

Africa



Emma Kamara, lecturer in Home Economics at the University of Sierra Leone: "My aim is to set up a centre where children can receive training in the skills of reconciliation, and I have started working with 100 or more war-affected children in my local church."



African participants meeting together

The Democratic Republic of Congo

Since August 1998 a civil war has been raging in the Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire) also involving armies from six neighbouring countries. Twenty participants from Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and the Congo met during the conference for a day of discussions to build trust amongst themselves and search how to contribute towards peace. The Congolese participants included intellectuals and lecturers, some of them living in the country, others in exile in Europe. One of them explained: "We created the space for real listening to one another. The Congolese have always spoken as if they were the victims. Now we could understand the Rwandans."

Rwanda

Prof Dr Rwigamba Balinda (right), served as President of the National Commission for the Rehabilitation and Renovation of the National University of Rwanda, in Butare, after the genocide. In 1996 he founded Kigali Independent University, of which he is the Rector. In order to create a mentality that can help prevent confrontations and atrocities in the future he has designed a course in ethics which is a standard part of every student's curriculum.



Ethiopia and Eritrea

Somali, Ethiopian and Eritrean participants who are engaged in initiatives for peace in the Horn of Africa, met for discussions and built what they described as "a solid bridge of trust and friendship for the future." Two of them, author Mammo Wudneh, Ethiopia, (photo on opposite page) and former Ambassador Dr Yusuf Al-Azhari, Somalia, together with two colleagues from Eritrea and Kenya, earlier in the year visited a number of European capitals to inform and consult politicians and diplomats about their work. They also met with refugee communities from their countries and made radio and TV broadcasts which were widely heard in their own countries. Although satisfied that the resolution of the UN-Security Council has been accepted by both sides and that the war is over, they stressed that "stopping all actions of hostility" must include the propaganda war of words.

Mammo Wudneh has been deeply involved in the search for a solution to the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict for 30 years and has written numerous articles and books on the subject. His commitment to a peaceful

and just solution has not been diminished by the many set-backs over the years. He explained: "There is a spiritual dimension to my struggle. God has inspired me for this purpose. That gives me hope till the end of my life."



Dr Yusuf Al-Azhari, Somalia

Australia



Carol Kendall

This year Australia hosts the Olympic Games in Sydney. World attention is drawn to the plight of Australia's Aboriginal people. In 1997 an official inquiry exposed the suffering of 'the stolen generations' of Aboriginal children. The following year, hundreds of thousands of Australians from all backgrounds partici-

parted in a National Sorry Day. People of the stolen generations responded by launching a 'Journey of Healing', which is enlisting thousands in practical action to overcome the consequences of the forced removal policies. So far the national government, although regretting past practices, has refused to make an official apology.

Carol Kendall, an Aborigine of the Worumi Nation in New South Wales and an Advisory Committee member for the National Inquiry into the Removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their families spoke at Caux: "We need international support to encourage our government to accept responsibility for actions of the past to ensure that Aboriginal people receive justice and basic human rights. We are dealing with the effects of the past governments' policies of assimilation and the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. Many children were conditioned to think that their people and culture were dirty and evil, that we should never go back to

"I could be a victim and be consumed by anger, resentment and blame. Or I could be a survivor, to work through my pain and continue my journey. I chose to be a survivor."

our own people and culture. And many of us did not." She was taken from her own family and was the only child in her adopted family. At age 35 she found her mother and has since found out who her father was and who her many sisters and brothers are. Slowly the pieces of her life are coming together. "I came to a fork in the road of my journey. I could be a victim and be consumed by anger, resentment and blame. Or I could be a survivor, to work through my pain and continue my journey. I chose to be a survivor."

Tim Muirhead works on behalf of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, to support the process of

reconciliation in the state of Western Australia. "My country is built on the dispossession of Aboriginal people. I and my people overwhelmingly enjoy the benefit of that dispossession. Carol, and her people, overwhelmingly bear the cost. In a nation whose standard of living is amongst the best in the world, that of Aboriginal people is amongst the worst. This is the simple impact of dispossession. Yet, the Aboriginal people do not ask us to leave. They do not use violence against us. They simply say - 'listen, learn, acknowledge, and work with us to heal the wounds of the nation.'"



Tim Muirhead

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Fiji

"After George Speight's military-inspired coup of May 19 this year, the indigenous people of Fiji, of which I am one, have an image as intolerant racists," said Jone Dakuvula, former adviser to the Prime Minister and now spokesman for the Citizens Constitution Forum, an NGO working to restore democracy.



