of staff, numerically, technically, and professionally, continues to be an obstacle to SECAM's ability to effectively and timely represent the Church in multiple spaces where important decisions are being made and to carry through the voice of the church on important matters when it should. While the current staff may continue to do their best to represent SECAM, they are numerically short-handed and do not always have all the technical and professional competencies required for effective delivery in all sectors that SECAM's activities cover.

Key Recommendations

a) Recommendations on project design and management

i) *Strategically Focus and Push to address specific issues in specific regions*: While the governance, justice, peace, and development needs of Africa are varied in spread and depth across the continent, SECAM cannot address all of them at the same time. We recommend that SECAM be strategical and prioritize its geographical and thematic fields of engagement to address the most pressing needs of specific geographies, based on a thorough assessment of the relative needs of the different regions. Concentrating efforts will allow SECAM to mobilize its experts and resources from other regions to support a whole-of-church approach to help the focal sister region or regions address the identified issues.

ii) *Establish Post-Advocacy Action Teams*: Successful advocacies do not necessarily lead to transformative changes in designed policies and actions, as recipients of advocacy messages may not necessarily be the policy designers and implementers. To ensure its advocacy work leads to transformative change, we recommend that SECAM institutionalizes post-advocacy follow-up mechanisms, working with affected regional and national conferences and liaising with other interest-holders to sustain the pressure for concrete action to take place. This will require planning and acquiring requisite resources to support follow-up actions that translate advocacy messages into actionable policies, programs, and practices that change lives.

iii) *Establish agile and adaptive structures of interventions*: SECAM works in a volatile space where the nature of the issues it deals with can and does change rapidly. Hence, SECAM cannot afford to be largely reactive, it must be proactive. It must be agile in making the voice of the church heard at critical moments when it is most needed. Institutional inertia in decision-making processes cannot be a good excuse for delayed actions when the lives and dignity of people are at stake. Hence, we recommend that SECAM carries out an audit of its decision-making processes and devise appropriate protocols, rules, and regulations that facilitate quick actions to changing operational contexts without sacrificing probity, transparency, accountability, and the grounding of such actions in the beliefs, values, and principles of the Church.

b) Recommendations for promoting good governance, peace, and security

i) *Build Capacity for Preventive Diplomacy*: The wide footprint of the church gives it ears and eyes on the ground, giving it the potential to have early and firsthand information on the ground. The Church is also a respected voice in many countries, even in situations where it is numerically a minority entity. It is also able to engage in the civil space at multiple levels – from the smallest community to the continental level. We recommend that, as the governance, justice, peace, and development (GJPD) advocacy wing of the Church in Africa, SECAM takes advantage of its position of influence, the network of the diocesan, national, and regional justice, peace, and development commissions to build negotiations and mediation capacities at all levels to support diplomatic engagements to avert any impasse. It should leverage these gifts to provide leadership for faith-based and civil society organizations to play more proactive roles in promoting good governance, peace, and development, especially in times of political crises.

ii) *Institutionalize proactive civic education and election monitoring and observation:* Election monitoring and observation is a key instrument for supporting transparency, fairness, and inclusiveness in elections. Elections happen in known cycles and countries likely to have challenges with elections are predictable. The factors and actions that contribute to electoral disputes and violence are embedded in known steps in the electoral process, ranging from the promulgation of the electoral laws, the compilation of voter registers, civic engagement, and education, among others. However, SECAM's participation in electoral exercises is not structured to support upstream and midstream processes in the electoral value chain. To be a more effective guarantor of good governance and democracy we

recommend that SECAM institutionalizes more permanent and robust structures at continental, regional, and national levels to accompany electoral processes along the election value chain, especially in countries prone to having disputed elections to ensure transparent and peaceful elections take place.

c) Recommendations for improving external communication

i) *Enhance Visibility, Relevance, and Impact in cyberspace*: Electronic media spaces are the first points of call for people seeking information on parties of interest. Although SECAM has a website, it is not enough to secure visibility for its GJDPC initiatives. The content on the site does not provide current, complete, and pertinent information on SECAM's GJPDC initiatives in ways that draw traffic to it. For instance, a website has no tap that directs visitors to information specific to its governance, justice, peace, and development activities. It does not have the capacity to build connections with young people, engage them on issues of interest to them, and facilitate the building of advocacy networks on issues that appeal to the youth. The site advertises social media links, but these are not functional. We recommend therefore that SECAM consider engaging a social media content specialist to develop content and facilitate engagements on its social platforms.

ii) *Set up a continuous engagement and education program: besides statutory meetings and conferences,* SECAM currently has no alternative platforms for holding scheduled outreach and educational Webinars (monthly or quarterly) that focus on topical issues pertinent to its agenda and of particular interest to member regions or countries. SECAM does not also adequately explore and tap into the expertise of its clerical and lay members to educate and mobilize them for engagement on its agenda. To create space for greater participation in SECAM's GJPDC activities, we recommend that SECAM institutionalizes regular engagement and education programs with its members. Church leaders (cardinals, archbishops, bishops, or religious men and women) as well as lay persons who are experts in a subject matter e.g. extractive industries and conflict, elections and conflicts, migration, human trafficking, etc.) or who are very close, geographically, to the issues that matter to SECAM could be identified and invited to lead the webinars issues of primary concern to the ordinary person, Catholics, and non-Catholics alike. Presentations in lay persons' language with simultaneous translation in the official languages of SECAM should be considered[4]. Topics should be selected in consultation with RJPC Chairpersons and Coordinators to enhance co-leadership, ownership, and participation. An equitable selection of issues/topics, speakers, or panelists across all regions will enhance relevant issues dear to regions and potentially increase participation and buy-in across the continent.

Other recommendations for strengthening SECAM's internal capacities are detailed in the relevant section of this report. They include recommendations to institutionalize joint standing committee and staff retreats and reflections to enhance decision-making; consideration for institutionalizing tenure to ensure Professionalism and Continuity of Leadership of the GJPD Commission of SECAM; consideration for restructuring the GJPDC wing of SECAM into a directorate with designated units responsible for different aspects of the directorate's work; and the need to augment internal fundraising within its member conferences to ensure greater financial independence and a move towards sustainability. The latter would include establishing ethical guidelines that facilitate SECAM's engagement with eh private sector and foundations in Africa to solicit funding that support is GJPDC initiatives on the continent.

[4] The webinar series could be modelled on the weekly Global Peace Studies for Sustainable Development in Africa webinars ran out of St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Zoom link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84157580433?pwd=Ny9kRGR1TjBtaHNiTGlFaWU4UW5Mdz09

I. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Contemporary Space of Governance, Justice, Peace, and Development in Africa

Citizens in countries across Africa continue to experience important challenges with access to good governance, justice, peace, and authentic and sustainable development. The perennial and elusive struggles of governments to ensure dignified and sustainable livelihoods have been worsened by a number of factors in recent times. The Covid-19 pandemic decimated economic opportunities, especially for the poor and marginalized, as many households lost, not only family members but also sources of income and livelihoods. Post-pandemic political inefficiencies and instability in many areas have made recovery difficult, if not impossible. Persistent high levels of corruption and wastage of public resources continue to deny basic services to citizens. Unbridled natural resource exploitation and environmental degradation have spun very active participation of youth in the struggle to grab a share through the proliferation of small-scale mining activities that destroy vegetative cover, farms, and pollute water bodies. Local conflicts over political participation and access to communal resources, such as the herder-farmer conflicts, have contributed to destabilization of local communities in many areas. The spread of Jihardist violent extremist activities has led to the destabilization of political systems across the continent, but most poignantly in West Africa where the return of military dictatorships was popularly welcomed.

Popular discontent with democratically elected governments that have failed to deliver the dividends of democracy has led to the uprising of the youth to challenge the relevance and legitimacy of governments, sometimes violently. Citizen's discontent with their political and economic conditions has spilled over to a new phase of decolonization in which citizens support the severing of diplomatic relationships between the colonial masters of their countries and the ousting of businesses associated with the hegemon countries. This dynamic has triggered the return of the Cold War competition for spheres of influence in Africa, where Russia and China compete to replace ousted colonial countries with military and economic packages that would entrench their hold on the continent's natural resources. The evolving context creates new dynamics of governance, justice, peace, security, and development unanticipated in electoral democratic systems that SECAM seeks to promote through its interventions to date.

Alongside these challenges, several emerging opportunities give Africa a chance to leapfrog its development agenda, if properly harnessed. The increased competition for spheres of influence in Africa, for instance, is spurring increased large-scale investments in infrastructure, especially in the transport, communication, and power sectors that create opportunities for increased investment, development, and trade within and between countries on the continent that can reduce poverty. The launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) offers great opportunities for the youth to leverage other youth-focused entrepreneurial development programs of the African Development Bank to create businesses that transform their lives. Policy intents, however, do not translate into veritable actions by themselves; advocacy, lobbying, and accompaniment are often required to ensure appropriate and inclusive subsidiary legislations, programs, and practices are rolled out to make the policies work for the people. The governance spaces must be just, inclusive, safe, secure, peaceful, and enabling for all actors.

1.1.2 Background to SECAM-Misereor Good Governance Project

Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) creates a continent-wide space for Catholic Bishops across Africa to engage with each other, reflect on common issues affecting the Church and people of the continent, and express with a common voice, the church's views and advice on policies, programs, and actions that affect it and the people it serves. SECAM therefore serves as the interface point between the Church in Africa and continental governmental bodies such as the

African Union and its regional blocks. It is also the church organ that interfaces with civil society organizations on the continent on matters of mutual interest.

SECAM houses two commissions - the Evangelization Commission and the Justice, Peace, Peace and Development Commission. The former oversees the work of the "... Catholic Biblical Centre for Africa and Madagascar (BICAM) which is responsible for Biblical Apostolate programs on the continent; the Theological Committee (COMITHEOL); which co-ordinates theological activities; the Pan-African Laity Co-ordination Board; an organ of liaison, co-operation and joint action for the training and formation of the Laity; [and the] Association of Catholic Education for Africa and Madagascar (ASSECAM)."[5] The Justice, Peace, and Development Commission, oversees work that promotes justice, peace, development, and good governance on the continent. Its activities cover engagements on African political, diplomatic, and social situations and enable SECAM to have a voice in issues related to the promotion of inclusive and authentic human development on the continent.

In furtherance of these objectives, SECAM has been working since 2007 with Misereor and other development partners to create capacities and synergies that allow the Church in Africa to have an influential voice in public policy and program decision-making spaces such as the African Union and its regional blocs[6] on political, social, economic, and development issues that affect the voiceless and marginalized on the continent. The Justice, Peace, and Development Commission (JPDC) of SECAM has served as the implementation unit of the interventions. Through it, SECAM and Misereor, have been working with the AU Secretariat in Addis Ababa, Regional Episcopal Conferences in Africa and Madagascar, CARITAS Africa, and National Episcopal Conferences to build capacities at all levels for effective representation and advocacy for the creation of more just, transparent, and peaceful policies, programs, and conditions that serve the needs of marginalized communities in the light of Gospel values and the social teaching of the Catholic Church. Through these, SECAM and Misereor, together with the implementing partners, hope to positively impact directly and indirectly the lives of the 1.3 billion citizens of Africa.

The partnership between SECAM and Misereor runs interventions based on three three-year cycles per phase. The partnership is currently completing the 5th Phase. Phase V interventions were built on the affirmation at the end of the Phase IV evaluation report that "the relevance of the JPDC is undisputed, also by non-Catholics, and stakeholders at the African Union (AU) want to see a stronger presence and voice of the Church at the AU". The Phase V project therefore sought to reinforce the Catholic Church's influence in Africa towards good governance, justice, and peace to consolidate the gains made in previous phases.

1.1.3 Planned Interventions for Phase V Project

a) Project Overview:

The goal of the Phase V project is to increase the influence of the Catholic Church in the political and developmental processes at various levels that reflect the concerns and interests of the poor and marginalized to establish a more just, prosperous, transparent, and peaceful African society living in harmony with nature. The intermediate objectives of the Project are:

i. To strengthen the Church's advocacy campaign at the African Union and other Regional Economic Communities.
ii. To strengthen good governance and peacebuilding in Africa.
iii. To contribute to the reduction of irregular migration of Africans to Europe and human trafficking.

[5] SECAM, see https://secam.org/departments/

[6] The regional blocks of SECAM include Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and Southern African Development Community (SADC)

iv. To step up the campaign for environmental protection in line with *Laudato Si*.
v. To step up campaign for more just land governance and natural resource management in Africa" (SECAM, Project Proposal p, 6.)

Appendix 2 is a cull-out of the theory of change of the Phase V project which, in summary, states that :

> **If** SECAM, with the help of experts, identifies priority advocacy issues on migration, governance, and peacebuilding, **and if** SECAM engages the AU, and sensitizes Regional/National Episcopal Conferences, Regional Economic blocks & national governments, **and** leverages strategic networks with partners such as *Laudato Si* action platform, CPLO Network, and Our Land is Our Life support REBAC, alongside building capacities for these partners, **then** SECAM will create intermediate outcomes that enhance its influence on policies and programmes of AU and other Economic blocks in Africa that benefit the marginalized; improve livelihood opportunities for the poor, protect the environment, to ensure a more just, prosperous, transparent, and peaceful African society living in harmony with nature.

Appendix 3 provides the logical framework that governed the design and implementation of the project. It maps the stated objectives, associated outcomes, indicators, and key activities to be undertaken by SECAM. It also provides statements of verifiable outputs, short-term outcomes, interim outcomes, and anticipated project impact. In sum, unlike other phases, SECAM had a clear vision of what it wanted to do, what it hoped to achieve, and which organizations it needed to partner with to achieve its objectives.

b) Phase V Project Strategy

In the Phase V governance, justice, and peace project, SECAM aimed to be a facilitator, an advocate, and an animator that adds value to the efforts the Regional and National Episcopal Conferences and other partnering organizations and institutions were making in the promotion of good governance and development on the continent. Accordingly, SECAM adopted three main strategies, namely:

- ***Promoting Advocacy***: SECAM planned to enhance its advocacy and lobbying efforts at global, continental, and national levels, on issues affecting the people it served. At the global level, it intended to collaborate with the Universal Church and other Episcopal blocs on joint peacebuilding advocacy. On the continental level, SECAM aimed to partner with regional episcopal conferences, civil society organizations, and religious groups, utilizing expert lobbyists to navigate advocacy fields within regional structures. SECAM's approach involved evidence-based advocacy through the articulation and sharing of position papers and the organization of workshops and conferences. SECAM also planned to establish advocacy platforms, engage the press to amplify their messages and build the advocacy skills of staff and partners to increase their influence on policy decisions. Its advocacy work will be grounded in the Church's values and bring the perspectives of faith into public decision-making.

- ***Capacity Building and Information Brokerage***: SECAM planned to empower key Church stakeholders, such as Regional Coordinators of justice, peace, and development portfolios and Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Offices (CPLOs) to enhance their effectiveness in advocacy, governance, peacebuilding, environmental protection, and land justice. It intended to leverage its network to identify experienced trainers who would design and deliver targeted training programs for Church personnel, equipping them to mobilize communities and advocate on critical issues. Participants in these workshops would develop action plans, which SECAM would monitor for long-term impact. SECAM also planned to continuously upskill its project staff, create platforms for information sharing among Church actors, and connect them with civil society organizations for expert guidance. It would also compile and share relevant information with Episcopal Conferences and gather data to produce performance reports, all supported by a comprehensive communication strategy.

- ***Networking***: SECAM planned to build strategic partnerships and networks with various organizations to enhance the delivery on its initiatives. Hence, it hoped to collaborate with groups like "Our Land is Our Life," SIMI, and the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), as well as civil society and religious organizations such as OXFAM, AACC, CIDSE, and the African Council of Religious Leaders for Peace. SECAM also aimed to strengthen ties with Church actors in Africa, working with JENA, CYNESA, and Caritas-Africa on joint advocacy efforts, particularly around the AU-EU partnership and the UN Environment Assembly. Additionally, SECAM planned to collaborate with the Laudato Si Movement-Africa to mobilize Episcopal Conferences for the Vatican's Laudato Si Action Plan and support CPLO South Africa in expanding the CPLO Africa Network. Through these efforts, SECAM aimed to identify areas where it could exert influence, sensitize Episcopal Conferences, and empower the Church to promote ethical and just business practices across the continent.

c) **Thematic Focus and Priorities**

To achieve the above strategic objectives, SECAM prioritized the following activities:

1. Engaging in multi-level advocacy and lobbying efforts with key negotiators at COP28.
2. Advocating for the African debt initiative.
3. Participating in lobbying efforts during the 9th UN Binding Treaty negotiations.
4. Collaborating with CSEM Start-Up and Coordination teams.
5. Facilitating the reopening of the SECAM-AU Liaison Office.
6. Assisting in the Bishops' reflections on mineral natural resources and conflict; and
7. Maintaining coordination of working groups.

Specific activities for the priority areas were built around these thematic areas.

1.2 Purpose of Evaluation

This end-of-phase evaluation seeks to establish the outcomes and impact of SECAM's Phase V governance, justice, peace, and development activities with funding from Misereor and partners under project Nr. 100-900-1664 ZG. The evaluation focuses on identifying the outcomes of the project over the last 3 years and establishing observable evidence of change at the continental, regional, national, and partnering institutions. It seeks to understand how the project has contributed to meeting SECAM's strategic outcome which is "to strengthen collaboration and social action among 4 Episcopal Conferences of Africa and the Islands through the promotion of justice, peace and integral human development across the continent"[7] as captured also in Appendix 1.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are:

a) Review the strategy being used by the project under each thematic area and analyze its relevance and effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes.
b) Assess and document evidential changes exerted by the project at AU, Regional Episcopal conferences, and other international platforms.
c) Determine whether the improvements/changes made were a direct result of the interventions made by the project.
d) Based on the findings, recommend the appropriate strategy that the project should adopt in order to achieve the desired results. This is in terms of lobby and advocacy efforts aimed at enhancing the influence of the Church in Africa.

[7] SECAM. (2024). Terms of Reference for Evaluation of the Justice, Peace and Development Commission 5th Phase Project. Accra: SECAM.

e) Based on the findings, recommend focused areas that the project could scale up in the next phase of implementation[8].

