

## **Workshop on the Proposed Constitution for dioceses of Kisumu in cooperation with CJPC held in Kisumu the 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2010**

Accompanying the process towards a new Kenyan Constitution the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation organised a workshop on the Proposed Constitution in cooperation with its partner organisation, the “Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC)” on 23 June 2010 in Kisumu.

Participants of the workshop in Kisumu were members of the diocese of Kisumu. The workshop being delivered to members of the Catholic Church had a special meaning regarding the fact that the Catholic Church officially is an opponent of the Proposed Constitution. The Catholic Church’s attitude towards the Proposed Constitution bases mainly on the two issues; abortion and Kadhi courts. The church criticises the wording of the Article on abortion (Art. 26) and fears that the new provision on abortion can easily be used to permit abortion in general. Concerning the Kadhi court issue the church states that the inclusion of Kadhi courts in Art. 169 of the Proposed Constitution elevates the Muslims over other religions.

The objective of Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation’s activity in workshops on the Proposed Constitution is to enable the participants to inform the Kenyan people about the Proposed Constitution and to put them in the position to decide for themselves to vote on the Constitution in August with Yes or No.

The objective of this workshop on the proposed Constitution was to enable the participating representatives of the dioceses to refer their acquired knowledge and understanding of the Constitution to their members.

At the beginning Archbishop of Kisumu Zacchaeus Okoth, who took part on the workshop, emphasized in his introductory speech to the participants the importance of the upcoming referendum for Kenya and Kenyans.

The workshop began by the participants expressing their expectations regarding the workshop. As a result it turned out that the majority was most concerned about the contentious issues discussed in public – the question of abortion, the Kadhis’ courts and the land issue. During the workshop the participants had the opportunity to discuss these issues.

Gideon Ochanda, the programme officer of Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation’s country programme Kenya, held the workshop. He acquainted the participants with the content and the meaning of the provisions in the Proposed Constitution by declaring the function of a Constitution as a guideline for the people and the legislation. Then an overview of the whole document was given to the participants. The most important amendments were exposed before getting into the provisions in detail.

The participants welcomed the opportunity to see the Proposed Constitution from a neutral point of view as the Church leaders stand firmly on the side opposing the Proposed Constitution.

Hendrike Wulfert-Markert