Jone Dakuvula

"Two days after the coup I went to visit Mrs Chaudhry, the wife of the deposed Prime Minister, to express my sympathy and wish that the illegal seizure of her husband's government would soon be resolved. Later I took the opportunity to apologise publicly for what had been done to her husband in the name of us indigenous Fijians. My article was widely read and Mrs Chaudhry received hundreds of letters from Fijians all over the world.

The morning after the release of the hostages I went to see Mr Chaudhry who embraced and thanked me for my article.

We have realised that the Constitutional democracy which we want to restore in Fiji must be underpinned by a culture of tolerance and respect."

Papua New Guinea



Map of Papua New Guinea

This year Papua New Guinea (PNG) celebrates its 25th anniversary of independence. The copper-rich island of Bougainville is part of PNG. An armed conflict and a secessionist struggle cost 15–20,000 lives – 10% of the island's population – between 1989 and 1997. The

conflict was both between Bougainvilleans themselves and between the island and the central government. Sir Michael Somare was Papua New Guinea's first Prime Minister and is now Minister for Bougainville Affairs. He attended with two colleagues who represent Bougainville in the national parliament. Sir Michael spoke about his country's recent struggle to overcome this conflict: "Political reconciliation has been an important feature – and facilitator – of the peace process in Bougainville. Today, after a number of false starts and minor set-backs, a Bougainville interim provincial government has been set up and operates under the Papua New Guinea constitution."

Sam Akoitai, MP for Central Bougainville, expressed his satisfaction at the signal from the central government that the island may be granted autonomy within

the nation of Papua New Guinea. From 1991 he led the resistance forces which supported the national government's efforts to restore order in Bougainville. He discovered to his dismay that his own resistance forces had committed unlawful killings and victimised



Sir Michael Somare

innocent people, as the other parties to the conflict had done. "I decided to think deeply about the conflict. As a leader I had to make a move towards peace. In 1994 my uncle was killed. I asked myself: If my uncle is dead, must I add more bodies on top of that of my

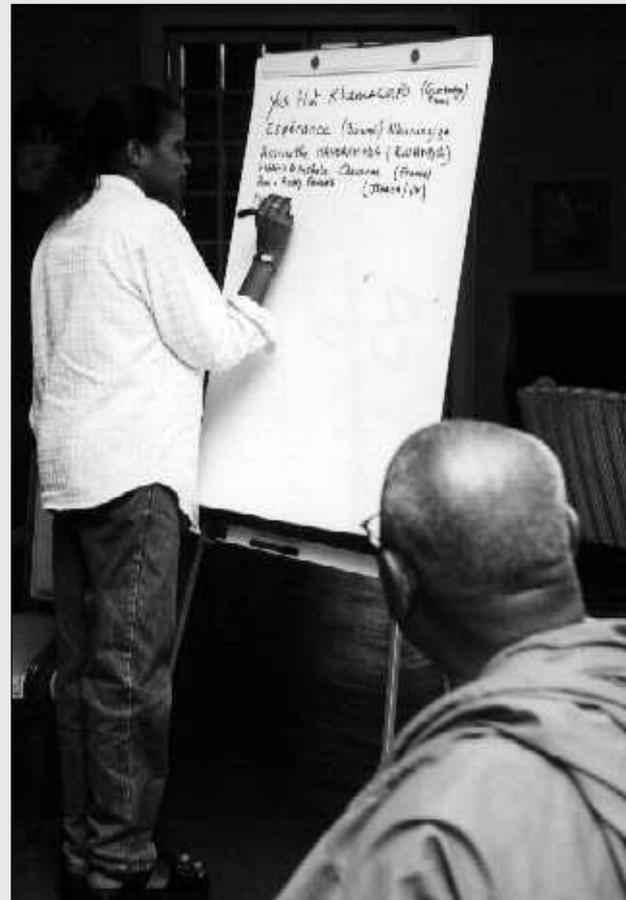
"I do not make peace by talking with my friends, but by talking with my enemies."

uncle?" Sam Akoitai began talks with the rebels and entered their territory unarmed. Thanks to a nephew in the rebel forces he was saved from being killed. Soldiers in the security forces also wanted to get rid of him. However, his conviction was: "I do not make peace by talking with my friends, but by talking with my enemies."

Jamaica



For a number of years the Governor General of Jamaica, Sir Howard Cooke (seated centre), has brought delegations from his country to the Agenda for Reconciliation conferences at Caux. This year the delegation included distinguished jurists, the director of prisons, a member of Parliament, a leader of the nurses' organisation, people in business, teachers and others.



Agenda for Reconciliation, a programme of Moral Re-Armament

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Front page photo (right): Dr Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the Swiss Foundation of Moral Re-Armament together with Imam of Brighton, UK, Dr Abduljalil Sajid, Vice-Chair of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, and Mrs Jamila Sajid

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