1.3 Evolved Socio-political Contexts and Challenges of Advocacy for Good Governance

The context in which the Phase V project was planned is not the same context in which it was implemented. Phase V aimed to magnify the voice of SECAM on issues of governance, justice, and peace on the African continent. Since its inception in 2021, the project has operated in a somewhat different governance and political environment, given the context at the time of project design. However, between the design and implementation phases, Africa witnessed considerable turmoil and changes in the economic, governance, peace, and security operational context in several parts of the continent. Some of these changes challenged the continued relevance of aspects of the project's assumptions and triggered quick and crucial, but not always constructive, responses from the AU and regional bodies, especially ECOWAS. Notable changes in the operational context of the project include, but are not limited to:

- *Persistence of Violent Conflicts*: Ongoing conflicts in Sudan, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the upsurge of attacks from violent extremist and terrorist elements in the Sahel region overshadowed the implementation of SECAM's Phase V project activities. The associated political upheavals, the dislocation of people, and the peace and security challenges they unleashed have led to significant humanitarian crises, exacerbated poverty levels, and political crises across the continent. In many cases, these conflicts provided cover for the unbridled exploitation of natural resources for private and corporate gains to the detriment of citizens and the environment. The Congo Basin, in particular, continues to be a victim of environmental injustice in many forms.

- *Regional Economic destabilization and insecurities*: The economic fallout of the post COVID-19 pandemic intensified poverty and marginalization across the continent, as governments struggle to align their budgets to meet multiple, competing, and urgent needs. This is manifested in the rising cost of living, high levels of unemployment among the youth, limited educational opportunities, and multiple spin-off effects on health and food insecurity, among others. In several countries, attempts of governments to realign national revenues with expenditure needs through taxation, the removal of subsidies on essential goods, and other fiscal reforms have compounded economic hardships and triggered mass demonstrations, some of which have resulted in fatalities. Unrest and demonstrations by citizens in Kenya and Nigeria stand out here for mention.

- *Emerging Youth Activism:* The increasing demands of the youth for good governance, justice, and equitable development in Senegal, Kenya, and Nigeria epitomize the growing citizens' disillusionment and discontent with the political system across the continent epitomize the unwillingness of the youth to be docile anymore. They are claiming their space in the public sphere with or without the blessings of the state. The strong activism and support from the youth that greeted and continue to support military regimes in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger signal the re-legitimization of military takeovers and dictatorships on the continent. Youth economic activism also manifests itself in the increasing land degradation through illegal mining activities across West Africa.

- *Shaky Democracies and Intensification of political instability*: Persistent and intensifying activities of violent extremists and terrorist groups gave rise to multiple coup d'états, with associated security and governance challenges in the Sahel. Harsh responses from the AU and ECOWAS in attempts to restore democratic order have pushed the military juntas into isolationism and triggered the decision of leaders of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger to exit the ECOWAS framework and form their own Union – the Alliance of Sahel States (or L'Alliance des États du Sahel- AES) – in French. Guinea

[8] SECAM. (2024). Terms of Reference for Evaluation of the Justice, Peace and Development Commission 5th Phase Project. Accra: SECAM.

which had its own coup d'état and political isolation from ECOWAS showed sympathy to the AES but has not formally joined their exit from ECOWAS. Coup makers have ridden on popular anti-western sentiments to question the relevance of democratic systems of governance increasingly seen as vestiges of colonial imposition that must be thrown out alongside Western powers from their territories.

In parallel, the essence of democracy as a universal value has been challenged in many ways. Military leaders of Gabon, which also experienced a coup d'état in 2023, adding to the string of Francophone countries reverting to military rule, have initiated processes for returning the country to civilian rule. Beyond that, other coup leaders in West Africa have dug in, making no effort to move their countries toward the restoration of democracy. Senegal was able to avert a constitutional crisis, thanks to the uprising of citizens against efforts to amend the constitution to allow the sitting president to run for office a third time; Chad's disputed elections were settled in favor of the incumbent, but Togo effectively carried out a constitutional coup d'etat when the sitting government successfully changed. The disputes over democracy have created new political cleavages in the affected states with the potential for dictatorial regimes to entrench themselves through hard-handed rules.

The silence of ECOWAS in the case of Senegal and Togo in the attempted and successful usurpation of constitutions to entrench incumbents in power has created a crisis of confidence in democratic systems of governance and the ability of ECOWAS to provide regional leadership that safeguards democracy, peace, security, and promote development. However, in response to the evolving governance situation in Africa, particularly in the Sahel and Gabon, SECAM issued two statements addressing the current circumstances from the SECAM Standing Committee[9] and the SECAM Statement on The Political Situation in the Sahel and Central Africa. SECAM[10] urged the conflicting factions and the coup leaders to engage in peaceful dialogue, respect human rights, and pursue mediation. Additionally, SECAM appealed to the international community and Christians to support efforts for peace and the restoration of democracy, as well as to pray for an end to the conflicts. Furthermore to make SECAM's efforts more effective and relevant, SECAM's advocacy efforts must seek to prevent the promulgation of constitutions and laws that allow for unlimited terms of office for the sitting president, and these forms of re-embrasure of the culture of military dictatorships threaten the survival of democracy on the continent.

- *Violent extremism and the New Cold/Proxy War in Africa:* The destabilizations and insecurities in the Sahel due to the presence and activities of violent extremist and terrorist groups in the Sahel have given rise to new proxy wars of the Cold War era, with increasing competition between superpowers of the east and west maneuvering to assert control over the resource-rich countries that are wallowing in political turmoil. The associated political uncertainties and instabilities have intensified poverty and marginalization of already vulnerable communities in many ways. While the violent conflicts have led to the dislocation and displacement of communities in the Sahel that were already living in very fragile conditions, the exit of the AES from ECOWAS risks destabilizing regional trade, especially on food and other life-saving commodities that support livelihoods in the region, particularly in the Sahelian countries. Forced migration and human rights abuses in such countries require urgent but often muted responses due to security challenges.

- *Continuing environmental devastation and climate change*: Unbridled exploitation of the gifts of nature – forests for lumber and other tree products, lands for mining, water bodies for mining, etc. run against the tenets of Laudato-Si and continue the path of destroying nature in the name of seeking economic livelihoods. In particular, the reckless pollution of water bodies through small-scale mining presents an existential threat to several countries that risk running out of potable water. The effects of climate change, manifested in droughts and floods, also continue to intensify with the attendant negative impact on agriculture, the main source of livelihood for most communities. Limited actions of the state

[9] Message from the SECAM Standing Committe,2024

[10] SECAM Statement on The Political Situation in the Sahel and Central Africa, 2023

to curb these climatic change hazards endanger sustainable management of the earth. The poor bear the heaviest burdens on this.

These changes in the operating environment of the Phase V project on good governance, justice, peace, and development test the relevance and responsiveness of SECAM and its constituent members and affiliates in addressing the issues that matter most to the people it seeks to serve. Hence, the evaluation finds it worthwhile to inquire on the extent to which the project has responded to and supported SECAM's principal actors – the regional and national bishops' conferences – to engage their equivalent interstate and nonstate national counterparts in finding ways to address some of the crises that have emerged, be they on the issue of coup d'états, economic hardships, the intensifying violent extremism, wanton destruction of land and water resources, or youth activism.

- *Emerging/Untapped Opportunities*: Despite these challenges, several positive developments inspire hope and create opportunities for Africa to break its bounds with poverty through the promotion of good governance for inclusive development. The competition for new footholds in Africa has spurred competition to invest in the development of various transnational infrastructures, especially in the transport sector. Investments in the rail and road sectors promise to open trade opportunities on multiple fronts for Africa. The World Bank's investment in reliable electricity, safe roads, and high-speed internet aims to open business opportunities for 300 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030. These infrastructure developments are particularly timely with the launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which is already opening up trade opportunities for Africa's youthful entrepreneurs who are actively exploring and exploring opportunities to trade in goods and services across multiple frontiers. Africa's youth are also taking on the challenge of fully participating in the digital world, through the development of innovative programs and applications that are transforming lives. In response, governments and other actors have launched several local, national, and continental initiatives that aim to harness the potential of the youth for accelerated and inclusive development. The African Development Bank's Jobs for Youth in Africa (JfYA) strategy, for instance, aims to create 25 million jobs and train 32 million young people over the next decade[11]. The Bank's Empowering Novel Agri-Business-Led Employment for Youth in African Agriculture (ENABLE-Youth) program aims to leverage Africa's agricultural potential to stimulate economic groups that address food and income securities through creating 8 million agribusinesses[12].

[11] African Development Bank (2016) Jobs for the Youth Programme, accessed from https://www.afdb.org/en/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-partnerships/jobs-for-youth-in-africa/what-is-the-jobs-for-youth-in-africa-strategy

[12] African Development Bank (2024) African Development Bank enhances ENABLE Youth Programs for greater impact, available from https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/press-releases/african-development-bank-enhances-enable-youth-programs-greater-impact-70024

II. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Approach

Misereor and SECAM intend to use the findings of this evaluation to a) capture what has been achieved in relation to the set project objectives and indicators and b) learn lessons that can be used to enhance the design of the next phase. We combined **summative** and **formative** evaluation approaches to the evaluation to ensure we captured both the outcomes of the current phase of the project and documented findings that helped prospective design considerations of the next phase. While the summative approach allowed us to take stock of project outcomes to date, using planned interventions, performance outcomes, and impact indicators as the yardstick, the **formative** approach allowed us to assess the project implementation processes to identify success factors and constraints to the implementation.

We also built the architecture of the evaluation on a utilization-focused approach to ensure that SECAM and its constituent members, its funders, and implementing partners such as the Working Groups and independent projects, all find value in the outcomes of the evaluation. For this reason, we emphasized the use of **participatory approaches** to enhance leadership in the processes for collecting and reporting on data and ownership of the outcomes. The participatory approaches included extensive engagement of SECAM staff in the design of the evaluation questionnaires, the selection of potential respondents, and the scheduling of the interviews to ensure high response rates among all target respondents participating in evaluation exercises. SECAM and partner staff will also have the opportunity to participate in sense-making sessions, during which they will review and provide input into the draft report of the evaluation to ensure the outcomes of the evaluation meet the needs of all stakeholders.

We also prioritized the use of **qualitative evaluation** to ensure that we capture the voices, views, and feelings of evaluation participants for their experiences and perceptions of the processes and outcomes of the project. Hence, in addition to textual reviews of the project documents we received, we conducted key informant interviews and supported the design and conduct of a self-evaluation exercise for the staff of SECAM.

To ensure consistency in our lines of inquiry in the evaluation across different instruments and participant categories, we built the evaluation instruments on the OECD DAC criteria that assessed the following:

1. **Relevance:** to what extent are interventions addressing the justice, governance, peace, and development challenges of Africa, as perceived by evaluation participants?
2. **Coherence:** how well do the interventions of the project fit with what other actors are doing to address the same or similar challenges of justice, governance, peace, and development in Africa and in specific geographical and thematic contexts?
3. **Effectiveness:** to what extent are the interventions achieving their objectives?
4. **Efficiency:** how well are project resources being used?
5. **Impact:** what difference are SECAM's interventions making to the challenges it set out to address?
6. **Sustainability:** How will the benefits of the interventions last?

2.2 Methodology for Data Collection

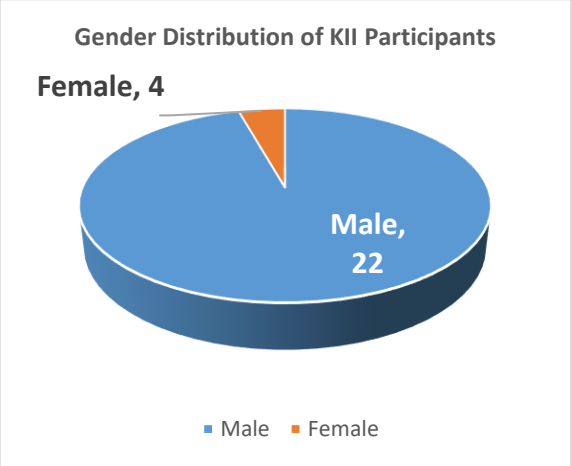
We carried out data collection for the evaluation using a three-step approach outlined below:

i) *Desk review*: We requested and received more than 80 individual background documents on Phase V of SECAM and Misereor's governance, justice, peace, and the project for review. Broadly, the categories of documents we reviewed included but we were not limited to the following:

- Project documents including the text of project proposal, implementation reports for each of five (5) semesters.
- Management documents
- Terms of reference for working groups
- Reports and other documents from working groups.
- Terms of reference for commissioned research work
- Research reports
- Concept Notes for various engagements
- Advocacy Statements from SECAM
- Reports on advocacy activities

- SECAM Statements to the AU and EU
- Policy Briefs of SECAM on various subjects
- Position Papers from SECAM on various issues.
- Press Releases and Statements on various issues from Regional Episcopal Conferences
- Reports of research on topical issues
- Statements on Africa and Europe Joint Civil Society Engagement Team

ii) *Key Informant Interviews*: With the help of SECAM, we identified and reached out to 26 participants for interviews. Of the 26 participants selected to participate in the KIIs, 22 were males and 4 females Appendix 4 presents the organizational and gender groupings of key informants we reached out to. In all 23 participated in the interviews. In addition, three (3) staff to the JPDC of SECAM participated in individual interviews while seven (7) staff of SECAM participated in the collective self-evaluation exercise. IPD resource persons administered the interview questions in English, French, and Portuguese, depending on the operating language of the participants. All the interviews were conducted via Zoom and situations this became a challenge we continued the interviews by phone calls. In all cases, we expressly sought prior permission from participants to record the interviews for notetaking. We received permission in all cases except for one participant who declined to permit us to record. The declination was accepted, and we took notes manually. We transcribed the interview notes and pooled them into one document for the analysis.



iii) *Self-reflection and evaluation engagement:* In line with the participatory and utilization-focused approach, we included a self-assessment process for SECAM staff. Under this, we provided staff with a set of self-reflection and assessment questions and encouraged them to do a collective reflection on their achievements, missed opportunities, successes, and constraining factors, among others, in the implementation of Phase V. The self-assessment tool was designed to stimulate internal dialogue and critical self-examination that would lead to increase collective reflection and ownership of the evaluation process and outcomes. We hoped to encourage staff to celebrate their achievements and take collective responsibility for their actions and inactions that produced the results they are seeing.

2.3 Analysis and Reporting

We developed a pre-coding scheme that enabled us to categorize and analyze the qualitative data that emerged from the different sources of data. This process allowed us to generate different themes along the lines of the inquiry using the OECD-DAC criteria. We have prioritized giving voice to the participants in the reporting of findings. Hence, we have used the viva voce approach that lets participants speak to the data. Accordingly, this report captures multiple anonymized voices that express the views and feelings of participants on the findings.

2.4 Limitations of Evaluation

i. *Restrictive Sample Pool of Participants*: The sample pool of evaluation participants that SECAM offered largely covered individuals and organizations that SECAM has worked closely with over the implementation period of the project. It did not include people who are outside this range who may have had different experiences seeing SECAM's engagements in secular spaces from a distance. In particular, the sample pool did not include participants from countries currently having serious governance, peace, and electoral challenges such as Gabon, Mali, Niger, Sudan, South Sudan, and Togo, among others. Therefore, the evaluation is not able to assess what people not affiliated with the project see about SECAM's work. A larger sample pool would be necessary to enable SECAM to know how non-church members and other outsiders view and assess SECAM's entry into and engagements in secular spaces.

ii. *Inadequate Inclusion of Groups at risk of marginalization*: Due to the restrictions referenced above, this evaluation was unable to reach out to critical subpopulation groups such as women, youth, and other minority or at-risk groups living on the margins of society to access their views on the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, among others, of the project based on their lived experiences. In line with the project's aim to magnify the voice of citizens in the public decision-making spaces on the continent, it is critical that the views of such population subgroups are heard in determining how effectively SECAM is standing up for them too. Besides, such groups are not mere recipients of intervention benefits, they are active agents capable of championing pathways to change when their views are counted and their voices heard in the determination of the change agenda.

iii. *Time Limitations:* The timeline given for the design and conduct of the evaluation was very short. SECAM cited pressure to get the evaluation done on time to provide input for the design of the next phase. However, the plan to have an evaluation before the design of the next phase was anticipated in the design of the project. It was unexplainable why the process was not initiated earlier. The rushed nature of the evaluation had design implications that included the limitations on sample frames and the distribution of participants that could be recruited for the evaluation. Gender and youth representation in the interview pool was virtually absent. This evaluation, therefore, misses their voices and views on issues particular to their context.

iv. *Resource Limitations:* SECAM made it clear at the initial engagement of works that it had limited resources to adequately remunerate the service providers. At the same time, SECAM faced time pressure to deliver the evaluation outcome to meet the timelines for the planning of the next phase. This evaluation has been possible because of the partial donation of time and other resources by IPD and resource persons who supported the data collection. The time loss in negotiating the whole or partial pro bono participation of resource persons could have been used to advance the work in many ways. The fact that SECAM was underbudgeted for the evaluation and had to resort to negotiations for qualified resource persons questioned the commitment SECAM attached to the exercise. SECAM may not have the same luck securing whole or partial pro bono services in the future.

III. FINDINGS FROM EVALUATION

3.1 SECAM Self-Assessment of Achievements of Phase V Project

Progress reports from SECAM staff and the self-assessment exercise have documented the following outcomes by objectives of project implementation up to the time of this evaluation:

Objective 1: Strengthening Church Advocacy at the AU and Regional Economic Communities: SECAM reports that it has achieved several milestones in advancing its advocacy at the AU. First, SECAM reopened its AU Liaison Office in January 2023 and presented an updated MoU to the AU Standing Committee in 2024. The return of SECAM to the AU demonstrates a commitment to increased engagement with AU structures and a strengthened presence and voice of the Church at the continental level. Over the project period, SECAM has also produced three advocacy papers on key global issues and participated in an AU interfaith event in Kigali.

Also, SECAM has improved its professionalism in producing advocacy papers that target policymakers and duty-bearers by collaborating with relevant organizations in these fields. These collaborations have resulted in SECAM advocacy papers now containing the "requisite professional touch like policy audience and what is required of them."[13] Despite these improvements in comparison to the last phase of the Project, SECAM still acknowledges that there is the need to ensure the influence of these papers gets policymakers and duty-bearers to act on the issues raised. This is noted in their self-assessment report, which states that this need exists in part because SECAM does not "... have a very effective follow-up mechanism and therefore monitoring has not been up to 100%. We could have done better"[14].

