

Society of  
Missionaries of Africa



Plenary Council  
Nairobi  
8 - 28 September 2025

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**Plenary Council, Nairobi**  
**8 - 28 September 2025**



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# INTRODUCTION

## BEGINNING AGAIN FROM OUR COMMITMENT TO THE MISSIONARY OATH

Dear Confreres,

As we celebrated the bicentenary of the birth of our Founder, Cardinal Charles Lavigerie last year, we welcomed as a grace the fact that our Plenary Council was held during the same year in Nairobi. As we know, the primary objective of a Plenary Council is to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations of the General Chapter. More profoundly, our 2025 Plenary Council was a true experience of synodality, bringing together the various instances of authority of the Society in an atmosphere of listening, dialogue and discernment, in order to recognise the calls of the Holy Spirit addressed to our missionary Society today.

This document brings together the reflections that emerged from that process and is intended as a tool for faithfully and creatively continuing along the path laid out by the 2022 General Chapter. In this light, it is structured in eight parts. Each part presents the current state of our Society as perceived by the members of the Plenary Council and by the summary of the consultations that preceded this meeting.

Each part also includes guidelines and recommendations intended to revive our apostolic zeal, so that we may respond with renewed commitment to the mission that the Lord entrusts to our Society.

The 2022 Chapter reflected on the different dimensions of our missionary life from the perspective of prophetic witness. The Plenary Council therefore sought to discern a fundamental question: *To what extent has our missionary life been a witness?* This was neither a moment of self-glorification nor a claim of the title of ‘prophets,’ but rather an honest check of how we strive to live out

the commitment we made in our missionary oath, in accordance with the direction taken at the last Chapter.

We give thanks to God for the positive witness of many confreres who, often in difficult contexts, serve the People of God with generosity and perseverance. They do a lot of good by bringing hope and comfort to people through their closeness to them. At the same time, the Plenary Council did not hesitate to acknowledge the sad realities in the Society. It is troubling to see communities where confreres struggle to live together in peace and where forms of counter-witness appear through lifestyles that no longer reflect the commitment of our Missionary Oath. Such situations wound our communion and weaken the credibility of our mission. We are called to do everything possible to help abandon those attitudes that constitute a counter-witness.

That is why it is our responsibility to continually reawaken in us the spirit of our Missionary Oath. Our fidelity to the Oath guarantees a life according to the charism of our Society. The Missionary Oath expresses the very soul of our Society. Those who still have questions concerning our identity, mission and charism must begin by meditating deeply on the words the Oath contains and then allow those words to shape their lives. It is not surprising that the Acts of the 2022 General Chapter placed the charism, in its relationship with the evangelical counsels, at the heart of our missionary identity, and that the very first recommendations of the Chapter concerned the Oath. The Chapter invited us to live radically the non-negotiable elements expressed in the Missionary Oath (see Chapter Acts 1.1, recommendations 2 and 3).

The Plenary Council noted with concern a growing tendency towards laxity, permissiveness, individualism and indifference with regards to living our Missionary Oath. The recommendations contained in this document are intended above all as a fraternal exhortation to each confrere to align his life with the Missionary Oath.

This call is not about returning to the past, but to rediscover the source that gives life, coherence and a prophetic character to our

missionary vocation. May it help us to renew our 'yes' with joy, humility and courage so that our Society may continue to serve the Church and the African world as a credible sign of the Kingdom!

Rome, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Lubungo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Stanley Lubungo  
Superior General

# 1. OUR CHARISM



*‘Our charism identifies us and orientates our mission (...) We are a Society of apostles, with Jesus as our model and sent by him into the world’ (A.C. p. 15).*

## 1.1. The Evangelical Counsels

There is an intrinsic link between our charism and the evangelical counsels in defining our identity. We are apostles; that is what our founder wanted us to be: apostles, nothing but apostles. Our charism, what animates us, what characterises us, emerged at the Chapter as a passion for God, for humanity in general and for the African world in particular. The noun ‘passion’ is significant because it has highly evocative synonyms: fervour, enthusiasm, attachment, ardent desire, as well as sacrifice and self-giving.

