Closing remarks at the international migration conference and its impact on Southern Africa, by Prof. Ranga Zinyemba, Vice Chancellor & Rector, Catholic University of Zimbabwe

As we come to the conclusion of our conference, it is my pleasure to give a short reflection of what has emerged from our deliberations and to express the gratitude of the Catholic University of Zimbabwe for the tremendous support we have received to make it possible for us to host the international conference on migration and its impact on Southern Africa and society in general. In my view what emerges from our deliberations include the following:

1. As in the natural world, human migration is an imperative for human survival and development. In the words of one of our presenters, Dr David Kaulemu, “Migration is a natural and wonderful resource for the development of Society and mission of the church in Africa.” And in the words of another of our presenters, Lily Sanya of the IOM, “Migration is as old as human kind.” In fact, she says further, ‘Migration is inevitable, necessary and desirable – if well managed.’ Indeed, as in the natural world of the Canada geese Migration and the wildebeest great migrations in East Africa, human migration is a desirable imperative. As Pope Francis told the US Senate of Representatives, ‘We are all immigrants.’

2. The examples of migrations from the natural world, especially the Canada geese, provide the ideal vision where the following conditions prevail:
   2.1 The necessity for migration is clearly understood and desired.
   2.2 Migration is supported & promoted.
   2.3 Migration benefits the migrant, the sending country and the receiving country.

3. What is making human migration a far any from the ideal exemplified by the natural world? Our deliberations have unearthed a number of issues in this respect:
   3.1 Conflicts are the main course of migration in Africa – Paul Muchena
   3.2 Failure to acknowledge & address gender issues in migration, especially labour migrations – Judith Kaulemu
   3.3 The ethnocentrism engendered by the concept of the national state that fosters exclusionism and erects barriers to the free movement of people across borders – Dr David Kaulemu.
   3.4 Perception that views migration as fostering brain drain – Christopher Mweembe.
   3.5 Restrictive and hostile immigration laws – Fr Edward.
   3.6 Human greed that feeds on dirty proceeds derived from human trafficking - Antoni Mbandi.
   3.7 Increasing poverty and national debt which in turn engender the view that migrants are here to take our jobs & plunder our resources.

4. What responses do we make?
4.1. Global compact responses through regional and international fora – the SDGs have specific references to migrants & refugees and when these are assessed, progress on how the issue of migrants (including human trafficking) is handled by the year 2030. – Lily Sanya & Esther Koumi.

4.2. Safeguarding and promotion of the various aspects of the common good inherent in each driver of migration, such as inclusive government systems – Fr Elias Opongo.

4.3. Inclusiveness, promotion of those aspects that bind people together as opposed to exclusion of the other for whatever reason. In the words of Fr Peter - John Pearson, “there’s no sustainability in a society which is not inclusive.”

4.4. Creating employment opportunities to curb labour migrations – Dr Godfrey Kanyenze.

4.5. The drive by the Catholic Church following the setting up of the Dicastery on Migrants in the Vatican whose activities should be cascaded down to countries, Dioceses, parishes, The scriptures and the social teaching and such other initiatives as the Jesuit Refugee Service of the Church give clear and useful guidance on how we should approach migration, given the examples of migrants in the persons of Abraham, Joseph and the Israelites in Egypt, Jesus and the Holy Family in Egypt. We are enjoined to heed the scriptures and the Social Teaching of the Church closely, including Pope Francis’ WPPID approach to immigration (Cardinal Turkson)

- Welcome
- Protect
- Promote
- Integrate

Underlying all these, - Discern

The second Vatican Council (1965) enjoined the church to “accompany the human family in all vicissitudes” – Cardinal Turkson.

4.6. Advocating for legislation policies, systems & procedures that are inclusive and that acknowledge and promote the human dignity of the migrant – Fr Edward Ndete.

In conclusion to this first part of my closing remarks, let me quote from the book of Isaiah quoted by Fr Peter – John Pearson:

“Defend justice, do what is right and it will vindicate you.”

Let’s go home with this injunction in mind. Let me conclude these closing remarks by thanking a number of people who worked hard to make this conference possible:

1. Cardinal Turkson who gave us the key note address for leaving his pressing duties in the Vatican to be with us.
2. Our Bishops – and they were all here- for gracing the Conference and for leading us in Mass.
3. Our various presenters for their insightful presentations which enabled us to examine the topic of migration from various angles.
4. Our Directors of Ceremonies, Mr Martin Maeresa and Dr Alice Zinyemba for staying on their toes throughout the two days of the Conference.

5. Chairpersons of the various sessions who tried, sometimes successfully, to make presenters stick to the 20 minutes provided to them.

6. Our sponsoring partners, Misereor, Catholic Relief Services, Trocaire and the Research Board of the Catholic University of Zimbabwe.

7. Members of the Catholic University Research Board for planning and putting together the Conference and making sure the 2 days’ programmes went well.

8. Let me single out 2 members of the research Board for special mention: Monica Mureriwa whom I have often described as the ‘ubiquitous Monica’ because wherever you go, you will meet her. Over the 2 days of the Conference, whoever wanted a problem solved got it solved by Monica. Her assured and calm demeanour kept own blood pressures from rising.

The other person is Sr Dr Janice McLaughlin, whom I have known since the 70s when she came to Zimbabwe as a young Maryknoll Sister and we worked together as members of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. She later got deported by the colonial government and returned to Zimbabwe after independence. She left Zimbabwe for 3-5 years to head her Order of Maryknoll Sisters in New York and almost immediately when her leadership term ended she returned to Zimbabwe. She and I talked at length on how she could make contributions to the Catholic University. This conference is one of the contributions to the University. We look forward to more, Sr Janice.

9. Students and staff of the Catholic University for running administrative chores before, during and after the Conference.

10. Cresta Lodge for the services and hospitality.

11. Last and most important - all of us as participants to this workshop. Without you, participants, there would have been no conference.

Moving Forward:

1. Our rapporteurs on the Research Board will be asking presenters for final versions of your presentations which they will publish in a Conference Proceedings book.

2. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Catholic University of Zimbabwe will use material from this workshop to develop a certificate course, a diploma course and a degree programme on Migration. Thank you for making this possible. Prof Rudo Gaidzanwa has challenged us to this.

3. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* enjoins Catholic Universities to interrogate important social injunctions, even if these create discomfort in certain quarters of society.

4. It now remains for me to say “Bon voyage” to you all, especially our guests from across our borders. We pray that the good Lord guide and protect you as you return home.

Thank you