Objective 2: Strengthening Good Governance and Peacebuilding in Africa: SECAM reports making progress in supporting good governance and peacebuilding, including its involvement in the UN Binding Treaty negotiations and participation in a pastoral visit to South Sudan in 2024 to aid peace efforts. A training session on election monitoring for Catholic actors was organized in June 2024. In lieu of visits to two other conflict-afflicted countries, SECAM organized a negotiation and mediation seminar for the bishops of those countries to enable them to contribute to peaceful discussions in their respective countries. SECAM also published statements on African debt and global reforms, which garnered international attention[15].

Despite these achievements, challenges persist. Monitoring surveys to track CPLO's impact on legislative processes were delayed. This is partly because CPLOs are yet to establish links to parliamentary processes, and no conflict mediation visits were completed. Additionally, limited election monitoring expertise among Catholic actors hindered progress.

Objective 3: Reducing Irregular Migration and Human Trafficking: SECAM reports that it has made notable progress in addressing irregular migration issues, with five Episcopal Conferences actively engaging in initiatives during the previous project phase. The Catholic Sisters Project trained 25 sisters in 2022-2023 and enrolled 36 more for a diploma in pastoral care of human mobility. Additionally, SECAM-JPDC collaborated with the Migration and Human Trafficking Network on a transatlantic project involving Africa, Europe, and the Americas, and identified 20 sisters working across 10 African countries to champion this initiative. The Migration and Human Trafficking Network serves as a platform for sharing best practices and pastoral resources related to migrant ministry.

[13] SECAM Fifth Phase 2nd Semester Narrative Report, 2022

[14] SECAM staff self-assessment report, 2024, p. 4

[15] See https://www.jubileeusa.org/secam_statement
https://pearlradio.co.ke/2023/10/11/secam-calls-for-debt-reforms-by-imf-world-bank-to-african-states-in-morocco/
https://www.jesuits.africa/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/SECAM-JPDC-Statement-19-April-2022.pdf

However, SECAM notes that the adoption of good practices regarding illegal migration has been limited among Episcopal Conferences.

Objective 4: Campaign for Environmental Protection: In its campaign for environmental protection, SECAM said it has achieved engagement from 18 Episcopal Conferences in environmental initiatives during the previous project phase. The organization participated in advocacy events at COP28, which included interactions with negotiators and the organization of cooperative side events. This involvement sparked interest among national conferences, particularly in Tanzania, Malawi, and Zambia, to collaborate with the African Group of Negotiators' Focal Points. SECAM indicates self-assessment report that "… there are a number of initiatives that our regions were involved in, especially AMECEA, RECOWA, ACEAC, which are very active in terms of promoting Laudato Si. There are specific initiatives that are running across the continent in different places, especially regarding promoting ecological conversion, as well as the stewardship of the environment and our common home"[16].

While we find evidence from other data sources that various regions have indeed invested in actions to protect the environment, as SECAM reports, we are unable to map SECAM's support under this project to such initiatives. It is therefore difficult to estimate the level of intentionality and direct action from SECAM and its contribution to the initiatives of the various regions. SECAM asserts that its efforts to create awareness of environmental issues have increased the engagement of church institutions in various acts for protecting the environment. However, in the absence of concrete evidence of what it did with its constituent members in this regard, isolating SECAM's contribution from that of the wider church initiative emanating from Laudato-Si is difficult to establish.

Objective 5: Just Land Governance and Natural Resource Management: SECAM said it focused on advancing just land governance and natural resource management, with one joint action taken among platform members during the previous project phase. Initiatives included the Church Conference on Natural Resources/Mining and Conflicts in Africa, where a declaration was issued for COP28, highlighting collective efforts and proposals made for SECAM to establish Commissions for Natural Resources and Mining within various levels of the Church. [17] . Additionally, SECAM circulated a declaration among the African group of negotiators and planned to establish a Commission for Natural Resources and Mining while promoting education and mobilization on ecological issues. During Phase V, SECAM collaborated with several organizations, including Our Land is Our Life (OLOL), the Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggles - West Africa, Friends of the Earth, and various other platforms. SECAM also partnered with the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, Denis Hurley Peace Institute, Centre for Studies for Social Action, and Mosaiko (a Dominican Missionaries' institution based in Angola), to organise a conference on "Natural Resources/Mining and Conflicts in Africa" in Accra, Ghana. Through these efforts, SECAM has chalked some successes in advancing its agenda.

Table 1 below assesses the achievements of project objectives against the indicators that SECAM set in Phase V project. It shows while the reports from SECAM indicate significant progress in achieving the set objectives, the reports we reviewed lacked specificity in many areas. This made it difficult to assess the magnitude of the achievements against the set objectives.

[16] SECAM self-assessment report, 2024, p. 2

[17] SECAM Fifth Phase 5th Semester Narrative Report, 2024

Table 1: Intermediate objectives, associated outcomes and indicators and key strategies

Intermediate Objectives	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Key Activities	Achievements
To strengthen the Church's advocacy campaign at the African Union and other Regional Economic Communities.	Evidence-based advocacy Papers developed to guide advocacy campaign	# of advocacy papers developed for advocacy campaign (At least four papers).	SECAM will prepare Terms of Reference (ToR) to guide the development of position papers on priority issues of interest as well as identify and engage experts to develop the papers SECAM shall organise policy dialogue with African Union involving selected Bishops, Regional Coordinators, Working Groups, with the view of influencing policies and programmes at AU and member countries.	SECAM has made significant strides in advocacy through the development of position papers, strategic collaborations, and effective participation in key platforms, thereby strengthening its influence. Five (5) advocacy papers were issued.
	More effective advocacy engagements with AU and other Regional Economic Communities in Africa.	# of advocacy issues raised by SECAM that found their way into the discussions or programmes of AU (At least three issues raised taken up by AU) # of Regional Conferences that have started engaging their respective Regional Economic Blocks (At least three Regional Conferences would have initiated dialogue with their respective Regional Blocks)	Identify critical issues at AU and Sensitize Regional/National Conferences on these issues and support them to begin engaging their respective Regional Economic blocks & national governments IMBISA and RECOWA have begun initial engagements with their Regional Economic Blocks on what?	SECAM indicates it successfully raised several advocacy issues that were integrated into the discussions or programmes of the African Union (AU). However, the exact number of advocacy issues is not specified in the provided narrative.
To strengthen good governance and peace building in Africa	Increased influence of the Church towards good governance	# of Bills or existing laws that the Church was able to influence (At least five bills) % of CPLOs trained who were able to link their Church structures to Parliamentary processes. (At least 40% of trained CPLOs)	Organize training workshop for selected CPLOs on techniques of Parliamentary engagement and lobbying Undertake follow-up to ensure commitments made at end of workshop are implemented	The project has effectively advanced its goal of enhancing the Church's influence on good governance and peacebuilding in Africa. Key achievements include successful collaborations with the Global Interparliamentary Network and capacity-building initiatives for Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Offices (CPLOs) focused on the UN Binding Treaty as well as awareness-raising sessions on election observations and training for MPs to strengthen governance frameworks. There is no information about the specific number of bills or existing laws that the Church was able to influence. Therefore, it is unclear how many bills were successfully influenced during the reporting period. However, to address

Intermediate Objectives	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Key Activities	Achievements
				this challenge SECAM proposes to institute a Monitoring and Evaluation Tool and collaborate with CPLO to gather such information. SECAM indicates that a certain percentage of trained CPLOs (Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Officers) were able to link their Church structures to Parliamentary processes, but it does not provide a specific percentage or number for this indicator.
	More peaceful African societies	# of countries with serious conflicts visited by Bishops to mediate (At least two)	SECAM shall facilitate mediation visits by selected Bishops to countries with serious conflicts.	There are mentions of collaborative initiatives aimed at addressing conflict and governance issues, but a precise count of countries visited is absent.
		% of African countries that held national elections monitored by the Church where there are no violent disputes. (At least 80%)	Facilitate training of Regional and national conferences (including justice and peace commissions) on best practices in election monitoring	SECAM notes the organization of workshops aimed at enhancing the capacity of Regional and National Catholic Electoral Stakeholder Actors to cooperate and manage electoral processes aimed at ensuring peaceful elections. However, no data exist for the percentage of African countries where national elections monitored by the Church did not experience violent disputes.
To contribute to the reduction of irregular migration of Africans to Europe and human trafficking.	Enhanced collaboration amongst conferences working on illegal migrants exist-/transit-points	# of Episcopal Conferences adopting good practices such as on illegal migrants exist-/transit points (At least 15 conferences)	SECAM will closely work with Church actors and secular groups on migration and human trafficking and facilitate information (among episcopal conferences) sharing of good practices such as on illegal migrants exist-/transit points (e.g., Morocco, South Africa, and Mozambique). Also, SECAM started the Catholic Sisters Projects aimed at gathering up-t-date information on pastoral obstacles and offering training for sisters who worked in supporting migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons,	The project made significant progress in establishing partnerships and improving data collection on Church initiatives related to migrants and human trafficking. However, specific activities on mobilizing Church actors for promoting safe migration and addressing irregular migration were not implemented during the reporting period. SECAM is focusing on this area by supporting initiatives led by Catholic nuns. As a result, twenty-five sisters across the continent received training for the 2022-2023 period, and thirty-six sisters have enrolled in the 2023-2024 diploma program in the pastoral care of human mobility. Besides this, there has been no collaboration with the Episcopal Conference on adopting best practices for illegal migrants,
To step up campaign for environmental protection in line with *Laudato Si*.	Increased initiatives by the Church structures to protect the environment	# of Episcopal Conferences engaged in environmental campaigns (At least 25 regional/national conferences)	Follow-up support to Episcopal Conferences to use Environmental Tool Kit developed for their environmental campaign.	The project demonstrated a strong level of achievement through the establishment of collaborative platforms, successful advocacy at international events like COP27, and multi-level engagement of Church and secular actors in climate justice dialogues.

Intermediate Objectives	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Key Activities	Achievements
				11 Episcopal Conference campaigns on the environment were held.
	Concrete steps taken by stakeholders towards protection of Congo Basin	Evidence and nature of initiatives taken by stakeholders towards protection of basin.	SECAM will support REBAC in its campaign to protect the Congo Basin	The project achieved notable success in advocating for the protection of the Congo Basin. Statements issued during the Convention on Biological Diversity and COP27, highlighted the Church's leadership in raising awareness about the Congo Basin's importance. The collaboration between SECAM, REBAC, and Laudato Si Movement led to a concerted effort to link climate justice with land justice, with specific advocacy focused on protecting the Congo Basin's biodiversity and natural resources.
To step up campaign for more just land governance and natural resource management in Africa.	Increased awareness and initiatives at local and national levels by various groups towards more transparent and just land acquisition and resource exploitation.	# of cases where there is joint actions or campaign among platform members towards more just land acquisition and resource exploitation. (At least three cases)	SECAM will collaborate with other faith organizations and secular actors in the OLOL platform towards a multi-level advocacy for ownership of land, just AU policies and guidelines for land governance and resource management and will mobilize its regional/national structures to advocate and monitor effective operationalization/implementation of these policies.	Objective 5 has been largely achieved, evidenced by active participation in key conferences and successful advocacy initiatives. Collaborative efforts have resulted in the development of policy briefs that effectively link land justice, climate issues, and peace, demonstrating a strong commitment to addressing local and international concerns. The number of cases was surpassed as 5 were addressed.

3.2 Assessment of Project Results and Outcomes

3.2.1 Relevance

a) Overall Relevance of Giving a Voice to the Church in Africa

Mission Relevance: SECAM exists to fulfill two commissions – one is to coordinate support for the evangelization work of the church in Africa, and the second focuses on supporting the social work of the church. The Justice, Peace, and Development wing of SECAM houses responsibilities for the latter. It is within this frame that interview participants discussed the relevance of SECAM's project with Misereor.

Asked about the relevance of interventions under the Phase V project, participants observed that Misereor's support for the governance, justice, peace, and development project "came as a grace" to help the church's commission on the social front. In the series of projects since 2007 all respondents emphasized the importance of Misereor's support for SECAM in rolling out the series of projects under its partnership with SECAM. They said that the projects create opportunities for the bishops of Africa to tackle some of the intransigent challenges of good governance, peace, and development in a continent beleaguered by military coup d'etats, localized and national violent conflicts, and more recently, the advent of terrorists and violent extremists bent on destabilizing or even taking over large swaths of territories. Participants, however, viewed the relevance of SECAM's Phase V interventions through two lenses i.e. the programmatic and institutional lenses.

i) Strategic Relevance of SECAM Priorities: Participants also raised questions about the relevance of the strategic design of the project. Although participants considered all of SECAM's priorities relevant to the continent, they nonetheless pointed out that there are major differences in regional challenges that require different priorities and levels of attention. In their view, a continental approach to the design of the interventions failed to consider the different levels of impact of the various strategy components to their specific regional or national contexts. For instance, while respondents within the Congo River Basin, which had countries from ACEAC, ACERAC, and IMBISA emphasized the need to prioritize the protection of the environment from unbridled deforestation and mining activities, which also occasioned the persistence of violent conflicts in the region, most respondents from IMBISA and RECOWA regions cited governance and elections as well as land governance as priority concerns. RECOWA participants added conflict and peace, especially with respect to the activities of violent extremists and terrorist groups in the Sahel seeking to penetrate the coastal regions. For some countries in the IMBISA region, migration was an important issue, especially given the challenges that South Africa and Zimbabwe must deal with in respect of migrant workers. Participants observed that these differences in regional and national priorities required localized actions. It is impossible, they argued, for SECAM to fully appreciate the intricacies of the peculiar challenges that the local churches faced and be able to address them from a centralized vantage point at the continental level. To that extent, the strategic relevance of the project is undermined.

ii) *Programmatic Relevance*: On the programmatic side, when participants were asked about the relevance or importance of SECAM's Phase V project activities on good governance and peaceful elections; environment and climate change; migration human trafficking; and land governance (extractives) challenges in Africa to their respective contexts and the work they do, respondents expressed appreciation for the importance of all the themes SECAM chose to focus on. However, the degree of relevance of each thematic item varied in different permutations across the continent and actors. In general, however, issues of governance and peaceful elections, land governance, and protection of the environment were dominant across all regions. SECAM's focus on **promoting transparent and peaceful elections** was very much appreciated, given the unstable political contexts in election years across the continent. As one responded (see text box 1), SECAM's support with awareness creation, training, and encouragement emboldened some episcopal conferences to take on the challenges of monitoring elections. Even where church representatives were not

Textbox 1

Relevance of Project Priorities

"Yes, these priorities were very, very much important to us, especially in the aspect of good governance and peaceful elections was. We are having so much of a problem of disputed elections in this part of the world. So, with the help of these thematic areas coming from SECAM, we're able in our region to advance the issue of election monitoring and being observers" (…)

accredited as official election observers, they still felt their presence and the data they collected for their internal reports was important. Engagement in the governance and elections thematic area also involved advocacy for electoral reforms to create more even playing fields and ensure transparency and fairness in elections. This, in the view of respondents, was a keyway to minimize electoral disputes and violence associated with elections.

The promotion of transparent and equitable **land governance** was the second most cited theme of SECAM's interventions that resonated with local concerns. In addition to localized concerns with land justice, as related to equitable access and usage of land for food and cash crop production for families, participants raised the challenges of battling against the increasing destruction of farmlands from mining and felling activities, the insurgence of land grabbing by government and multinational actors, and the uncertain land policies and laws that often expropriate lands from minority groups. SECAM's support for voicing the views and issues of the underprivileged on land issues culminated in its input into the African Union's land governance strategy document, which was finally launched at the African Land Policy Conference in Addis Ababa in December 2023.

Textbox 2

Importance of Land governance Interventions

"We can't have sustainable agriculture without secure access to productive land; so, land justice, land governance, is an issue we came against a lot" (E59)

Interventions in **environmental protection** were considered very relevant as well, as several respondents referred to the Congo Basin as the second lung of the earth that needed protection. Inspirations from Laudato-Si were cited as the major guiding principle that gingered several national and regional episcopal conferences to engage in actions to advocate for regulatory frameworks that protected the environment or to take direct actions to rejuvenate the environment through tree planting initiatives.

Migration also came up for mention several times as an important thematic area for some regions. Some participants observed that intra-Africa voluntary migration, which used to outpace migration to Europe and other places, is on the decline, in comparison to migration trends out of Africa. Participants also noted the increasing trend in forced migrations such as the displacement of whole communities by attacks of violent extremists and terrorist groups, especially in the Sahelian Countries of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, have occasioned the movement of large numbers of people southward into La Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and Benin. Such unanticipated movement of people came under the radar of SECAM, and therefore not much has been done at the continental level to address this trend. Episcopal Regions, national conferences, and individual dioceses and parishes have had to deal with this as best they can.

iii) *SECAM's Institutional Relevance in the Project*: SECAM is keenly aware that many other organizations are working on the issues that its interventions focus on. However, the Church in Africa has a large and deep footprint that enables it to have a deeper connection with the people and an understanding of the challenges that they face. The Church therefore feels a moral obligation to speak up for the people through its special lens – the faith-inspired approach to engaging with the social challenges on the continent. Therefore, SECAM's engagement in the secular space is not a redundancy. On the contrary, SECAM's presence and visibility in continental and even intercontinental spaces of engagement were considered very relevant to the advocacy efforts of the church and its partners. This is because SECAM's presence in these spaces creates a platform for the voice of faith-based organizations to be collectivized and projected into the public spaces at the regional, AU, and even intercontinental levels.

The re-establishment of its presence in Addis Ababa and the renewal of its Observer Status Memorandum of Understanding with the African Union, for instance, positioned SECAM to serve as a point of interface for the church and other allied faith-inspired organizations within and outside Africa with their civil-oriented counterparts such as civil society organizations, development agencies, nongovernmental and quasi-governmental organizations, among others. Participants noted, for instance, that SECAM's presence at the AU allows it to network with other faith-based and secular organizations on issues of mutual interest. This interfacing allowed SECAM to collaborate with secular organizations that facilitated its participation in several international forums such as the COP 28 where, in association with other partners, made its voice heard on critical environmental issues. Respondents observed that while SECAM may not have championed the

engagements at these forums, its presence there created access to the discussion spaces and gave a moral voice to its partners to speak truth to power. Hence, SECAM's decision to champion environmental issues in the project was seen as very relevant.

