**Synopsis of the Second Workshop of Global Nairobi Hub**

**Discussing Contemporary Political Trends in Africa in Connection with Fratelli Tutti**

14th January 2023.

**Background.**

His Holiness Pope Francis began his notable encyclical with a headline which summarized the current world affairs as “Dark Clouds over the World”. Under the first chapter of the encyclical, he has given examples of various threats to humanity and politics of the future. As we are surrounded by armed groups and conflicts, it is clear that the challenge to humanity is evident in the existence of weapons of mass destruction, provocative social media accounts, fake news, corruption and so on. Therefore, during this conference we will be working on the current affairs of the world at large and Africa in particular in order to draw a holistic picture of the issues that surround us – and connect them in the light of Fratelli Tutti.

The particular challenges facing Africa range from ethnic divisions, resource conflicts through to intra and inter-state conflicts. Military coups are still in vogue as witnessed recently in Chad and Mali, The Tigrayan issue in Ethiopia involvement of Eritrea, Political tensions in Somalia, and resource issues in South Sudan, the flare up of the Mozambique resource conflict, and the resilience of Bako Haram and Al-Shabab. This is made worse by big power involvement such as USA, Russia, France, UK, UAE. These conflicts have led to humanitarian crises, with thousands of displaced people seeking refuge in neighboring countries. This has put a strain on countries’ resources and infrastructure as they need help to provide for the influx of refugees.

A continent that has been plagued by corruption, uprisings and coups we plan to look at the aftermath of the political landscape in these respective countries particularly the North African region. It has been over a decade since the Arab spring that started out in Tunisia before it spread to the rest of the Arab world. Now ten years on, analyst ask themselves if the uprising was worth it, did it spark change or did it create an economic and political decline in the affected countries? An example is Libya, after the death of dictator Muammar Gaddafi, an oil rich country previously been considered to be one of the continents economic powerhouses is now known for its civil conflicts with a heavy foreign military presence in the country. However, some countries fared well after the Arab Spring, were able to maintain stability as they transitioned in to a new democratically elected regimes for the first time in decades.

In the last few years there have also been shifts in alliance where countries that have been historically locked in conflict are beginning to come together and work to improve conditions in their respective regions. Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Sudan are an example of this, they have recently formed a strategic alliance to resolve longstanding conflicts and promote regional economic development. However, this alliance is considered to potentially undermine the regional organizations, such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU).

China's growing influence in Africa has also raised concerns among some countries and international organizations. They are concerned about China's lack of transparency and accountability and the potential for negative impacts on human rights, governance, and the environment. Great powers, such as the United States and France, have also been critical of China's engagement in Africa, with some accusing China of engaging in "neo-colonialism" and seeking to exploit Africa's resources for its gain. They have also been accused of countering China's influence in Africa by increasing their political and economic engagement with the continent. China's growing economic and political influence in Africa has been a concern for many great powers, particularly the United States and other Western countries. One of the main issues raised in China's loan practices in Africa, which many argue are predatory and have the potential to create debt dependency among African countries. For example, in 2017, China extended a $60 billion loan package to African countries, which many experts have argued could lead to a debt crisis if not managed properly.

Outside of regional power dynamics, the global megatrend of Climate Change will bring about new conflicts, which are addressed in Fratelli Tutti, too. Global solidarity as a concept to counter or mitigate the mentioned issues needs to be the answer.

**Guiding Question:**

What is the complementarity between religion and politics in Africa and how does Fratelli Tutti address that issue?

**References**

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