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Credential Letters of the Ambassadors of Mauritania, Nepal, Trinidad and Tobago, Sudan, Kazakhstan and Niger at the Holy See

Address of the Holy Father

***Curriculum vitae* of the new Ambassadors**

At 10.00 this morning, in the Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the Ambassadors of Mauritania, Nepal, Trinidad and Tobago, Sudan, Kazakhstan, and Niger, on the occasion of the presentation of their credential letters.

The following is the full text of the Pope's address to the new ambassadors, and a brief biography of each one.

Address of the Holy Father

Dear Ambassadors,

I am pleased to receive you on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters by which you are accredited as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your countries to the Holy See: Kazakhstan, Mauritania, Nepal, Niger, Sudan and Trinidad and Tobago. I offer a particular welcome to Mrs M'Haiham, the first Ambassador of Mauritania to the Holy See. I would ask all of you kindly to convey my sentiments of gratitude and respect to your respective Heads of State, with the assurance of my prayers for them and for the peoples whom they represent.

The international scene is at present marked by great complexity, nor is it free of dark clouds. This requires a greater awareness of the approaches and actions needed to pursue the path of peace and to lessen tensions. Among the factors aggravating problems is an economic and financial system that, rather than being at the service of people, is set up principally to serve itself and to evade oversight by public authorities. Those

authorities are responsible for the common good, yet they lack the means necessary to moderate the disproportionate appetites of the few.

We also see a greater readiness to have recourse to force, not as a last resort but practically as one means among many, ready to be used without a full consideration of its consequences.

Yet another factor exacerbating conflicts is fundamentalism, the abuse of religion to justify a thirst for power, the manipulation of God's holy name to advance by any means possible one's own plans to gain power.

The response to these distortions and the risks they pose to world peace must be the creation of a responsible economic and financial system responsive to the needs of individuals and the communities in which they live. Men and women, not money, must once more become the goal of the economy! We must also confront differences with the courageous patience of dialogue and diplomacy, with initiatives of encounter and peace, and not with shows of force and its hasty and ill-advised use. It is likewise essential to isolate those who seek to turn a religious affiliation or identity into a motive of hate for all others. Those who befoul the image of God in this way need to be confronted by a concerted commitment to demonstrating that those who honour God's name save lives, not take them; they bring reconciliation and peace, not division and war; they show mercy and compassion, not indifference and brutality. If we move decisively in this direction, the cause of peace and justice – the conditions of a balanced development for all – will make tangible progress.

Dear Ambassadors, I would like to express, through you, my greetings to the pastors and faithful of the Catholic communities present in your countries. I encourage them to continue their witness of faith and to offer their generous contribution to the common good.

As you officially begin your new mission, I extend to you my best wishes and I assure you of the constant support of the various offices of the Roman Curia in the fulfilment of your responsibilities. To this end, I willingly invoke upon you and your families, as well as all your fellow citizens, an abundance of divine blessings.

Curriculum vitae of the new Ambassadors

Her Excellency Aichetou Mint M'Haiham
First Ambassador of Mauritania to the Holy See

Born on 12 June 1963 in Maghta Lahjar, Wilaya del Brakna, she is married with a daughter.

She has a degree in secondary school teaching (ENS, Nouakchott, 1989) and a degree in environmental agronomy (University of Barcelona, Spain, 1995).

She has held the following offices: teacher of Natural Biophysics at the Teveragh-Zeina Lyceum (1990-1991); officer at the Ministry of National Education (1991-1996); officer at the École Normale Supérieure (ENS) (1996-1997); secretary of State for the status of women (1997-1998); president and coordinator of National Women's NGOs (1998-2003); adviser to the Presidency of the Republic, in charge of Cultural and Social Affairs (2005); assistant commissioner for Food Safety (2009-2014); commissioner for Human Rights, Humanitarian Action (February 2014). She is currently ambassador of Mauritania in France.

Foreign languages: Arabic and French

The relationship between the two countries was established on 9 December 2016.

His Excellency Ramesh Prasad Khanal
Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal to the Holy See

Born on 16 November 1961, he is married with two children.

He holds a diploma in journalism from the Nepal Press Institute, (NPI), and in Japanese, from the Japanese Language Institute of the Japan Foundation, Tokyo, and carried out special studies in security at the Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies. He holds a bachelor's degree in law and a master's degree in Political Science from the Trubhuvan University, Kathmandu.