Participants pointed out that SECAM's increased visibility and action within the secular space at the AU and in other circles such as with the EU also allowed SECAM to open doors for the church to have a presence in multiple levels of diplomacy – from Track 1 to Track 4. It makes the final connection of the Church to the secular world at the continental level. This has enabled the church to have a foot and a voice in spaces where it is now better positioned to advocate for good governance, justice, development and peace for Africa.

Participants observed that SECAM's presence and contributions to discussions often offered a new and critical perspective on issues from a faith dimension that secular perspectives to advocacy often fail to see. SECAM's faith-based input allows them to be more critical of some policies and agreements that the West wants to foist on Africa. One respondent cited the case of EU policy on critical material and the extractive industry, which on the surface seemed harmless until SECAM voiced the views of people from the ground. SECAM's presence at European partners' engagement with the EU helped them secure better terms in negotiation for Africa.

Participants also noted that even when SECAM did not have the human resources or technical competence to lead on some of the advocacy initiatives, its presence offered an important umbrella under which other actors could find the voice to engage in the higher-level spaces such as during engagements with the AU and EU. For instance, a participant from a SECAM partner organization noted that "Our work of seeking justice for Africa in the European Union or rather Brussels won't be complete without having partners like SECAM" (A partner). Other participants noted that SECAM provides them with faith dimensions on the policy issues to focus on and what to be critical of when engaging state actors.

3.2.2 Coherence

We examined the coherence of SECAM's activities from two dimensions – internal and external coherence. While internal coherence looked at how well SECAM's activities align with what its constituent members are doing in the regions, countries, and dioceses, external coherence examined the alignment of SECAM's activities with institutions outside the Catholic Church in Africa.

i) ***Internal Coherence****:* The assessment of internal coherence focused on understanding the extent to which SECAM's justice, peace, governance, and development activities in the Phase V project at the continental level are i) in consonance with what its constituent members at the regional, national, and diocesan levels are doing on the same issues; ii) creating linkages and synergies with the activities of a) its constituent members, b) other cross-territorial initiatives of the church such as REBAC, and c) interventions carried out by sister institutions such as religious congregations working on the same or similar challenges on the continent. It also examined to what extent SECAM's interventions complement, are in harmony with, and strengthen collaboration with the activities of other governmental and civil society organizations working on the same issues. In sum, to what extent are SECAM's project activities adding to or taking away value from what other actors are doing?

With respect to the internal coherence of SECAM's activities with what other constituent national and regional episcopal conferences are doing in all the thematic areas that Phase V focuses on, SECAM staff pointed to actions going on at the subcontinental levels, and insinuated credit for those actions, but cannot demonstrate to what extent it its funding and actions under this project directly influenced those activities. Evaluation participants also noted the existence of many commonalities in the issues that the church is tackling, albeit at different levels of intensity at national and regional levels.

Participants, however, pointed out that synergy grows from intentional collaborative action, not merely juxtaposed actions or events. Hence, the existence of commonalities between what SECAM is doing at the continental and what regions, national conferences, dioceses, and other institutions of the church are doing at the subcontinental levels are not necessarily representative of cohesive actions. In their view, the existence of commonalities in actions on the same issue does not mean the existence of intentionally coherent or aligned

efforts at addressing a common challenge. On the contrary, participants cited examples where the existence of the coincidence of interests and intents did not translate into coherence of actions between SECAM and the dioceses, national and regional episcopal conferences, and the church's other specialized cross-territorial initiatives such as REBAC, Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office (CPLO), and the various the Working Groups under SECAM. On issues of migration and environmental protection, for instance, participants talked more about what they, as regions, national conferences, or dioceses were doing by themselves, not what they were doing in association with SECAM. In other words, while information-sharing sometimes takes place in meetings where they report on what they are doing, their actions are not triggered, supported, or coordinated by SECAM.

Participants attributed the existence of disconnected initiatives on the same issues to the absence of communication and/or the prevalence of weak coordination mechanisms to facilitate interactions between initiatives championed by members of religious congregations, especially in the areas of human trafficking environment, migration, where individual efforts of religious orders or their members ran parallel to what SECAM is doing. In the view of participants, this gap in communication, coordination, and collaboration between SECAM and its constituent subcontinental members in all thematic areas is the major stumbling block to the coherence of actions, as most constituent members of SECAM were unaware of SECAM's Phase V project. As such activities on the same issue tended to take place in silos.

The leadership of SECAM and key figures within Regional Justice and Peace Commissions have acknowledged that there are communication challenges between SECAM and its member conferences/dioceses. Similarly, several key informants in evaluation interviews including SECAM's partners and bishops, were unaware of SECAM's activities. Consequently, the opportunities for coordination are lost. It was noted for instance, that even though some national and regional episcopal conferences are carrying out activities very similar to what SECAM is doing at the continental level, there is no connection and coordination between those actions. Highlighting the disconnect between SECAM's project and what its constituent members such as RGJPDC are doing on the ground, most respondents were able to discuss the priorities of SECAM mainly in the context of what they have done without SECAM's involvement.

ii) ***Alignment with External Actors:*** SECAM's priorities also bore similarities with what other non-constituent members of SECAM are working on. At their AU level, several faith-based organizations, civil society organizations, and coalitions of different permutations are advocating on issues of good governance, peaceful elections, agroecology and food sovereignty, human trafficking, and migration, among others. Unlike in the case of internal coherence, SECAM has made considerable effort under the Phase V project to seek out and join hands with some of the external actors to create partnerships and synergies for its work in different thematic areas. SECAM made efforts to collaborate with the African Union (AU), particularly with the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (ARBE), before the reopening of SECAM's AU liaison office. However, the lack of response from ARBE impeded any opportunities for collaboration on shared areas of interest. However, it is important to note that the alignment of interests of SECAM and its constituent members did not necessarily translate into conjoint or coordinated actions with its constituent regional and national episcopal conferences.

While SECAM's activities may not be visible and coordinated with its constituent members on the continent, various actors outside the continent have found that their interests aligned with SECAMS and created opportunities for joint action on common platforms with SECAM. The Our Land Our Life platform, for instance, worked with SECAM to influence the African land strategy document. SECAM also worked with the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) and other partners to develop a policy brief on biodiversity, which also touched on the issues of land grabbing and environmental degradation. These collaborations have culminated in joint advocacy initiatives with the European Bishops Conference at the EU and AU levels. The participation of SECAM in the caravans - a coalition of actors organized to raise awareness on various priority issues, especially concerning food sovereignty was also mentioned as another platform where SECAM's visible engagement at the regional and continental levels to create awareness on issues of land grabbing, water resource ownership and management, local seed systems, and seed security that ensures climate adaptative and sustainable agriculture for citizens, among others.

a) ***lections and good governance***: Increased citizens' engagement in elections, democracy, and governance, however, had a twist that SECAM did not anticipate in its intervention – increasing citizens' disillusionment with electoral systems and the democratic governments they produced. On the contrary, there is an increasing preference for return to military regimes that are arising from the perceived failure of elected governments to deliver the dividends of good governance, peace, and democracy. This is exacerbated by the perceived high levels of corruption and the mismanagement or outright theft of public resources for private again to the detriment of the poor.

Textbox 3

Democracy Under Scrutiny

...when we went to Guinea Conakry, I discussed with some people. They said, father, we didn't know that we had too much money. With the military, they're working hard. They're constructing roads, they are doing this and that. But with the democratic leaders, we didn't have this kind of thing. It's what we hear also in Nigeria, you know that is why if the protests, people went out to say military come and take the power. It's not the solution, I know, but yeah, we can see also in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, that this country, if they are suffering [it is] because of terrorism, [otherwise] the military are doing good things. We must recognize it. I'm here now in Burkina Faso, I can see the changes.

Citizens' discontent with elected governments that led to the embrasure of the military takeovers in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger did not happen overnight. The disillusionment with elected governments had brewed over decades. Hence, SECAM's focus on promoting peaceful and credible elections may have been at variance with citizens' experience and expectations of elections. As a respondent explained in text box 3, participants felt military regimes fared better than elected governments in ensuring justice, equity, and concrete dividends of governance.

3.2.3 Effectiveness

Evaluation participants viewed the success and limitations of the effectiveness of SECAM's Phase V project from different perspectives and levels. These included the following:

- *Effectiveness Through Presence*: Participants had mixed reactions in assessing the effectiveness of SECAM's Phase V project in addressing the priority needs that it identified. They discussed SECAM's effectiveness generally at the conceptual level, as several participants said SECAM's engagement in these thematic areas and its presence at the AU level are effective ways to address the challenges it has identified. As one participant from a Working Group noted, historically, the church has been kept outside the public space because of the concept of separation of church and state which created the "…tendency to maintain a dichotomy [in which] Church issues are separate from politics". The fact that SECAM is now present and demonstrating at the continental level that "…a church organization is also concerned about the issue of governance and is also monitoring what is happening, for me that is something because […] that is another sphere" of action for the church. Because of this presence and action in the public space, another evaluation participant felt that "… there is a change, and the influence of the church is being felt more and more. It might be because of the papers that come as written and the push, that we have a push peaceful society in Africa".

Textbox 4

External View on SECAM's Effectiveness

"… whenever I've worked in collaboration with them, I found them to be highly effective, well versed in the subject matter, well able to enunciate their position and to engage in those spaces. [However], I guess they could be more effective if they have more capacity to be more engaged and not pulled in too many directions and […] not be able to…" give equal attention to all the issues they have to deal with (Partner staff).

- *Effectiveness through strategic partnerships*: SECAM's partnership with advocacy groups such as the Food Sovereignty Alliance, Our Land, Our Life, and others enabled it to project the voice of the church on policy advocacy engagements related to promoting just and equitable land governance, protection of the environment and natural resources, supporting agroecological, among others. Through these partnerships, SECAM brought its faith-inspired voice into the drafting of the African Land Policy which was launched at

the African Land Policy Conference in Addis Ababa in December 2023. As one participant noted, SECAM's contributions to the advocacy document "…successfully made major changes to bring it to become a more progressive and punchier document". Similar partnerships took SECAM to Cop 28 and other global spaces of engagement where it made the church's presence felt and voice heard. Respondents however noted that several of these engagements were one-off, short-lived interactions that did not carry on beyond the achievement of the primary objective i.e. rally of actors to craft documents for the AU-EU conference or collaboration on writing a policy brief on an issue. Such ad-hoc and transient engagements can hardly be described as strategic since they lack the stay of actions to make them agents of transformation. Participants noted the lack of follow-up engagements to ensure the uptake of policy and program recommendations after advocacy events as a major weakness of SECAM's engagement in advocacies.

- *Effectiveness through facilitating engagements*: Other participants cited SECAM's organization of various meetings and conferences to create awareness of the different thematic issues as a demonstration of the effectiveness of the project. At lower and more concrete levels, however, participants had difficulty pinning down how effective the Phase V project has been in delivering results from its activities. Part of the challenge derived from the lack of visibility on what SECAM was doing at the subcontinental level. As one regional coordinator of an episcopal justice and peace department said "…I'm not very clear on the strategies which were made by SECAM on these. So, it will be very difficult for me to judge how they're effective or not because I'm not aware of these specific strategies."

- *Effectiveness limited by staff limitations*: A major limitation to effectiveness that evaluation participants observed is the inadequacy of staff capacity to support multiple engagements. They noted that SECAM has only one Programme officer at its Secretariat who must juggle participation in multiple interventions, sometimes simultaneously. This means that SECAM is forced to choose between action points, and in the process, misses opportunities to be active in key discourses and actions. Participants also noted that it is not only about the numbers but also the competencies that SECAM can bring on board. To expect one staff member to be an expert in multiple fields and still be effective in representing the voice of the Church in such fields is a long stretch, in their view.

- *Effectiveness Hindered by Spreading wide*: Participants also mentioned that part of the reason SECAM struggles to demonstrate effectiveness was that it was spreading itself too thinly by trying to run multiple, continent-wide initiatives at the same time. The fact that not all parts of the continents face the same priority issues on SECAM's agenda equally was referenced. Besides differences in priorities, regions also have different capacities in different domains, even if all issues are of equal importance to them. It was suggested that SECAM would be more effective if it focused on designing its interventions to support one or two countries or a region to address specific issues at a time in one project phase. In this way, SECAM will marshal resources, human, financial, and material from its members to support the chosen region to comprehensively address the given issue. The next phase of the project could then target another region with a different or even the same set of priorities as in the previous one.

- *Subsidiarity Blunts Effectiveness*: Another challenge to SECAM's effectiveness is the conceptual hurdle that its adherence to the principle of subsidiary creates for its operations. Designed to ensure the devolution of responsibility for all actions to the lowest possible level where action can be taken, the unquestioned compliance with the principle of subsidiarity gets in the way of the effectiveness of SECAM's interventions in governance, justice, peace, and development initiatives. The principle has become a Janus-faced excuse for lack of or ineffective coordination of action between SECAM and its constituent members. Between SECAM and its constituent members, there is an endless chain of passing the buck that perpetuates the duplication of efforts that limits the church's ability to have synergistic impact at diocesan, national, regional, and continental levels. In the context of the Phase V project, for instance, SECAM management and staff cited respect for the principle of subsidiarity for its reluctance to provide leadership, guidance, and influence on what regional episcopal conferences are or should be doing in the different thematic areas of the project. The Regions, in turn, cited the same principle for their inability to engage national conferences more directly and intentionally for collaborative or coordinated actions, just as national conferences limit engagements with their constituent dioceses for the same reason. As a result, while different levels of the church are often

engaged in trying to address the same challenge, their actions are largely unconnected, and therefore, miss the opportunity for synergies that will have a greater impact than the individual actions can ever have.

3.2.4 Efficiency

Examination of the efficiency of the SECAM Phase V project sought to understand how well project resources are being used. This evaluation did not require assessing the efficiency of SECAM's financial and other resource management systems. Therefore, we did not carry out quantitative studies to document efficiency ratios in financial management. Instead, the evaluation carried out a qualitative assessment of the efficiency of the project's management systems based on the experiences, knowledge, and perceptions of the project participants taking part in the evaluation interviews about perceived efficiency of the i) structures, systems, and procedures that SECAM used in the implementation of the project in addressing the development priorities it focused on; ii) SECAM's agility, innovativeness, and adaptability in respect of what it could have done differently to ensure cost-efficiency in the delivery of its project activities; and iii) its ability to implement decisions emanating from conferences and meetings it carried out in furtherance of the project's objectives.

In their self-assessments, SECAM staff asserted that under the Phase V project, SECAM has streamlined its organizational structure and institutionalized regular senior staff meetings to ensure clear communications for efficient decision-making within SECAM. There are also weekly meetings with the AU Liaison office to facilitate information sharing. There are also frequent and open communications and joint planning sessions with SECAM's partners, such as REBAC, to enable effective coordination of activities and resource sharing leading to better project outcomes. Meetings with working groups and the regional JPDCs were held regularly. They cited "… joint collaborative work between SECAM, RECOWA, and IMBISA, which led to the production of policy briefs that were later used at different international platforms like COP and the UN Binding Treaty in Geneva" (Staff Self-Assessment Report).

In response to questions about SECAM's structural and communication efficiency in the management of Phase V, however, participants said they were severely constrained to respond because they have very little knowledge about the text of the project, much less its budget lines. They noted that they do not also have access to progress reports on the project. Other respondents also indicated that they are new to their positions and in the absence of records of documents and communication between SECAM and their predecessors, they have nothing to rely on as sources of information. As a result of the dearth of information, they had no basis to contribute any insights. One participant summed up the limitation this way: "I'm not sure I'm qualified to respond on that. To be honest, I'm not familiar with the financial resources they have so I haven't worked at a level where I would be able to really comment on their efficiency in terms of how well they use their resources".

Despite the prevailing opinion among participants that communication about project activities has been inadequate, SECAM staff report that they organized three online information exchange meetings—one in 2022 and two in 2023. Additionally, they held an in-person meeting in 2024 in Madagascar. These meetings were aimed at sharing information about their activities with regional coordinators. Furthermore, during the Nairobi meetings with the Secretaries General of the Regions, SECAM provided updates on the progress of project activities, and discussions were held regarding the budget.

Data from the evaluation suggest that the perceived dichotomy in the perception of the efficiency of SECAM's management processes may have been due to several factors:

a) Content Inadequacy: SECAM may have improved on the frequency of its communication with constituent members and partners, but the content of what is communicated did not provide insights into the project e.g. full disclosure of activities.

b) Participant Instability: Given frequent transitions or changes in the leadership at regional episcopal conferences, SECAM's engagement with them may have involved different people in different engagements. Therefore, with the stated deficiency in track records at these levels, people new to different offices do not have the background information to know what has gone on before them.

3.2.5 Project Outcomes

A major departure of Phase V from previous projects is that it had a well-articulated theory of change that mapped activities unto desired outputs, outcomes, and anticipated results at multiple levels. As a direct response to the critique in the Phase IV evaluation report, the development of the theory of change did not only provide a roadmap for coordinated action for SECAM staff but also established a framework for coordination and collaboration with SECAM's constituent members – the national and regional episcopal conferences; especially since most of these members have initiatives with similar priorities. In line with this, the Phase V project identified two categories of outcomes - short-term and intermediate outcomes. In the short term, SECAM hoped to achieve i) more effective advocacy engagements with AU and other Regional Economic Communities; ii) more efficient implementation of SECAM project due to partnerships & synergy effect; iii) enhanced environmental integrity; and iv) more peaceful societies. In the intermediate term, it hoped to have i) increased influence of the Church in Policies and Programmes of AU and other Economic blocks in Africa that benefit the marginalized; ii) improved livelihood opportunities; and iii) improved climatic conditions.

Participants observed that the three-year life cycle for the implementation of the project is too short to observe concrete and transformative outcomes. This is particularly so since SECAM's activities are woven around using advocacy to influence policies and actions. While SECAM may conduct successful advocacy engagements, it cannot control the translation of policy advocacy into concrete actions that produce the desired outcomes. In that respect, SECAM's statement of desired outcomes may have been more ambitious than it could hope to achieve.