For us as consecrated persons, passion for God and humanity is clearly expressed through the evangelical counsels that we live out of love for God. Through them, we are configured in a special way to Christ, and Christ is essentially the one who gives his life by sacrificing it for others. The evangelical counsels are values that Jesus proposes as a way to follow him more closely, for those who aspire to a life of total dedication to God, in other words, for those who are animated by a passion for God.

By freely choosing to live a simple lifestyle, that is, personal and communal poverty (CL 22), we seek detachment from possessions and trust in divine providence. By living chastity, in celibacy for the Kingdom, we wish to devote fully our love to God, to be more available for the service of all. Through obedience, we surrender our will to God in faith, which is done concretely through obedience to the legitimate authority of the Church and the Society.

Living the evangelical counsels is our way of loving and imitating

Christ, who was poor, chaste and obedient unto death. They remind us every day that we have given our lives to serve God and humanity. The evangelical counsels remain an expression of our self-giving, of our availability to God and to all. Even in the eyes of the world today, this remains a prophetic witness. But there seem to be, among many of us, a misunderstanding of personal freedom in relation to the spirit of the Society.

Within the Church, our Society and its charism are appreciated. Over the past three years, the Society has given the universal Church one cardinal and four new bishops. Three confreres serve the Holy See in three different dicasteries. We must, in all humility and gratitude, consider this contribution the Society is making to the governing bodies of the Church as a sign of appreciation.

That said, we are also aware of the existence, within our Society, of a certain laxity and numerous cases of interpersonal conflicts, conflicts of interest, abuse of power, lack of openness and confidentiality both within and outside the Society. All this constitutes a counter-witness to the mission we are called to live, which needs to be seriously examined. There are also proven cases of moral failings, as well as embezzlement and misappropriation of funds. Sometimes the evangelical counsels are considered a private matter. We face a real challenge that calls each of us to conversion and to live faithfully what is contained in our missionary oath. Commitment to the Society through the Oath requires a certain lifestyle. It requires both individual and collective responsibility.

## Recommendations

1. Guide a reflection on personal freedom in relation to our missionary oath.
2. Within our communities, remind each other of the obligations of the Oath by removing taboos and creating a fraternal atmosphere conducive to sharing.
3. Put into practice the Chapter's recommendation concerning the community project.
4. Revive our passion for Christ and root ourselves in him to overcome individualism and relativism.
5. Emphasise our charism during formation and in all our apostolic insertions.

## Decision of the General Council:

**The General Council requests that the Plenary Council's reflection on the evangelical counsels be the subject of recollections in all communities upon receipt of this document.**



## 1.2. Sharing our Charism with the Laity

This recommendation was one of the most novel and daring of the 2022 Chapter. It set the Society on an unprecedented path, without any ready-made documents, methods or traditions. But it was a prophetic inspiration! Reaching out to the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (MSOLA) marked the desire to form a true charismatic family.

Three years after the Chapter, the first stage of developing the vision has been completed. We drew on our history and charism to draft a Charter that defines who we are and where we want to go as the Lavigerie Family. It is now time to take the next step with the laity. It is up to us to help our lay brothers and sisters welcome the Charter, organise themselves, and embody the Lavigerian charism in their own contexts.

### Recommendations

1. Explain the Charter clearly so that our confreres can make it their own.
2. Listen to the laity and help groups to draft their statutes with a view to ecclesial and civil recognition.
3. Not to leave the project to a few: mobilise everyone, ensuring that we are all moving in the same direction.
4. Appoint a confrere in each province and section to be responsible for this apostolate, as it is a project that requires time and resources.
5. Continue our conversion in the way we view the laity: trust them, welcome them as collaborators in the mission, and walk with them in discovering and participating in our mission.