He has held the following offices, among others: under-secretary of the Departments for Europe-America, and South, South-East and North Asia at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1988-1994); second and subsequently first secretary of the Embassy in China (1994-1998); under-secretary of the Department of Protocol and International Organizations and UN at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1998-2001); first secretary of the Embassy in Saudi Arabia (2001-2004); adviser and subsequently minister of Embassy Affairs in Bangladesh (2005-2009); under-secretary of the Department of Multilateral Economic Affairs and Passports at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009-2010); minister of Foreign Affairs in Israel (2010-2013); general manager of the Department of Passports at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013-2014); head of Protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2015-2016).

Foreign languages: English

His Excellency Colin Michael Connelly
Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago to the Holy See

Born in Trinidad and Tobago on 21 December 1961, he is married with a son.

He graduated in letters, history, language and literature from the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, in 1986, and then then obtained a diploma in international relations (1988) and another in education from the same university (1993). He obtained a certificate from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in 2008, and a master's degree in international security studies from the University of Leicester, England (2012).

He has held the following offices, among others: desk officer, Protocol and Consular Department, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1999-2000); desk officer, Department of Africa, Asia, Middle East and Pacific, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2000-2004); director (Ag.), Department of Africa, Asia, Middle East and Pacific, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2003-2004); first secretary of the High Commissioner in London (2004-2007); embassy advisor in Nigeria (2007-2012); desk officer, Department Africa, Asia, Middle East and Pacific, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2012-2014); embassy advisor and official in charge of international affairs, Washington DC, since 2014.

Foreign languages: English

His Excellency Daffa-Alla Elhag Ali Osman
Ambassador of Sudan to the Holy See

Born in Sinja, Sudan on 3 March 1955, he is married with two daughters.

He holds a degree in Letters from the University of Khartoum, Sudan (1978) and a master's degree in international relations (University of Preston, Pakistan, 2008).

He has held the following offices: Translator at the central postal office, Taif City, Saudi Arabia (November 1978 to November 1979); third and subsequently second secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1980-1983); second embassy secretary in Bangui (1983-1986); first secretary of the permanent mission at the United Nations in Geneva (1986-1989); first secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1989-1991); embassy advisor in Seoul (1990-1992); embassy advisor in Cairo (1992-1994) and general console in Alexandria, Egypt (1993-1994); advisor and minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1994-1996); rapporteur of the preparatory National Committee for the world summit on the Information Society (WSIS) (2001-2004); head of the national authority for the application of the provisions of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (2001-2004); director of the department of the International Organisations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2001-2004); ambassador in Islamabad (2004-2008); director general of the Zaver petroleum company, Sudan; permanent representative at the United Nations, New York (July 2010-2013); director general at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (July 2014-2016); since 2016, he is ambassador of Sudan in France, Portugal and the Principality of Monaco.

Foreign languages: French, English, Spanish.

Her Excellency Zhanar Aitzhan
Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the Holy See

Born in Almaty on 9 May 1965, she is married with two children.

She obtained a degree in history and English language from the Kazakh State University (1982-1988), and subsequently followed a postgraduate research programme at the Moscow State University (1989-1990). She undertook postgraduate studies at the Charles University and the Central European University (Prague, 1991-1992) and followed an executive programme in economy and public finance (Joint Vienna Institute, Austria, 1996-1997) and a master's degree in public administration (John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, U.S.A., 2002-2003).

She has held the following offices: Programme officer, head of the sector of administration and economic transition, office of the UN UNDP (1993-1996); assistant resident representative of the UNDP in Mongolia (1998-1999); programme coordinator, regional office of the UNDP for Europe and the CIS, New York (1999-2002); deputy minister for industry and trade (2003-2010); special representative of Kazakhstan at the negotiations for joining the WTO (2005-2016); minister for economic development and trade (2010-2011); minister for economic integration (2011-2016); since 2016 she has served as ambassador in Berne and permanent representative at the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

Foreign languages: Russian, English, Czech.

His Excellency Boubacar Boureima
Ambassador of Niger to the Holy See

Born in Dargol, Niger, on 1 January 1958, he is married with five children.

He holds a master's degree in diplomacy and law of international organizations (University *Paris XI*) and a master's degree in law, with specialization in international studies (University of Benin in Lomé, Togo).

He has held the following offices, among others: managing director of the department for Africa and the Middle East at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1990-1992); advisor for foreign affairs and, subsequently, director of legal and consular affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1992-1994); deputy secretary general of and *ad interim* director of protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1994-1995); director of legal and consular affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1996-1999); director of legal affairs at the Secretariat of the Agreement on Non-Aggression and Defence (ANAD) in Cote d'Ivoire (1999-2001); head of the division for Cooperation and Decentralization in the Department for Decentralization and Non-Governmental Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2001-2004); advisor at the United Nations in New York (2004-2010); secretary general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2010-2012); permanent representative at the United Nations in New York (2012-2015); ambassador in Germany (since 2016).

Foreign languages: French and English.