Within this frame, participants identified some preliminary results from the project that can contribute to the achievement of the desired outcomes, if subsequent and persistent investments are made to support the translation of outcomes of advocacy engagements into substantive policies and actions. SECAM actively supported and advocated for the underprivileged in land governance resulting in significant outcomes. SECAM's strategic partnership with advocacy groups like the Food Sovereignty Alliance, and Our Land, Our Life, projected the Church's commitment to equitable land policies, environmental protection, and sustainable agriculture. These collaborations culminated in significant contributions to the African Union's land governance strategy, launched at the African Land Policy Conference in Addis Ababa in December 2023. Through these collaborations, SECAM's faith-inspired input helped shape the African Land Policy into a more progressive and impactful document, with one participant noting that SECAM's contributions "successfully made major changes to bring it to become a more progressive and punchier document."

However, there is more to do to have AU member states adopt and operationalize that policy within their national frameworks. That requires action at the subcontinental level by the member regions and national conferences of SECAM. However, the latter can only pick up such action if a) land governance is a priority issue in their catchment area b) they were involved in or have fully understood and bought into the agenda; and c) they have the resources and capacities to engage duty bearers at the regional and national levels to domesticate the AU land policy document through appropriate legislations and action plans.

Prior to this, SECAM and its partners in promoting justice and good land governance released various land policy briefs and joint statements[18] targeted at continental bodies such as the AU and EU, heads of state and governments, and all other relevant stakeholders. SECAM and its collaborators in these statements called for leaders to support equitable land governance, protect customary land rights, end large-scale land grabs, promote peasant agroecology and small-scale farming, invest in decentralized clean energy, prevent African lands from being used as carbon offsets for major polluters and urged the Global North to address ecological debt and

[18] African People's Summit Declaration, 2022
Africa-Europe Week CSO Forum outcome document, 2022
No Climate Justice Without Tand Justice, 2022

respect local knowledge. SECAM also participated in conference on women and land rights, and rivers and dams in it bid to advocate for more just land governance and natural resource management in Africa[19].

Another major outcome is that Phase V successfully created a platform for church leaders on the continent to speak truth to power on diplomatically uncomfortable issues. As one participant stated, the "visit of SECAM to the EU was noted as an effective engagement, especially when Cardinal Ambongo used the platform to raise issues that no one had dared to talk of before". In the view of participants, that engagement with the EU opened doors for the discussion on the role of Rwanda in the Eastern DRC that has a bearing on the factional conflicts, exploitation of natural resource trade, and contributing to the destruction of the Congo Basin – once considered a no-go area in diplomatic circles, even though all the issues associate with it are of interest to SECAM's Phase V project agenda. Participants who attended the AU-EU engagements with the presence observed that while everyone skirted around the issue, the Cardinal that accompanied the SECAM delegation spoke up. As one of the participants noted,

> "...everyone kept quiet [about the issue] until the Cardinal spoke. When the Cardinal spoke about it, it was like a bomb, you know [...]you could see the members of [the European] parliament did not know how to react because they didn't expect the Cardinal to say it; even for us, you know, we were like, wow, this is an act of courage. You know, everyone was afraid." But the participant observed that since the Cardinal dared to speak on the issue, "the concrete outcome is that it has given birth to several conferences we have attended, and I was one of those who attended those conferences" to deepen discussions on the issue.

Speaking truth to power is something only the Church can do, and Phase V created the platform for the Church to be in the right spaces to say what it needed to say. The fact that it generated subsequent conferences would, hopefully, create the space and engagements that find a resolution.

Another relevant outcome of this phase of the project was the reopening of the SECAM-AU Liaison Office in Addis Ababa with a new Liaison Officer, Fr Stephen Okello, a Consolata priest from Kenya. This positions SECAM to revive its relationship with AU from 2015. SECAM and the AU are working to finalize and sign a new Memorandum of Understanding to define their relationship boost collaboration between the two organizations and replace the existing one from 2015. The reopening of the SECAM-AU Liaison Office positions SECAM to influence policies and activities at the continental level.

Though participants in the evaluation welcome the reopening of the Office they noted it was a missed opportunity of not having a Liaison office in the African Union. For that duration of SECAM's absence, the church did not have "a presence in these bodies" and "could have contributed more also in Addis Ababa and the African Union." A focal person for SECAM at "the African Union, that is a good thing", " positive" and having an MoU in place immediately act as the point for SECAM to contribute to the AU agenda. One participant suggested the MoU "should be as broad as possible so that you know SECAM is not confined" to only particular thematic areas. Another, advantage of SECAM's presence at the AU was SECAM could "facilitate access to RECOWA" and other regional episcopal conferences in dealing with conflicts in their regions. SECAM's presence facilitates advocacy work at the "continental level, at the regional level, and even at the national level."

One important outcome from Phase V is SECAM's growing influence and credibility achieved through its visibility internationally and strengthened partnerships with diverse CSOs and relevant groups across different divides. This is exemplified in SECAM's role and leadership in leading advocacy in the global financial reform discussion with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and African Ministers of Finance

[19] SECAM Fifth Phase 5th Semester Narrative Report, 2024

Meetings in 2022,2023 and 2024. SECAM in its 2022[20] and 2023[21] statements urged global financial leaders to protect the vulnerable populations from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine War, provide debt relief, increase Africa's allocation of special drawing rights, implement resilient development plans, and reform the international financial system to ensure responsible lending, fair risk-sharing, transparent, and sustainable long-term financing for Africa's future. In 2024, SECAM further reiterated this call to the African Ministers of Finance in advocating for debt forgiveness aligned with sustainable development goals, increased access to non-debt development resources, and strong governance frameworks to ensure responsible, transparent use of public and private investments[22]. These statements received international publicity[23] and amplified SECAM's advocacy, mobilized global support, and pressured international bodies to prioritize Africa's needs in debt relief, sustainable development, and equitable financial reforms.

In advocating on issues like the one stated above and others, SECAM had to work with Catholic and non-Catholic CSOs to achieve its intended purposes. SECAM collaborated with non-Catholic CSOs such Global Inter Parliamentary Network (GIN), Alliance for Africa Food Sovereignty, Rural Women Assembly, The Eastern, and Southern Africa small-scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF), Citizenship and Consumer Awareness for Sustainable Development (CICODEV-Africa), Friends of the Earth and many other more. On the Catholic front, SECAM partnered with like-minded institutions including Jesuits Justice and Ecological Network Africa(JENA), Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Offices (CPLOs), Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN), Caritas International, International Catholic Migration Commission, and other relevant institutions and organizations. At the regional and continental level, SECAM participated in activities of the African Union, the European Union, the Economic Community of West Africa, the African Union Citizens and Diaspora Organisations Directorate, and others. Internally within its ranks, SECAM collaborated with its regional conferences and specialized departments such as the Ecclesial Network for the Protection of the Congo Basin (REBAC) and the SECAM-AU Liaison Office to attain its objectives of the project.

3.2.6 Impact

SECAM hopes to create a "more just, transparent, prosperous and peaceful African societies living in harmony with nature" in its theory of change. As with outcomes, it is too early yet for SECAM to report concrete, verifiable impacts from the Phase V project currently. Also, since most of the project activities to date took place at the continental level, participants from the regional and other levels could not speak to its impact.

Participants that tried to leverage actions at the subcontinental level were unable to show impact for their work because they lacked the locus for action. In Zimbabwe, for instance, an evaluation participant noted that with SADC's attempt to get involved in election monitoring, "… the impact on this project for us was not really that much because […] we could not really establish an office near South Africa or Zimbabwe". Another participant working in the Congo Basin also recalled how the lack of accreditation from the government stalled their engagement on environmental issues. In both cases, participants believed if they had had established or visible link with SECAM, they might have had better luck in negotiating spaces of engagement.

The limited level of impact from Phase V of the Project stems from seeking to ensure change happens through advocacy. As a tool for change, advocacy needs consistent and persistent engagement with various policy makers to ensure that the views put forward are heard and understood more than competing and contrary

[20] Financing Crisis Recovery with Hope for the Most Vulnerable in Africa, 2022
[21] A Call to Leaders Actions for a True Jubilee of Hope in Africa Statement to the 2023 Annual Meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, 2023
[22]Statement to the 56th Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 2024
[23] 1.https://www.aciafrica.org/news/9342/world-bankimf-leaders-need-to-foster-africas-fresh-journey-hope-dignity-secam
2. https://www.jubileeusa.org/secam_statement
3. https://www.jubileeusa.org/secam_african_ministers_march_2024

opinions. The implementation of policy recommendations can only be implemented by done by the decision makers and there to directly correlate change to advocacy, SECAM will need to invest human, financial, and material resources and be present at all relevant functions, events, and decision-making forums to make a claim for the churches position on relevant thematic areas.

3.2.7 Sustainability

Participants discussed the sustainability of SECAM's governance, justice, peace, and development initiatives from two dimensions – sustainability of the activities and the sustainability of the institutional arrangements for managing the activities.

a) *Sustainability of activities*: SECAM's governance, justice, peace, and development activities are exclusively funded by its external partners at a time when these partners are also experiencing diminishing inflows of funds from their traditional sources. In the absence of alternative funding sources for SECAM, participants have questioned the ability of SECAM and other affiliate agencies that rely on donor funding to continue with their activities, should these sources run out of funding or are unable to keep up funding levels as they have done so far.

Participants recognized that SECAM's current donors are also experiencing reduced inflows of resources as their national governments shift their focuses to pressing domestic issues or other geopolitical interests in which the priorities of civil society and nongovernmental institutions supporting development efforts in Africa "…tend to say take second place". Hence, continued reliance on them cannot guarantee sustainability. Representatives of SECAM's funding partners also acknowledged that the increasing difficulty they have accessing funding from their donors is associated with shifts of emphasis on domestic values and policy priorities such as those related to respect for human rights and the reaction of the Church to some of those values. As a mitigating factor, some respondents suggested SECAM intensifies intra-Africa funding and resource mobilization from communities, private sector businesses, and the church to ensure that "…sustainability is not an issue that would negatively impact their future work."

In discussing the high level of dependency of SECAM on non-African sources for its funding, some participants lamented the apparent lack of interest or initiative on the part of SECAM to actively mobilize funding within the continent to complement or even eventually replace the extra-continental funding sources it currently relies on. One Regional President of a RJPC wondered why SECAM has not fully exploited the opportunity to raise close to USD200,000 annually from its more than 400 or more member dioceses[24]. Another wondered why SECAM cannot reach out to local philanthropists, especially those with business who stand to gain from a stable peaceful continent to engage them to see investment in the promotion of good governance, justice, peace, and community development as a viable and profitable investments to undertake. They argued that if foreign governments, businesses, and foundations see value in investing in activities that promote peace and security to protect their businesses in Africa from local conflicts, electoral disputes, and the spread of violent extremism, why not African businesses? They believed if approached with well-articulated advocacy and fundraising messages, businesses on the continent will be willing and able to respond favorably with substantial investments that support SECAM's activities.

b) Institutional sustainability: Besides the challenges of resources to sustain SECAM's initiatives, participants also raised questions about the institutional limitations that undermine the continuity of SECAM's interventions, and by extension, its credibility in sustaining initiatives over time. Limited numbers of staff in key sectors such as the programming department, which comes with a limited scope of technical expertise, were raised as major concerns. Participants also worried that the tenure of key leadership positions in SECAM were also a major factor in determining continuity. Participants were concerned that even though the same issue was raised in the Phase IV evaluation report, SECAM did not receive the approval of the Standing Committee to include increased staff positions in the Phase V design. The non-approval from the Standing Committee in turn raised questions on the extent to which the Standing Committee was abreast with the staffing challenges of

[24] The participant averred that the SECAM has instituted annual dues of USD500 per diocese for all its member dioceses.

SECAM and its impact on the continuity and sustainability of SECAM's governance, justice, peace, and development initiatives.

IV. DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Discussions of Findings

Based on the data from the evaluation, we offer evaluative perspectives on several issues that SECAM and its partners may want to consider in thinking ahead of the design of the next phase of interventions.

4.1.1 Need to reconceptualize and retool the interpretation and application of subsidiarity:

Participants noted that the geographical differences in the incidence and intensity of different governance, justice, peace, and development issues across the continent make it impractical for SECAM to develop and implement a continental program that adequately responds to the peculiar challenges in all regions of the continent. They argued that to be more effective, SECAM needs to develop an a la carte menu of interventions from which each region can pick, plan, and execute interventions that most appropriately respond to their needs while ensuring that SECAM has a coordinated set of interventions that contribute to the achievement of its continental objectives. Besides honoring the principle of subsidiarity, this approach, participants observed, will give greater ownership and control to regions over what they choose to do and enable them to feel integrated into the actions of SECAM.

While devolution of responsibilities is important, it is equally important to acknowledge that subsidiarity's emphasis on local agency for actions on local matters and interests does not preclude the role of superior authorities in ensuring strong consultations, collaborative decision-making, and joint or closely coordinated actions with and among subordinate actors for greater efficiency, effectiveness, and synergistic impact in meeting agency-wide objectives. On the contrary, an isolationist view and use of the principle of subsidiarity contradicts and defeats the rationale for the creation of synergy among national, regional, and continental bodies of the church to ensure a collective and coordinated approaches to delivering results that individual dioceses, national and regional conferences will be unable to achieve. A dogmatic view and over-generalized application of the principle hurts the ability of the church to be more efficient, effective, and impactful especially with respect to its engagement in secular spaces where the issues it must deal with are beyond the scope of one territorial unit such as a diocese, national, or regional conferences. The Church cannot expect to effectively engage with and influence policies and programs of highly structured secular inter-territorial institutions of regional blocs such as ECOWAS, SADC, COMESA, or a continental organization such as the AU and EU among others using small territorially restricted approaches.

In the design and execution of SECAM's interventions, a rigid respect for the principle of subsidiarity became a stumbling block rather than a bridge for coordinating actions on thematic issues. It became an excuse for the creation of turfs of disjointed actions that yield isolated and minimally impactful results. Hence, in an exercise of passing the buck, SECAM cites the principle of subsidiarity to justify its inability to reach out and down to regional episcopal conferences to engage them in coordinated actions that serve their mutual interests. The latter constituent members in turn assert their independence of action from SECAM and cite the same principle to argue why they cannot reach beyond national conferences for collective actions that serve their common good. Donors also use the same principle to justify support for bilateral partnerships and funding to individual dioceses or national and regional entities for actions that run without coordination or reference to SECAM.

As a result, SECAM and its constituent members tend to act in parallel rather than in synchrony largely because of the absence of a collectively designed and coordinated action plan that links actions from parishes through dioceses, national, and regional conferences to the continental and global agenda of SECAM. Hence, SECAM's projects are planned on behalf of, instead of in collaboration with, the regional episcopal conferences. This is why many of the evaluation participants said they had not heard about SECAM's project activities. Consequently, while the church in Africa may be pushing hard to address similar issues on its priority list, its constituent diocesan, national, and regional institutions may be pushing at different rhythms, paces, and even directions. As a result, the synergistic potential of the church's engagement in public spaces is greatly diminished.

4.1.2 Need to enhance credibility and legitimacy of subcontinental structures

With more than 260 million adherents across more than 465 archdioceses and dioceses, the Catholic Church has a large and deep footprint in Africa, with closely knit institutional networks. However, its ability to marshal these institutional numbers and penetrations to exert influence on national, regional, and continental policies and programs to transform conditions of living for Africa's population is not fully harnessed. While the church has had positive impacts in the secular spaces in some countries, its contribution to transformational policies and programs that promote good governance, justice, peace, security, and inclusive and authentic development is not the same across national and regional conferences. Often, its engagements are ad hoc and not visible in the relevant spaces. In some places, it is not recognized as a legal entity within local legal frameworks, especially in cases where Church institutions are required to register as corporate entities under national laws. In some countries, it is often impossible for church structures to engage in discussions with state structures when they are not formally recognized and accredited by the state. Respondents in this interview pointed to cases where they were questioned for their intent to act on some social issues because they lacked the requisite legal status and accreditation from the State to engage in such actions. They gave examples of situations in which local church institutions are told to stay within their narrowly defined spiritual spheres because they are not clothed with legal personality to act outside those boundaries.

Under such circumstances, while subsidiarity is important for creating space for local action on local issues, it may not be enough to support local action of the church. On the contrary, a stronger presence of SECAM's voice and image in local actions is necessary to facilitate access and actions of local churches in their respective public spaces. For instance, evaluation participants argued that, in the absence of recognition by national governments, local churches can leverage the connections SECAM has with intergovernmental institutions at the continental level to offer the local church institutions the legitimacy they need to operate. To do this, however, local church institutions need to demonstrate very strong and clearly visible connections between what SECAM is doing at the continental level with what they are doing at their level. It would strengthen the case for local church institutions if they can point to strong institutional relationships and programmatic partnerships that SECAM has with AU and regional institutions as the source of the local actions.

4.1.3 ***Need for Enhanced Collaboration with Church Actors***:

While SECAM has been able to leverage partnerships with external institutions to make its voice heard in the secular space to advance its project objectives, participants in the evaluation pointed to several opportunities that SECAM missed to create synergy for its activities by acting in consonance with its constituent members and affiliates. On environmental programming, for instance, participants regularly referred to REBAC as the star initiative of the church in response to Laudato Si. SECAM is the originator of REBAC, which has emerged as an inter-regional structure that focuses on the Congo basin. However, beyond sponsoring some administrative costs, SECAM has limited influence on the work of REBAC. The activities of Rebac cover 6 out of 9 countries in the Congo Basin. However, the 6 countries belong to different ecclesiastical regions. Additionally, four countries that are geospatially within the Congo Basin are not covered by REBAC. This effectively means that REBAC is not effectively covering the entire region that various participants referred to as the second lung of the world. It also means that, jurisdictionally, REBAC is outside the direct ambit of any of the RECs or RJPCs in the regions its activities cover. Therefore, its accountability is neither to SECAM, RECs, nor the RJPCs in the regions it purportedly covers.

4.1.4 Need to Address communication bottlenecks:

SECAM asserts in its self-evaluation report that "There are clear communication structures which have been set up between SECAM and the working groups" (p.5). SECAM has Pan African Episcopal Committee for Social Communications as its communications arm, a website that provides information on its activities, and monthly newsletter that it sends out to update its constituent members on its activities. All these avenues including the JPDC's communication officer are available for collaboration to get it messages and information to its stakeholders and partners. However, in evaluation interviews, SECAM staff have acknowledged that the current structure for communicating with its constituents is inadequate, as it relies on regions and dioceses to pass on the information it sends out through their networks of conferences, dioceses, and parishes in the hope that the

information shared through these channels' percolates down to the community levels. Subsidiarity is the reason for this elaborate chain of communication. As one participant from SECAM put it "… we speak through regions and then the region, they will speak through the national conferences, national conferences to the dioceses, and so on. So, if I want to contact the Conference of Tanzania, I don't jump".