**Decision of the General Council:**

**Organise a session to explain the Charter to confreres working with lay people.**

## 2. MISSION



### 2.1. Primary Evangelisation Today

At the heart of our charism, primary evangelisation involves learning the language and culture, being close to and journeying with people, stability, and missionary audacity. It uses modern means of communication with discernment to proclaim the Gospel to the peripheries of the world. It must be better understood and fostered from the beginning of initial formation and be the subject of ongoing accompaniment.

Learning local languages and cultures remains the entry point to the Mission and the spiritual gesture of respect and love for people. It is a matter of turning towards people and not towards ourselves. In general, confreres have enough time to immerse themselves in the language and culture before beginning their work, even if we sometimes lack structured language centres and confreres who are fluent in the local languages.

Stability benefits the mission and the people. Constant personnel changes hinder a good understanding of the environment, the people and their culture.

Most of our communities are involved in the peripheries and with vulnerable people. Going to the peripheries is part of our charism, even if it is sometimes unattractive. Primary evangelisation continues through our pastoral commitments in rural areas. Unfortunately, a worrying tendency to prefer staying in cities and settling for ordinary pastoral routines, where our charism is not visible, is creeping into our approach to mission. Strategic planning remains weak, and coordination with the General Council insufficient.

In addition, young confreres need to be accompanied and supported in their first years of mission. Some of them are fragile, sometimes emotionally unstable, and have a poor understanding of freedom. Others are closed to any accompaniment and need to open up more.

Much is being accomplished in our missions, but this remains unknown to the Society as a whole. The General Council has therefore strengthened the Communication Team of the Society to better disseminate our mission in the world of the media.

### **Recommendations**

1. Ensure good accompaniment of new confreres (language, culture, pastoral ministry) and avoid giving them responsibilities too early.
2. Collaborate with other religious institutes with regard to language centres.
3. Reinforce the principle of appointments of at least 6 years (requested by the Chapter) to guarantee continuity, trust and pastoral fruitfulness.
4. Reinforce consultation when identifying new missionary fields.
5. Promote intergenerational balance, the sharing of experiences between provinces/sections, and regular evaluation of our missions and communities.
6. Encourage the use of social networks and the creation of quality content.



### **Decision of the General Council:**

**In certain provinces in Africa, slow down the opening of new insertions and strengthen those already in existence.**

## 2.2. Encounter and Dialogue

‘Encounter is at the heart of our mission and invites us to dialogue with cultures and religions.’ This is what emerged from the testimonies of our confreres Bonaventure Mashata, Brendan O’Shea, and Innocent Habimana, whom we invited to participate online during the Plenary Council.

Between 2022 and 2025, we held several meetings to revive our commitment to Encounter and Dialogue (ED).

In the context of Muslim-Christian dialogue, at a meeting with confreres, we were invited to strengthen our actions at three levels: dialogue in the field, academic research through specialised centres (PISAI, IRDIS, IBLA, IFIC), and engagement within local Churches.

Concerning African Traditional Religions (ATR), a session in Kungoni, at Mua in Malawi, led to the development of a Strategic Plan structured around five areas: animation of confreres, formation, synergy between Centres, parish collaboration and visibility/research. A webinar in April 2024 fostered dialogue between Christianity and ATRs, promoting peace, fraternity and understanding of African religious diversity.

Despite our missionary Society’s long tradition of dialogue and encounter, and despite our achievements in this area, some bishops feel we are not sufficiently committed or doing enough. And many confreres still consider Encounter and Dialogue as a matter for specialists!

## Recommendations

1. Be attentive to Encounter and Dialogue in daily life.
2. Integrate Encounter and Dialogue into the strategic plan of our parishes.
3. Identify, plan and strengthen the formation of confreres in view of our specialised Centres.
4. Make Islam in Africa a priority for research and publications.
5. In terms of training, ensure that candidates have apostolates related to Encounter and Dialogue and, above all, that deacons, in addition to liturgical service, do not abandon this aspect of our charism.
6. Have formators who are convinced in this area and ready to comply with the Society's guidelines.