Nonetheless, many participants in this evaluation, including senior church leaders with regional and national level responsibilities for governance, justice and development portfolios have expressed frustrations with the lack of information on what SECAM's good governance project is about and what SECAM is doing on the ground. They highlighted the limited information sharing from SECAM to allow for their informed and meaningful engagement with SECAM on the project. In individual evaluation interviews, the leadership of SECAM recognizes that these modes of communication are not working. One senior leader of SECAM gave an example of how the Bishops' Conference in Tanzania expressed their lack of information on what SECAM is doing on the continent. A President of a regional episcopal GJPDC expressed similar frustrations on lack of information on SECAM's activities in his region.

It is obvious that SECAM's communication strategy on paper may be missing a good chunk of its intended audience. It also means that SECAM does not have a feedback loop in its communication strategy to ensure that the information it sends out reaches the intended audiences and triggers expected responses from them. This means SECAM must find ways within or around the barriers of subsidiarity to ensure it is communicating effectively with its constituent members at all levels.

4.1.5 Need to harness Information and Communication Technologies for effective advocacy

The thrust of SECAM's agenda is built on using advocacy to influence public policies and programs to promote just, equitable, inclusive, and authentic human development, especially for the poor and marginalized. However, the spaces for public policymaking are both collaborative and contested spaces where different interest groups compete against or build coalitions with each other as they seek to mobilize support for their common interests. While advocates may share a common goal, the reasons for seeking the same goals may differ greatly. In the contemporary context, the proliferation of information and communication technologies has liberalized access to information and given citizens access to multiple on-demand and at-will sources of information that often offer varied perspectives on the same issues.

The Phase IV project evaluation established that SECAM has not sufficiently harnessed the power of electronic communication technologies to effectively share information on its activities. In particular, the report noted that SECAM's "… website is underutilized and the communication to external audiences is insufficient. The material posted on the website and in the monthly newsletter is not very interesting to the JPDC's non-Catholic stakeholders."[25] This current evaluation notes that SECAM has put in considerable effort since the last evaluation in 2020 to keep the website updated with current information. Out last review of the website on 18/10/2024 shows updates that include a report of a 12 October 2024 conference in Rome in which Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo made a presentation on the topic "The Church cannot remain silent in the face of the illegal exploitation of mineral resources in Africa"[26]- an intervention of critical importance to SECAM's agenda. We note, however, that the website has icons purported to be linked to SECAM's social media accounts such as Facebook and X (formerly Twitter). However, clicks on the links to these accounts lead one to social media pages that are either inaccessible or inactive. Appendix X provides a screen grab of the link to the Facebook account of SECAM.

SECAM understands that the youth, who are the majority in the church, no longer hold encounters around parish halls and other physical spaces; they congregate in multiple cyberspaces that are often beyond the reach of the

[25] Schwegmann, C. and Pul, H. (2020)Report of Project Evaluation Good Governance Project Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) Project Nr. 100-900-1570ZG, SECAM and Misereor, July 2020, on file, p.6.

[26] SECAM (2024) Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo: "The Church cannot remain silent in the face of the illegal exploitation of mineral resources in Africa" presented at "Modern martyrs, victims of the exploitation of mineral resources in Africa: Realities and perspectives of the outgoing Church", Rome, 12 October 2024, available at https://secam.org/cardinal-fridolin-ambongo-the-church-cannot-remain-silent-in-the-face-of-the-illegal-exploitation-of-mineral-resources-in-africa/

church, and therefore cannot be reached with messages passed through the structures of the church or other brick-walled spaces. Additionally, the emergence of influencers in digital spaces often crowds out traditional advocacy initiatives from decision-making spaces as multiple voices with divergent views compete for the attention of decision-makers. In these circumstances, SECAM, and for that matter, the church no longer has a monopoly over a captive audience in its pews to pass on information to through its structures and institutions.

Hence, it must vigorously compete with these new and revamped traditional media outlets to catch the attention of and mobilize its followers for any action. Consequently, continued reliance of SECAM on hierarchical approaches to disseminating information on its activities is not only ineffective and inefficient, but it also risks being counterproductive as its followers may access incomplete, inaccurate, and counter information from other sources. To keep pace, SECAM must be more innovative and proactive in its communication strategies. It cannot expect to effectively mobilize and engage Catholics and supporters in issues ripe for advocacy by handing down information through the hierarchical channels of regions, national conferences, and dioceses to parishes and outstations.

4.1.6 Need to Recognize the Limitations of Advocacy:

Advocacy, however pungent its message, does not necessarily lead to actions that make change happen. Advocacy, as a tool for change, faces a peculiar challenge. Policy makers hear multiple, competing, and sometimes contradictory views from different interest-holders on any one issue under consideration. Hence, while it is important for the Church to speak up on issues of concern to ordinary people, the implementation of advocacy policy recommendations is out of the hands of SECAM. Per their statement in Textbox 5, SECAM recognizes this limitation of advocacy as an instrument for making change happen. SECAM appreciates that the issuance of a single policy paper is not enough to secure a transformative policy response from policy makers. Consistent engagement with the duty bearers at different levels is essential to secure action. That requires the dedication of resources of human, financial, and material resources and the creation of appropriate structures, systems, and action outlets that SECAM currently does not have but needs to have.

Textbox 5: Limits of Advocacy

We give our position papers or our advocacy appeals, but the people who should implement them are other people. And the impact does not depend on the content of what we have stated. We hope they have listened to us. So many times, the situation might remain the same, because maybe they did not listen to what we suggested, and that is the reason why we continue repeating our appeals, but efficacy or the impact is not very visible because we are not the ones who implement these policies we recommend.

4.1.7 Need to Institutionalize Professionalism and Continuity of Leadership of JPD Commission of SECAM:

The Second Deputy Secretary General of SECAM leads the Justice, Peace, and Development Commission (JPDC) of SECAM, whose tenure is time bound. In appointing the Secretary General and his two deputies, ensuring that the appointee is a priest and representation of SECAM's official languages (English, French, and Portuguese) in the selected staff take precedence over professionalism and technical competencies, especially for the JPDC. Put together, these criteria mean that having effective and sustained leadership of SECAM's JPDC initiatives is left to chance more than intentionality, as the personal interests, expertise, commitment, and enthusiasm of the individuals posted to the position determine the pace and direction of what the JPDC can achieve during that individual's tenure. While ensuring equitable regional and linguistic representation in SECAM's leadership structure are important criteria for the composition of the leadership structure at SECAM, no strong arguments have established why appointees need not be priests nor why a deputy secretary general must have operational responsibilities for the JPDC wing of the SECAM Secretariat. If a deputy Secretary General must provide oversight over the JPDC activities of SECAM, why can't the position of a technically competent professional Director of Programs - be the person a priest, a religious, or lay person - whose tenure is not tied to the rotation of Secretaries general, be incorporated into the management structure of the JPDC to work under the auspices of the Deputy Secretariat General?

Maintaining the status quo does not only hurt the consistency and continuity of SECAM's JPDC initiatives over time, the uncertainty over who comes next as the leader of SECAM's JPDC does not inspire donor confidence

for long-term investment in SECAM's activities. Besides, restricting non-clerical positions within SECAM to only priests hurt in public image, alienates the non-clerical side of the church and its ability to portray a whole-of-church face and approach to its work to the outside world. This has implications also for SECAM's ability to build effective and enduring partnerships with non-Catholic entities, fundraise outside the church system, and demonstrate its professional independence and competence in secular spaces.

4.1.8 Need to Center the Role of the Youth in all domains of SECAM's Programming:

The Phase V proposal of SECAM's project mentions youth only twice in the project text, and in both cases, in connection with migration. In its narrative reports, SECAM worked with youths from the Laudato Si Movement and Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability (CYNESA) in developing papers in preparation for COP28 on the loss of biodiversity, protecting the Congo basin, and energy and fossil fuels. SECAM also supported these groups to issue a statement at the African Climate Summit[27]. Further, as members of the Environmental Working group, they collaborated with REBAC to develop position papers and synergies with other institutions at the African Climate Dialogue[28]. However, more attention needs to be given to the central role that the youth have played and will increasingly play in the public space in Africa that affects all the priority areas of SECAM's governance, justice, peace, and development agenda. To refocus the attention of SECAM, this evaluation highlights the youth factor below.

i) Youth Factor and the Promotion of Good Governance: A critical piece to consider in the next phase is how to center the engagement of the youth in all aspects of SECAM's activities. This is because youth are active players, positively and negatively, in all sectors that SECAM's priorities have targeted. The increasing activism of the youth in the governance spheres, for example, illustrates the promotion of good governance is no longer about ensuring peaceful elections and transition of power between political parties; it is more about ensuring that the elected no longer turn deaf ears to the interests of the people once they are elected. Demonstrations of the youth in Kenya, Nigeria, and Senegal show how the youth are taking democracy out of the chambers of parliaments into the streets to force political leaders to do the bidding of the citizens.

The proliferation of traditional (radio, television, and newsletters) and social media platforms, thanks to the ubiquity of platforms of engagement made possible by increasing access of information technology tools have liberalized debates on national issues. Cabinet rooms and chambers of parliaments or national assemblies no longer hold the monopoly over decision-making. The rise in citizen journalism means the youth have access to information about anything they want to know about, and their voices can no longer be muffled. The actions and inactions of political leaders that harm them can no longer be hidden. The youth know what properties have been acquired by which political leader, how, and with what resources. Therefore, their tolerance levels for acts of corruption and ineffective leadership are very low.

The rapid mobilization of the youth in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, and to some extent, in Chad in support of the military ejection of elected governments presents another face of how the conventional conception and forms of democracy is being challenged by the youth. Youth activism in Burkina Faso ousted President Blaise Compaore in defense of electoral democracy but the same youth action supported the ousting of the elected government by the military. This means the conception of good governance in the mind of the youth, is not bounded by the rules of elections and transition of power; the ability to deliver dividends of peace, security, and development are paramount definers of what the youth want as good governance.

Increasing youth activism in the streets means democratic engagements have moved beyond the chambers of parliaments and assemblies and spilled into the streets, where they can ensure that the elected hear the voices of the electorate and live up to their responsibility of serving the interest of the poor in using collective resources for the common good rather than private gain. SECAM needs to fully understand the foregoing dynamics in the field of promoting good governance and peaceful elections to device interventions that move beyond support for the adherence to electoral rules to ensuring transparent, accountable, and equitable systems of governance that deliver concrete and authentic outcomes for the betterment of all the people they serve.

[27] SECAM Fifth Phase 4th Semester Narrative Report, 2023
[28] SECAM Fifth Phase 2nd Semester Narrative Report, 2022

Young people are also the agents of electoral violence when they are persuaded, instigated, or hired by political parties and leaders to perpetrate acts of violence to support their quests for power. Youth living on the margins of society are susceptible to being lured into participation in actions that unleash politically motivated violence for a pittance. They are therefore both perpetrators and victims of acts of political violence they participate in.

ii) **Youth Factor and the Promotion of Good Land Governance and Responsible Resource Extraction:** SECAM's land governance program centers on the challenges of ensuring responsible extractive activities by multinational mining, lumbering, and oil and gas companies operating on the continent. However, large multi-national corporations are no longer the only culprits for environmental degradation through natural resource extractions. On the contrary, small-scale mining is a greater menace to the environment as it occasions the wanton destruction of land, forests, farms, and water bodies in the name of mining. The youth are predominantly the actors in this sector. Hence, the challenges of promoting responsible mining and exploitation of natural resources can no longer ignore the role of the youth; it must center it and create spaces for them to be active promoters of responsible and sustainable mining and alternative livelihood systems that honor and protect the environment.

iii) **Youth Factor in Climate Change and the Protection of the Environment:** SECAM's climate change and environmental protection initiatives are hinged on leveraging "**…**the spirituality and belief systems of various people to [sensitize and] motivate people to act in ways that can protect and enhance the environment." (Project, p. 4). The project does not identify subsections of population groups to target as active participants in the protection of the environment. Although the proposal indicated SECAM will undertake joint advocacy activities with Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA). However, there is no evidence of such direct engagement of this youth organization or any of its kind. But as indicated in the section immediately above, the youth are active agents of environmental degradation through their participation in mining, lumbering, and other activities in support of their livelihood systems. Hence, not much can be achieved in promoting climate change and environmental protection without them. Besides, global trends indicate it is youth activism that has garnered some of the greatest attention and response from decision-makers at the United Nations and continental levels. Therefore, SECAM's agenda in this sector will be better served if it is hinged on mobilizing the youth across Africa to champion it.

iv) **Youth Factor and Migration and human trafficking:** Youth are the subjects and objects of migration and trafficking. The entrepreneurs in the migration and trafficking industries rely on networks of youth for their recruitment, management, and sustenance of the operations of their networks. In the same way that youth are supportive agents, they can also be subversive ones, helping to identify and disrupt the operations of the networks, using their peer-to-peer information and communication connections within and across countries. It is therefore essential that SECAM centers youth as agents of change in the fight against migration and human trafficking.

4.2 Conclusions

The design and implementation of SECAM's Phase V governance, peace, justice, and development project has resulted in several important changes and results. Overall, the success rate of this project can be rated higher than in the previous one. Nonetheless, the evaluation notes some areas of improvement in different segments, as captured below:

Governance mechanisms: SECAM maintains the governance structure in which elected bishops constitute the Standing Committee of SECAM. No professional or lay representations are included, contrary to the recommendation of the Phase IV project. The Standing Committee meets twice a year, despite the possibility of using electronic platforms to host more meetings to provide timely guidance to the work of SECAM. Committee members do not seem to have the time to peruse all documents before them. Members have limited opportunities for wider consultation with the staff of SECAM. Instead, they rely on briefings by the Secretaries General to make decisions. Hence, the decisions and guidance they provide often do not reflect the real needs of SECAM, as demonstrated in the case of turning down SECAM's request for more staff.

Management Performance: The current set of management personnel at the SECAM JPDC unit participated in the evaluation of the Phase IV project and led the design of the Phase V one. This has demonstrated the benefits of continuity of staff, as there is clear evidence of the transfer of learning from the design and management of Phase IV and Phase V. SECAM has demonstrated the achievement of more concrete results in Phase V than in the previous ones. Nonetheless, the shortage of staff in the programming unit is also manifested in the ability of SECAM to be present in multiple spaces where important decisions were being made. Evaluation participants lamented this as an obstacle to the effectiveness of SECAM in leveraging all opportunities to carry through the voice of the church on important matters when it should.

Program Design: The design of SECAM's Phase V governance project closely followed the project design recommendations from the Phase IV evaluations. Hence, it differed considerably in its design from previous projects. Guided by an explicit theory of change and a logical framework, the project aimed to amplify the church's voice in influencing high-level decision-making forums on the continent on four priority areas in order – i) promoting good governance and peaceful elections: ii) addressing issues of migration and human trafficking, iii) advancing land governance and the protection of natural resources against unbridled exploitation, especially in the extractive sectors; and iv) addressing issues of environment and climate change. Strategies and activities for achieving the objectives under these priority areas hinged on the use of advocacy and lobbying. The inclusion of verifiable indicators for each component provided a clear road map and assessment standards for the project. These design features demonstrate that at the staff level, SECAM took the recommendations of the Phase IV evaluation seriously and sought to comply with them. It showed that SECAM can be a learning organization.

Project Implementation: Challenges were, however, observable at the implementation level, where SECAM was unable to follow the recommendations from the Phase IV evaluation on the need to engage more and qualified human resources either as full-time staff or as members of a Technical Advisory Group. Although the replacement of the AU Liaison officer was complied with, the position was filled at the end of February 2024 - roughly 6 months before this evaluation assignment. The additional programming staff the evaluation recommended were not hired and the Project Technical Advisory group is not in place. As a result, SECAM did not have the full complement of staff recommended for effective and efficient implementation of the project.

Communication and Coordination: The need to improve communication within and between SECAM and other external actors was an issue raised in the 2020 evaluation report. Some progress has been made to improve internal communication within SECAM. Internally, SECAM has made efforts to harness information and communication technologies to improve its engagement with the regions. It uses regular virtual meetings and emails to maintain communications between its office in Accra and the Liaison Office in Addis Ababa. However, communication between SECAM and its constituent members and partners is still a challenge. Several partners and senior members of the church with responsibility for work related to SECAM's agenda at regional and national levels said in evaluation interviews that they had little to no information on what SECAM was doing in their respective fields. As a result, there was little to no coordination of actions between SECAM and some of its constituent members.

Public Visibility of SECAM's work: The visibility of SECAM in public spaces has improved significantly during this project cycle. SECAM has partnered with several church-based organizations and civil society counterparts to prepare and present advocacy papers in highly visible spaces such as the AU, the EU, and the UN. These have established the presence and voice of SECAM in these spaces. In collaboration with other agencies, it has also co-authored and published some documents, which increase its electronic footprint in the digital world of engagement through publications.

4.3 Recommendations

4.3.1 Recommendations on project design and management

iv) *Strategically Focus and Push to address specific issues in specific regions*: SECAM's priorities remain valid; the Church in Africa cannot demonstrate the achievable of verifiable contributions and long-term impact

if its project activities remain thinly spread at the continental levels. To make lasting contributions to change in any of the priority areas, SECAM needs to strategically choose fields of engagement and focus its actions to address issues of importance to specific geographies. For this, we recommend that based on a thorough analysis of the priority needs of different regions, SECAM selects one or two regions with high need for support in one or two priority areas to focus on during a project cycle. This will enable it to mobilize and concentrate its efforts and resources to support the selected regions and tackle clearly defined issues in line with SECAM's priorities. It will also allow SECAM to mobilize experts and resources from other regions to support a whole-of-church approach to help the focal sister region or regions address the identified issues. For example:, SECAM could concentrate its efforts in a given project cycle to support regions implicated in the protracted conflicts of the Great Lakes regions, to highlight and support resolution efforts to address the intricate nexus of extractive resources, conflicts, governance, peace, and development working with the AU, respective regional governments, episcopal conferences, international partners and their home governments, and other local nonstate actors, to push for solutions to the resource conflict dynamics in the region.

v) *Establish Post-Advocacy Action Teams*: As noted earlier, successful advocacies do not necessarily lead to transformative changes in designed policies and actions, as recipients of advocacy messages may not necessarily be the policy designers and implementers. For instance, the AU's policies and protocols are recommendations only. It is up to member countries to domesticate and operationalize them by setting up the requisite laws, legislative instruments, institutions, and providing the resources (human and material) to make the policy changes happen and achieve their intended purposes. To ensure that its advocacy work led to transformative change, we recommend that SECAM institutionalizes post-advocacy follow up mechanisms, working with affected regional and national conferences, and liaising with other interest-holders to sustain the pressure for concrete action to take place. This cannot be left to volunteers. It requires the expertise of professional lobbyists and volunteers to secure action. Planning for and mobilizing the resources to support this will be crucial to translating advocacy into actionable policies and programs that address the needs of the poor and marginalized.

vi) *Establish agile and adaptive structures of interventions*: SECAM works in a volatile space where the nature of the issues it deals with can and do change rapidly. However, the Church largely is reactive, not proactive. It is often the first to show up to provide relief, rehabilitation and related post-traumatic assuaging services. It is seldom proactive in detecting, alerting, preempting, and supporting the prevention of traumatic events. Indeed, several senior church leaders in this evaluation expressed dismay at the lack of response from SECAM, even in reaching out to national episcopal conferences that were caught in the midst of political turmoil to share sympathies, ask how they can help, and be a voice of reason with the AU, ECOWAS, and the leadership of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger to find amicable ways to avert the current stalemate and widening conflict. Other evaluation participants expressed frustration with how SECAM lost time or opportunities for engagement at critical moments due to inability to take quick make funding decisions in collaboration with their funders. Instead of initiating discussions for the release of unused funds from a line item on an approved budget for a time-bound activity, a decision was made to apply for new funding. Such limited agility, adaptability, and responsiveness to changing circumstances lead to the loss of time and opportunities to carry out important activities.

It is recommended that SECAM carries out an audit of its decision-making processes to ensure that appropriate protocols and decision-making rules and regulations are in place to facility quick and responsive actions to changing operational contexts without sacrificing probity, transparency, and accountability in the process.

4.3.2 Recommendations for promoting good governance, peace, and security

i) *Build Capacity for Preventive Diplomacy*: The wide footprint of the church gives it ears and eyes on the ground, allowing it to have a feel of people on issues confronting them. For example, although the governance, peace, and security challenges engulfing the Sahelian regions of West Africa took the leadership of major political, economic, and ordinary citizens by surprise, the event needn't have been unpredictable to the

church, given the widespread discontent among the youth which manifested in the popular support they received from this population subgroup. Unfortunately, the rapid succession of military coup d'états in West Africa came on the blind side of SECAM and by extension RECOWA and their secular counterparts the African Union and ECOWAS respectfully, despite SECAM's governance initiatives.

Coupled with its closeness to the ground in most countries, the Catholic Church has a respected voice in most countries in Africa and across different religious divides. This creates an opportunity for the church to engage in multi-level diplomacy, from the highest to the lowest rubric in society. It is seen as a thought-leader that provides guidance to other faith-based and civil society organizations on issues of national and regional interests. These political assets of the Church and its position of respect create an opportunity for the church to engage in multi-level diplomacy, from the highest to the lowest rubric in society. However, SECAM and RECOWA literally were flat-footed and unable to mobilize RECOWA and the national conferences to engage with political authorities at the national and ECOWAS levels to manage the impasse that led to the exit of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger from ECOWAS and the creation of the AES. SECAM, and for that matter, the Catholic Church, could have provided leadership in mobilizing voices of reason to engage AU and ECOWAS in mediation efforts to avert their threats of sanctions and military actions that pushed the military leaders in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger to create the AES. Instead, SECAM missed a rare opportunity to be the alternative voice to the state-centric view of the challenges in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger and to advocate moderation and reasoning that considered the views of the people on the ground

Given the position of respect and influence the Catholic Church has in most countries in Africa, it has a duty to use these gifts to provide leadership for faith-based and civil society organizations to play more proactive roles in promoting good governance, peace, and development, especially in times of political crises. We recommend that, as the policy implementation wing of the Church in Africa, SECAM takes advantage of the network of the diocesan, national, and regional justice, peace, and development commissions to build negotiations and mediation capacities at all levels to support diplomatic engagements to avert the impasse.

ii) *Institutionalize proactive civic education and election monitoring and observation:* Election monitoring and observation is a key instrument for supporting transparency, fairness, and inclusiveness in elections. Elections happen in known cycles across the regions, and countries likely to have challenges with elections are predictable. Transparency of elections and associated disputes do not happen on the day of elections. The factors and actions that contribute to electoral disputes and violence are embedded in a wide range of steps, ranging from the promulgation of the electoral laws, the processes for the compilation of voter rolls, civic education of citizens on their rights and responsibilities before, during, and after voting, the training of domestic electoral observers, etc. However, SECAM's participation in electoral exercises is not structured to support upstream and midstream processes in the electoral value chain. SECAM and its regional and national constituent members engage largely in downstream processes with the deployment of election observers, by which time all the factors that could lead to disputed elections are already in full run.

To be a more effective instrument for promoting good governance and democracy through guaranteeing peaceful elections, we recommend that SECAM institutionalizes more permanent and robust structures at continental, regional, and national levels to accompany electoral processes from the beginning to the end, especially in countries prone to having disputed elections. SECAM could work with the regions to identify potentially conflictual elections across its project cycle and engage the respective national and regional episcopal conferences to plan and carry out targeted interventions along the election value chain to ensure transparent and peaceful elections take place as and when they roll out.

4.3.3 Recommendations related to communication

iii) *Enhance Visibility, Relevance, and Impact in cyberspace*: Electronic media spaces are the first points of call for guests seeking information on parties of interest. However, presence in such spaces is not enough to secure patronage. The content of the spaces must be of interest to the prospective guests. In particular, SECAM needs to continue to enhance its presence and increase its visibility in cyberspaces where it can build connections with young people, engage them on issues of interest to them, and facilitate the building of advocacy networks

on issues that appeal to the youth. In addition to keeping its websites updated with content that attracts and engages the youth, SECAM must make its social media handles functional, engaging, and current. We recommend therefore that SECAM consider engaging a social content specialist to develop content and facilitate engagements on its social platforms.

iv) *Set up a continuous engagement and education program:* SECAM should consider holding scheduled outreach and educational Webinars (monthly or quarterly) that focus on topical issues pertinent to its agenda and of particular interest to a region or country. Church leaders (cardinals, archbishops, bishops, or religious men and women) as well as lay persons who are experts in a subject matter e.g. extractive industries and conflict, elections and conflicts, migration, human trafficking, etc.) or who are very close, geographically, to the issues to be discussed should be identified and invited to lead the webinars. The issues to be discussed should be of primary concern to the ordinary person, Catholics, and non-Catholics alike; presentations should be in lay person language, and simultaneous translation in the official languages of SECAM should be considered[29]. Topics should be selected in consultation with RJPC Chairpersons and Coordinators to enhance co-leadership, ownership, and participation. An equitable selection of issues/topics, speakers, or panelists across all regions will enhance relevant issues dear to regions and potentially increase participation and buy-in across the continent.

4.3.4 Recommendations for Strengthening SECAM's

i) *Institutionalize Joint Standing Committee and Staff Retreats and Reflections to enhance decision-making*: The Phase IV evaluation made recommendations for strengthening staff capacity with the JPDC of SECAM. In particular, the report recommended that SECAM recruits' additional staff with requisite qualifications and experience to lead various initiatives, especially the advocacy agenda. The tenure of such staff should be designed to "… overlap with that of Secretaries-General of SECAM to allow for continuity and the passage of institutional memory between regimes at all times" (Schwegmann and Pul, 2020, p. 35). The report also reiterated the recommendation of the 2016 evaluation for the establishment of a Technical Advisory Committee to provide technical expertise and insights that support the work of the Standing Committee. This evaluation finds that these recommendations were not carried out because the Standing Committee did not approve the recruitment recommendation. Some evaluation participants believe that the Standing Committee may not have had full information about why the recommendation was made – a suggestion that they may not have had the opportunity to read the full evaluation report nor hold a wider consultation beyond the reports of the Sectary General to gain insights into further and better information to allow for a decision that responds to the actual needs of the unit.

While evaluation recommendations are not prescriptive, they ought to be taken seriously and acted on. Where actions are not possible, strong justifications must be documented to guide management in finding alternative but equally effective ways to address identified challenges. It is also understandable that members of SECAM's Standing Committees, all Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops who have full responsibilities managing their regular responsibilities, may not be able to fully appreciate the contents of evaluations and be able to follow through with decisions that support their implementations. Also, membership of the Standing Committee is not permanent; members rotate in and out in accordance with the rotational plans for membership of the Committees of SECAM. Therefore, new members may not have the institutional memory to guide them in decision-making. Finally, the Standing Committee meets only twice a year to receive reports, deliberate on them and make decisions. In the rapidly changing environment in which SECAM operates, meeting only twice a year does not provide ample space for the Standing Committee to provide timely guidance to the operations of SECAM.

To ensure Standing Committee members understand and fulfil their responsibilities, we recommended that SECAM holds regular orientations to bring Standing Committee members abreast with development and

[29] The webinar series could be modelled on the weekly Global Peace Studies for Sustainable Development in Africa webinars ran out of St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Zoom link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84157580433?pwd=Ny9kRGR1TjBtaHNiTGlFaWU4UW5Mdz09

facilitate regular reflections and training to help them perform their board functions effectively. This is especially important for members who may be joining the Committee. These meetings need to be in person. SECAM and the Standing Committee need to fully explore the use of communication channels such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google's conference call, etc. to meet more frequently to ensure SECAM staff receive the guidance they need to be effective.

We further recommend that avenues be created for joint regular retreats and reflections that allow Standing Committee Members and the programming staff of the JPDC to interact and share information that helps the Standing Committee in its decision-making roles.

ii) Institutionalize Professionalism and Continuity of Leadership of JPD Commission of SECAM: To address the issues of staff professionalism, continuity, and representation articulated in comment 4.17 above, we recommend that SECAM's Standing Committee takes steps to review SECMA's management structure, especially in relation to the JPDC section to include a Directorate for Programming with responsibilities for the design and implementation of SECAM's activities and JPDC activities. The Directorate will have a director appointed based on technical training, demonstrated competencies, experience, and ability to work within the tenets of the Catholic Church. The position should be opened to both priests, male and female religious, and male and female lay persons. The Director shall work closely with the Second Deputy Secretary General but shall have a functional relationship with the JPDC Standing Committee to ensure easier and quicker decision-making, ensure the Standing Committee is abreast with and participates regularly in making decisions to guide the operations of the directorate, and ensure continuity in between the rotation of Deputy Secretaries Generals.

The directorate would have Sectors staffed with technically qualified and experienced Sector Heads responsible for:

a) Programs Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning – responsible for designing interventions, writing proposals, monitoring and evaluation of interventions, and generation of reports that support collective learning.
b) Advocacy and Constituents Engagement – professionally plans, coordinates, and executes all advocacy initiatives of SECAM across all priority areas. Responsibility of the sector will include oversight of the operations of the AU Liaison Office and working closely with the Working Groups on advocacy issues.

c) Communications and Public Relations – responsible for planning and executing effective communication and public engagement strategies that include ensuring regional, and national episcopal conferences and other agencies are well informed of what is going on with the GJPDC side of SECAM's activities; management of public-facing interfaces such as ensuring a functional and informative website, organization of webinars and other encounters; production of publications, among others.

4.3.5 Recommendations for Building Institutional Capacity and Sustainability

The Phase III and IV evaluations both recommended that the SECAM devise a means to mobilize funding within the continent through engagement with financially capable faithful, citizens' groups, and private businesses to support its efforts. However, SECAM has no verifiable evidence of any effort it has made in this respect. No tangible reason has been given for its inability to do so and there is no evidence it has plans to do so any time so any time soon. It has no staff with expertise in fundraising in place. At the same time, most donors are pushing to localize their international funding practices by working directly with local agencies instead of channeling funding through intermediaries such as SECAM's traditional funding partners. As the flow of funding to such agencies dwindles, SECAM stands to lose out from its traditional sources of support as well.

The recommendations below bear in mind that sustainability does not mean SECAM has to generate all its funding from internal resources. On the contrary, it means SECAM needs to diversify its sources of funding to include substantial internal resource mobilization. Hence, the recommendations are directed to both SECAM's partners and SECAM itself.

i) Recommendation to SECAM Partners

a) *Partners Should Support SECAM Develop and launch a Local Fundraising Strategy*: To support SECAM in taking the local fundraising suggestions seriously, we recommend that SECAM's partners make it a prerequisite for funding the next phase that SECAM includes a local fundraising plan in the next phase of the project. This should include i) plans and resources for the hiring of a Fundraising Officer, ii) a job description and performance-based contract with time-bound deliverables for funds raised; iii) a fundraising capacity development training plan for staff, iv) a systems development to support efficient engagements with prospective donors, and v) a clear plan with which SECAM will engage and dialogue with African businesses and philanthropists to solicit their funding and advise for supporting nationally, regionally or thematically specific and mutually beneficial initiatives. The plan should include benchmarks to guide performance monitoring and appraisals for the key staff involved in fundraising.

b) *Partners need to Support SECAM's Donor Engagement Efforts:* As funders of development initiatives seek to localize their interventions through working with local structures, the church stands to gain a lot through effective engagement with such funding partners. To do this, however, it must have the institutional capabilities to meet the resource management and reporting requirements of the donors. To be ready for this, funding partners of SECAM need to support her in developing internal capacities to meet the requirements of donors for proposal development, execution, and reporting standards for major donors seeking to localize their interventions. As donor funding is often targeted to specific geographical enclaves or SECAM may be required to pass through funding to lower-level structures for the implementation of projects, the resource management capacity building should be extended to the regional and national JPDC offices to ensure the church has synchronized systems at all levels to manage to receive, manage, and account for resources without hitches.

c) *Streamline and Harmony Resource Management Plans*: SECAM's current donors and partners come to SECAM and its constituent members with different budgeting practices, financial reporting procedures, and related practices that do not support the development of robust internal structures and systems for harmonized resource management and accountability practices. SECAM and its constituent members therefore have to juggle multiple accounting and reporting systems to meet the needs of the different donors. To support SECAM in developing and institutionalizing a robust and harmonized resource management plan, we recommend that SECAM partners work together to agree on common standards and procedures for SECAM and its partners to follow in the management and reporting of resources from their partners. This will help SECAM develop a resource management culture that can outlive projects and meet the needs of subsequent donors.

ii) Recommendations to SECAM

Intensify Intra-Continental Fundraising Efforts: Participants in this evaluation have highlighted the multiple opportunities that SECAM must raise substantial funding for its governance, justice, peace, and development portfolio on the continent, if it positions itself well to engage with prospective funders in the private sector and other spaces. To do this, however, SECAM needs to meet certain preconditions.

a) *Have a Strong Argument and a Plan of Execution*: To elicit any positive response, SECAM must approach prospective doors with a compelling demonstration of its past records and capacity to design and execute targeted interventions in the governance, justice, peace, and development space at the local, national, regional, and continental levels, in collaboration with its constituent members. This requires expertise that SECAM does not currently have. Hence, we recommend that SECAM seek expertise from outside its current set. Several religious and lay organizations and individuals who have expertise in these matters can be approached for their services. Many may be open to supporting SECAM partly or fully free of charge.

b) *Fully Utilize Opportunities for Internal Resource Mobilization*: Within the church, SECAM first needs to make it administratively easy and programmatically attractive for dioceses on the continent to pay their annual dues in full and on time. Second, SECAM needs to develop a strategy to engage lay individuals and societies within the church in Africa to mobilize support for its activities. To attract the interests of such people, SECAM

must demonstrate the relevance of the initiatives to the immediate needs of the dioceses through the pursuit of the recommendations above, especially those under 4.2.3

c) *Exploring External Resource Mobilization Within the Continent*: Outside the church, SECAM needs to reach out to local and expatriate businesses operating within specific sectors within defined geographical enclaves (e.g. mining companies within the Congo Basin and enclaves in West Africa), companies that have transnational businesses (e.g. Dangote Group of Companies, MTN, African financial institutions such as Ecobank, Access Bank, Stanbic Bank, etc.), Corporate and private foundations (such, MTN Foundation, Elumelu Foundation, etc.) to demonstrate how the extensive network of the church can support peace and security initiatives that create enabling environments for businesses and communities to thrive in synchrony. SECAM engages the services of a professional fundraising strategist to help her devise a robust and inclusive strategy with accompanying donor engagement plans that help SECAM demonstrate how its agenda on promoting governance, justice, peace, and development on the continent adds value to their respective businesses.

d) *Develop internal Ethical Standards for Donor Engagement*: As a faith-based institution that operates strictly in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church underscored by strong beliefs, values, and moral codes, fundraising outside the church systems comes with potential reputational risks related to possible conflicts of interests, values or unwitting co-optation of SECAM to advance beliefs and practices at variance with its own. SECAM must know what lines to respect in its dealings with the external world. Therefore, a first step to venturing out into the fundraising pace is for SECAM to develop its code of practice to guide whom it would engage with, and where and how it raises its funds. We recommend therefore that SECAM draws on the church's resources of canon lawyers, moral theologians, ethicists, and other competent authorities to develop and use its strong internal standards that serve as guard rails for its engagement with donors.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Terms Of Reference

SECAM

Justice, Peace and Development Commission

Project title: Reinforcing the Catholic Church's influence in Africa towards good governance, justice and peace

(Project Nr. 100-900-1664 ZG)

Impact Evaluation Assessment

Summary	Evaluating the impact of SECAM JPDC project on "reinforcing the Catholic Church's influence in Africa towards good governance, justice and peace" funded mainly by MISEREOR
Location	SECAM Secretariat, Accra-Ghana
Official Representative of Legal Holder	Rev. Fr. Rafael SIMBINI JUNIOR (Secretary General of SECAM)
Project Director	Rev. Fr. Jean Germain RAJOELISON (2nd Deputy Secretary General of SECAM)

1. Background:

The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) is a forum for Catholic Bishops of Africa and Madagascar to network and speak with one voice that can bring forth the African vision to the Universal Church, as well as influence the political and developmental processes in Africa that can reflect and articulate the concerns of the poor and marginalized. To achieve this goal, the Justice, Peace, and Development Commission (JPDC) of SECAM launched the Good Governance Project, primarily funded by MISEREOR. The initial stage of the project took place from 2007 to 2009, and MISEREOR has continued to support the SECAM project, now in its fifth phase from 2021 to 2024.