### Decision of the General Council:

**Organise a symposium on Islam in Africa.**

### 2.3. Justice and Peace, Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

JPIC is not just an activity; it is a way of being missionary. It begins in our communities and includes human peripheries and ecological dimensions. It takes root through a conversion of heart and structures. Being Missionaries of Africa today also means promoting justice, peace and care for creation through our lives, words and actions.

Some provinces have reflected on internal injustices within our own structures, emphasising the importance of fraternity, evangelisation of our communities and ensuring that our collaborators are treated fairly. Our provinces and sections are invited to collaborate with the local Church and civil Society to promote peace, reconciliation and social cohesion, particularly through interreligious dialogue, humanitarian projects and ecological actions. Much is being done in this regard, although the impact remains uneven.

JPIC formation and animation aim to raise awareness among the laity, especially young people, but initiatives sometimes remain fragmented and dependent on a few motivated confreres. Our presence in international decision-making and advocacy forums remains limited. Existing JPIC tools are under-utilised, while ecological conversion, inspired by *Laudato Si'*, guides a few environmental actions that are still too little integrated into community projects. Overall, these efforts reflect a growing commitment to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation, but they require greater coordination, formation, and structuring.

## Recommendations

1. Strengthen fraternity and the spirit of the Gospel at all levels.
2. Make our JPIC commitments more visible and provide greater clarity on their follow-up.
3. As a fruit of the bicentenary of Cardinal Lavigerie's birth, open a department of peace studies at the "Institut Supérieur Privé de Philosophie - Maison Lavigerie" in Ouagadougou.
4. Strengthen our involvement in international advocacy.
5. Adopt the JPIC-ED vade mecum and other available tools.

## Decision of the General Council:



**Study the feasibility of recommendation no. 3.  
Open a community in Addis Ababa in view  
of advocacy.**

## 2.4. Listening and Collaborating with the Local Church

In most of our provinces and sections, the welcome of new confreres, the learning of local languages, and apostolic insertion into local Churches are well organised, even if in some places there are shortcomings in the commitment to learn the language, the deepening of cultural knowledge, and missionary stability. The anthropological attitude and spirit remain limited, particularly in the research and promotion of local languages and cultures.

Collaboration with the local Church is real, especially in JPIC-RD and social service, but the Society's specific charism is sometimes diluted by traditional pastoral practices. Participation in diocesan activities is generally positive, although some confreres do not express any interest. Our missionary witness is sometimes weakened by counter-witnesses and a reluctance to serve in the peripheries.

Accompaniment of new confreres for the insertion in the local Church exists, but its effectiveness is not well evaluated.

Finally, certain historical legacies and erroneous financial perceptions continue to affect our collaboration with some members of the local Churches, calling for a paradigm shift based on co-responsibility and sharing.

## **Recommendations**

1. Respond quickly to community problems.
2. Ensure that contracts for all insertions are concluded, signed or renewed before the next General Chapter.
3. Provide clear guidelines to be followed by all provinces and sections for new insertions.



**The General Council agrees  
with these recommendations.**

## 2.5. Mission outside Africa (Europe/Americas/Asia/Generalate)

The Generalate in Rome is developing as a place of visibility for our charism, memory and ecclesial openness, thanks to cultural and religious activities. We reaffirm the missionary relevance of our presence in Asia, particularly for intercultural and vocational witness, while recognising the significant obstacles linked to visas, formation, and vocational animation. In Vietnam, a new missionary and vocational animation initiative is underway despite linguistic, human and financial challenges. New initiatives outside Africa are generally supported but require strategic discernment.

Concerning our presence in Europe:

In the global North, the mission is confronted with secularism, contexts where church attendance is minimal, where religion and the Church are sometimes deliberately marginalised and neutralised.