The fifth phase of the Good Governance Project is scheduled to conclude in September 2024. Following an external evaluation conducted in June 2021, the recommendation for a fifth phase was made, emphasizing the project's continued importance within the context of widespread corruption, inadequate governance in several African nations, escalating conflicts, and environmental

deterioration.

The fifth phase project is being implemented between October 2021 and September 2024, approved by MISEREOR under Project No. 100-900-1664 ZG.

Goal

The project goal is to increase the influence of the Catholic Church in the political and developmental processes at various levels that reflect the concerns and interest of the poor and marginalized towards establishing a more just, prosperous, transparent and peaceful African societies living in harmony with nature.

Specific objectives

The intermediate objectives towards realising this goal are:

Objective No. 1:
To strengthen the Church's advocacy campaign at the African Union and other Regional Economic Communities.
Indicators:

a) # of advocacy papers developed for advocacy campaign (At least four papers).
b) # of advocacy issues raised by SECAM that found their way into the discussions or programmes of AU (At least three issues raised taken up by AU)
c) # of Regional Conferences that have started engaging their respective Regional Economic Blocks (At least three Regional Conferences would have initiated dialogue with their respective Regional Blocks)

Objective No. 2:
To strengthen good governance and peace building in Africa. Indicators:

a) # of Bills or existing laws that the Church was able to influence (At least five bills)
b) % of CPLOs trained who were able to link their Church structures to Parliamentary processes. (At least 40% of trained CPLOs)
c) # of countries with serious conflicts visited by Bishops to mediate (At least two)
d) % of African countries that held national elections monitored by the Church where there are no violent disputes. (At least 80%)

Objective No. 3:
To contribute to the reduction of irregular migration of Africans to Europe and human trafficking.
Indicators:

a) # of Episcopal Conferences adopting good practices such as on illegal migrants exist-/transit points (At least 15 conferences)

Objective No. 4:
To step up campaign for environmental protection in line with Laudato Si.

Indicators:

(a) # of Episcopal Conferences engaged in environmental campaigns (At least 25

regional/national conferences)

(b) Evidence and nature of initiatives taken by stakeholders towards protection of basin.

Objective No. 5:
To step up campaign for more just land governance and natural resource management in Africa.
Indicator:

a) # of cases where there is joint actions or campaign among platform members towards more just land acquisition and resource exploitation. (At least three cases)

Measures to be supported

SECAM wants to further develop its project strategy in close cooperation with Church actors of the Regional and National Episcopal Conferences and through alliances with African and European civil society in order to introduce its political voice at regional, Pan-African and international level.

The measures and activities to be implemented shall include:

Relating to objective no. 1 – Further development of the lobby strategy:

- systematic further development of the strategy and methodical approach of SECAM and associated actors of the African Church.
- continuing research work on lobbying possibilities at the AU in Addis Ababa;
- research work, working meetings, seminars and targeted networking on the thematic focal points;
- drafting position papers and introducing them into political processes;
- continuous enhancement and implementation of an impact & outcome-oriented planning monitoring and evaluation system.

Relating to objective no. 2 – Peacebuilding and governance:

- exchange and cooperation with Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Offices (CPLOs);
- training on peacebuilding and election monitoring;
- organising selective mediation visits by individual bishops to countries in crisis.

Relating to objective no. 3 – Migration and illegal human trafficking:

- research on specific topics;
- sharing and learning from good practices.

Relating to objective no. 4 – Environment and climate change:

- follow-up support to Regional and National Episcopal Conferences to use Environmental Tool Kit;
- exchange with and support of the REBAC network.

Relating to objective no. 5 – Land grabbing and resource exploitation:

- joint positioning with the platform Our Land is Our Life;
- event-related lobby activities (e.g. at the EU-AU Summit 2022).

Overarching measures:

- purchasing a vehicle for work in Addis Ababa and office equipment;
- covering the running costs for staff and administration activities.

The first target institution of the project is AU Secretariat in Addis Ababa. Other immediate target groups Regional Episcopal Conferences in Africa and Madagascar, Caritas Africa, and National

Episcopal Conferences (usually reached through the Regional Conferences, in terms of providing them with relevant information and building their capacities to enable them effectively articulate, in the light of Gospel values and the Social Teaching of the Church, the needs of the marginalized in society, in political and development processes towards establishment of more just, transparent and peaceful African societies. The ultimate beneficiaries of the project therefore are the general population of Africa, estimated at 1.3 billion people.

After more than two and a half years of support it is important that the project evaluates and documents its successes and challenges in terms of evidential impact that has happened with the targeted groups and beneficiaries.

2. Purpose:

This evaluation is part of the project's strategy to solicit for feedback on an innovative approach to yield more desired results and providing information to aid in planning for the 6th phase of the project. This evaluation is therefore expected to evaluate and understand the impact of the project in the last two and half years – endeavoring to establish the evidence of the changes achieved at AU, regional and national levels. The specific objectives will be to:

a) Review the strategy being used by the project under each thematic area and analyse its relevance and effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes.
b) Assess and document evidential changes exerted by the project at AU, regional Episcopal conferences, and other international platforms.
c) Determine whether the improvements/changes made were a direct result of the interventions made by the project.
d) Based on the findings, recommend the appropriate strategy that the project should adopt in order to achieve desired results. This is in terms of lobby and advocacy efforts aimed at enhancing the influence of the Church in Africa.
e) Based on the findings, recommend focussed areas that the project could scale up in the next phase of implementation.
f)

SECAM Outcomes

In addition, the evaluation will assess the contribution made by the project towards meeting SECAM corporate outcome: That is, to strengthen collaboration and social action among Episcopal Conferences of Africa and the Islands through promotion of justice, peace and integral human development across the continent. However, the focus of the evaluation will be on the project.

Guiding questions for the evaluation

- How is the relevance of the project approach with the selected topics in the context of SDGs and AU Agenda 2063 assessed?
- How is cooperation between SECAM's two locations (Headquarters in Accra; AU Office in Addis Ababa) organized? What works well, what needs to be improved?
- To what extent has the cooperation with Regional Bishops' Conferences and thematic working groups in this project phase proved successful, what are the potentials and limits of

this working approach?

- What results have been achieved for the themes chosen in the current phase, what are particular successes, what are failures?
- How is lobbying and advocacy organized? Which concerns could be raised with regard to the AU in Addis Ababa and/or other addressees? What were the effects / consequences?
- How is the current PME assessed?
- Is the communication and networking system appropriate in the multi stakeholder setting of the project? (including cooperation with CIDSE secretariat, CIDSE members, "Our land, our life" platform)
- What recommendations can be made to make SECAM's work more efficient and to make even greater use of this for the work of CIDSE and aid agencies in the North?

OECD-DAC Criteria[1]

This impact evaluation will also pay attention to the OECD-DAC criteria. The evaluators are asked to give an overall assessment with regard to each criterion. The questions added under each criterion shall be considered as orientation for the evaluators.

- **Relevance**: The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries' global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.
    - Is the project approach appropriate with a view to improving – either directly or indirectly – the life situation of particularly disadvantaged groups?
    - Is the project strategy likely to be successful with a view to achieving the planned project objectives?

- **Coherence**: The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.
    - Internal: What are the synergies and links between the project and other interventions carried out by the same institution?
    - External: Is there complementarity, harmonisation and coordination with others, where appropriate? To what extent does the project create added value while avoiding duplication?

- **Effectiveness**: The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.
    - To what extent were the objectives achieved / are they likely to be achieved?
    - What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of objectives?

- **Efficiency**: The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

- Was the project implemented economically and cost-consciously?

- **Impact**: The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.
    - What exactly has changed for the beneficiaries as a result of the project? The focus here should be on social, economic, political, cultural and environmental changes with consideration given to gender aspects and other relevant social differentiations.

- **Sustainability**: The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue.
    - To what extent are the benefits of the project likely to persist at different levels?
    - What are the main factors that have influenced the achievement or non- achievement of project sustainability?

3. Methodology:

The evaluation will be carried out by a team of two evaluators, one chosen and commissioned by MISEREOR, and one chosen and commissioned by SECAM. They will agree on distribution of tasks. Methodological elements are:

- Desk review of the proposal, and half-year reports of the project as well as monitoring data
- Literature review on SECAM JPDC project by other stakeholders available for public consumption
- Virtual and face-to-face interviews with project staff, other stakeholders, target groups and beneficiaries
- Other relevant evidence gathering methods as will be recommended by the Consultants

Methodological elements of the evaluation could be a desk study, enriched with interviews (e.g. phone, skype or other tools) and a survey to be sent to stakeholders involved. The consultants are expected to share their methodology to be chosen with SECAM and MISEREOR.

4. Timings: (30 days)

- Briefing and debriefing of consultants – 1 day
- Desk review – 7 days?
- Interview period – 10 days (with project staff, stakeholders & target groups)
- Validation of key findings to SECAM JPDC – 1 day
- Final report writing, submission of final report and presentation to SECAM JPDC / MISEREOR (11 days)
- Holding of a virtual meeting in order to discuss findings of the evaluation with SECAM, MISEREOR and both evaluators

5. Stakeholders:

Stakeholders who should be involved/consulted during the evaluation process:

- Bishop Presidents of Regional Justice and Peace Commissions
- Regional Coordinators of Justice and Peace Commissions
- Working Group Chairpersons
- Partners in "Our Land is Our Life" Platform (e.g., CIDSE, AEFJN, AFSA)
- REBAC Secretariat (focal person)
- AU Migration & Human Trafficking Department
- CIDSE Secretariat, CIDSE Member Organisations
- MISEREOR and CAFOD as lead supporting agencies

In coordination with SECAM and MISEREOR the evaluators will draw samples from stakeholder groups as it may be impossible to involve all stakeholders.

6. Evaluation Output:

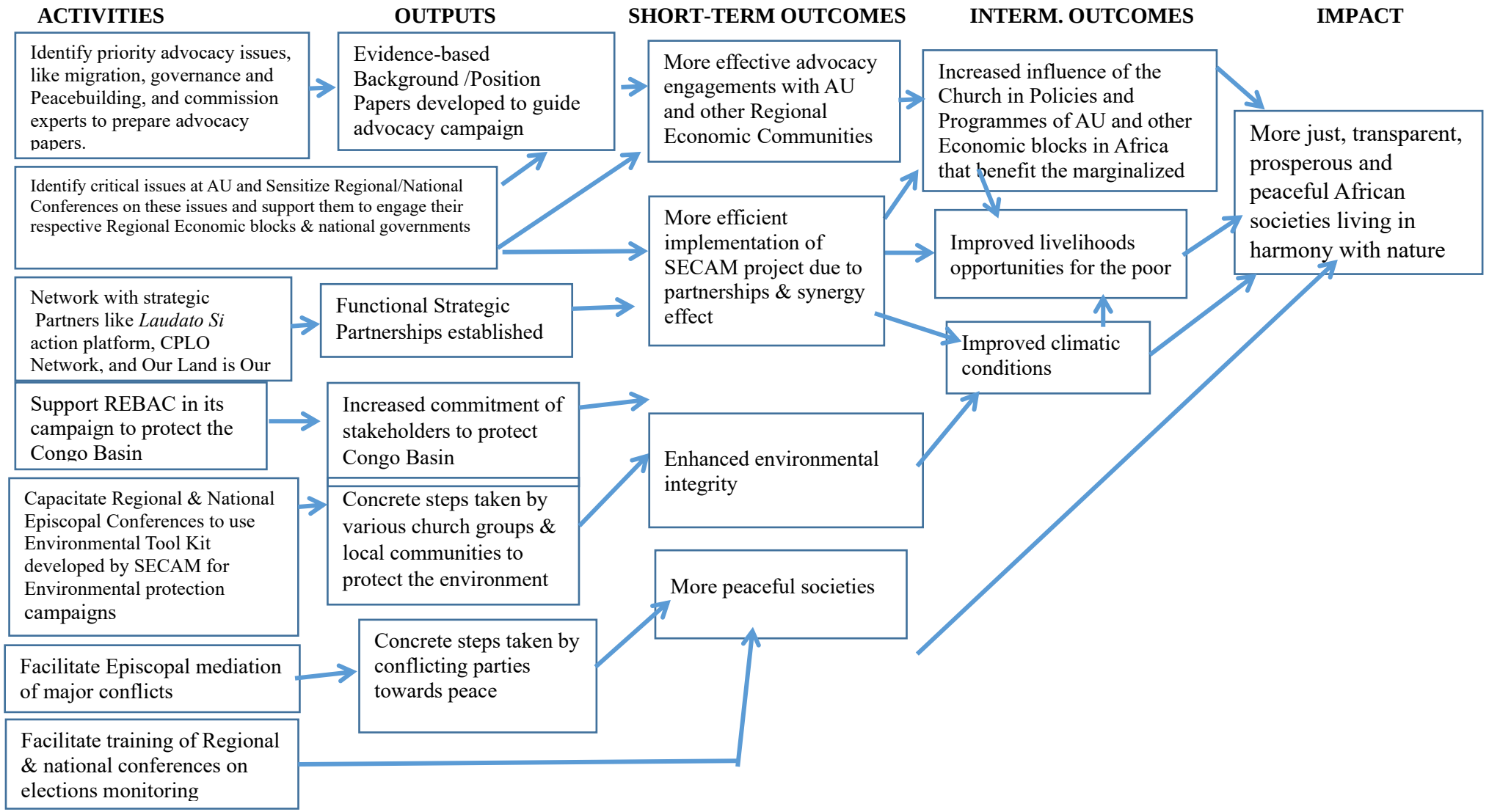
The expected outputs of the evaluation are:

(a) A short document describing methodology to be applied, including samples.
(b) A final evaluation report based on "Minimum requirements to be met by evaluation reports for projects funded by MISEREOR/German Catholic Central Agency for Development Aid (KZE)". The report shall not exceed 30 pages (without annexes). Both evaluators will be responsible for contributing to the report as pert work division agreed. Final responsibility to submit the report to SECAM will, however, be with the evaluator commissioned by MISEREOR. MISEREOR and SECAM will be responsible for commenting and accepting the report.

SECAM, MISEREOR, June 2024

Rev. Fr. Jean Germain Rajoelison,
Deputy Secretary General of SECAM in charge of Justice,
Peace and Development Commission

Appendix 2: Theory of Change Diagram Underpinning SECAM Project



Appendix 3: Project Logical frame

Intermediate Objectives	**Expected outcomes**	**Indicators**	**Key Activities**
To strengthen the Church's advocacy campaign at the African Union and other Regional Economic Communities.	Evidence-based advocacy Papers developed to guide advocacy campaign	# of advocacy papers developed for advocacy campaign (At least four papers).	SECAM will prepare Terms of Reference (ToR) to guide the development of position papers on priority issues of interest as well as identify and engage experts to develop the papers SECAM shall organise policy dialogue with African Union involving selected Bishops, Regional Coordinators, Working Groups, with the view of influencing policies and programmes at AU and member countries.
	More effective advocacy engagements with AU and other Regional Economic Communities in Africa.	# of advocacy issues raised by SECAM that found their way into the discussions or programmes of AU (At least three issues raised taken up by AU) # of Regional Conferences that have started engaging their respective Regional Economic Blocks (At least three Regional Conferences would have initiated dialogue with their respective Regional Blocks)	Identify critical issues at AU and Sensitize Regional/National Conferences on these issues and support them to begin engaging their respective Regional Economic blocks & national governments
To strengthen good governance and peace building in Africa	Increased influence of the Church towards good governance	# of Bills or existing laws that the Church was able to influence (At least five bills) % of CPLOs trained who were able to link their Church structures to Parliamentary processes. (At least 40% of trained CPLOs)	Organize training workshop for selected CPLOs on techniques of Parliamentary engagement and lobbying Undertake follow-up to ensure commitments made at end of workshop are implemented
	More peaceful African societies	# of countries with serious conflicts visited by Bishops to mediate (At least two)	SECAM shall facilitate mediation visits by selected Bishops to countries with serious conflicts.
		% of African countries that held national elections monitored by the Church where there are no violent disputes. (At least 80%)	Facilitate training of Regional and national conferences (including justice and peace commissions) on best practices in election monitoring
To contribute to the reduction of irregular migration of Africans to Europe and human trafficking.	Enhanced collaboration amongst conferences working on illegal migrants exist-/transit-points	# of Episcopal Conferences adopting good practices such as on illegal migrants exist-/transit points (At least 15 conferences)	SECAM will closely work with Church actors and secular groups on migration and human trafficking and facilitate information (among episcopal conferences) sharing of good practices such as on illegal migrants exist-/transit points (e.g., Morocco, South Africa, and Mozambique).

To step up campaign for environmental protection in line with *Laudato Si*.	Increased initiatives by the Church structures to protect the environment	# of Episcopal Conferences engaged in environmental campaigns (At least 25 regional/national conferences)	Follow-up support to Episcopal Conferences to use Environmental Tool Kit developed for their environmental campaign.
	Concrete steps taken by stakeholders towards protection of Congo Basin	Evidence and nature of initiatives taken by stakeholders towards protection of basin.	SECAM will support REBAC in its campaign to protect the Congo Basin
To step up campaign for more just land governance and natural resource management in Africa.	Increased awareness and initiatives at local and national levels by various groups towards more transparent and just land acquisition and resource exploitation.	# of cases where there is joint actions or campaign among platform members towards more just land acquisition and resource exploitation. (At least three cases)	SECAM will collaborate with other faith organizations and secular actors in the OLOL platform towards a multi-level advocacy for ownership of land, just AU policies and guidelines for land governance and resource management and will mobilize its regional/national structures to advocate and monitor effective operationalization/implementation of these policies.

Appendix 4: Gender and Organizational Groupings of Key Informant Interview Respondents

Gender	**Number**
Male	22
Female	4
Total	**26**

Participants Organizations	**Number**
African Union	1
Bishop Presidents of Regional Justice and Peace Commissions	4
MISEREOR and CAFOD as lead supporting agencies	1
Partners in "Our Land is Our Life" Platform	3
REBAC Secretariat	1
Regional Coordinators of Justice and Peace Commissions	4
SCAIF	1
Working Group Chairperson	3
SECAM Staff	8
Total	**26**