Another challenge is that some confreres still hold a traditional, geographical understanding of mission as a movement from ‘North’ to ‘South’ and do not accept that the M.Afr. charism can be shared wherever it is needed.

Some confreres are overcome by fear in the face of this situation and our future in Europe.

### **Recommendations**

1. Where it is difficult, go through dioceses, episcopal conferences and religious associations to obtain visas.
2. Develop new ways of promoting interculturality in our communities in Asia (studies and visits).
3. Examine in depth the invitation received from a bishop in Cuba.

4. Strengthen our ties with friends and associations outside Africa.
5. Encourage confreres to recognise the current change in our Society and in the Church, marked by the sending of missionaries from the South to the North, to embrace the positive changes that this implies, and to respect the decision-making process within the Society.
6. About Europe, that the General Council should play a prominent role in the animation, vision and planning of future missionary communities without replacing the role of local leadership.

### Decision of the General Council:



**Encourage each Sector of PEP to have at least one missionary insertion in a parish setting by the next General Chapter.**

### 3. INTEGRITY IN MINISTRY



Integrity in ministry is a call to live out truth, accountability, and transparency in our relationships, management, and mission. It is nourished by trusting fraternity, genuine mutual support and good community governance. To be a missionary with integrity is to serve in the light, in fidelity to Christ and to the charism of the Society.

However, some communities lack confidentiality and depth in relationships, and the individualistic mentality of ‘it’s my life/it’s his life’ is spreading among us, making it difficult and delicate to question a confrere about issues of integrity in a fraternal manner. During official visits by superiors, some confreres are very critical, while others refuse to share, citing the lack of confidentiality in the community lacks confidentiality.

The Society actively accompanies confreres in difficulty, offering rehabilitation, spiritual guidance and local support, although the lack of formal structures and long-term follow-up sometimes limits its effectiveness. Confreres are called to take responsibility for sexual, financial or moral abuse, but the awareness and systematic follow-up remain insufficient.

While progress has been made in financial management and transparency through regular audits, reports, and accounting tools, some resistance persists, and the dissemination and implementation of procedures to address financial scandals remain insufficient. Caution and prevention remain the rule in all situations.

## Recommendations

1. Revive community life so that trust and truth become the pillars of missionary fraternity.
2. That each confrere takes time to reflect on what 'integrity in mission' means to him and how he applies it in his ministry/apostolate (personal ongoing formation on protection and safeguarding).
3. Ensure thorough and transparent monitoring of our finances.
4. Raise awareness among confreres regarding the Society's major financial guidelines.
5. That provincial and section leaders commit themselves to embrace these guidelines, create opportunities to present them, and ensure that all confreres comply with them.

## Decision of the General Council:



**That the theme of integrity in mission be taken into consideration in planning the next common retreats in the Society.**

## 4. INTERCULTURALITY AS PROPHETIC WITNESS



Interculturality is both our identity and our prophetic mission. It requires formation, openness, trust and daily conversion.

Living together, beyond cultural and national boundaries, is to proclaim to the world that it is possible to love and serve in diversity in the manner of Christ.

Interculturality is an integral part of our charism: it is a gift from God, a prophetic sign of the Gospel, and a source of personal and community conversion.

It is a grace linked to our charism and our common culture, which we are happy and proud to live. Generally, interculturality and internationality are respected in appointments. While our missions and structures are already intercultural and international in nature, it is still necessary to strengthen this aspect, particularly in appointments to positions of responsibility. The continued appointment of native confreres in their home circumscriptions is inconsistent with the General Chapter's objective of promoting interculturality and internationality: this remains a concern. The tendency to use national filters, the lack of confidence in leaders' discernment, and the preference for compatriots weaken the witness of interculturality and the vision of the founder.

## Recommendations

1. Encourage confreres to openly share their opinions, comments and proposals with the leadership team.
2. Reaffirm intercultural sensitivity in the appointment of confreres.
3. Organise regular workshops, seminars and retreats on intercultural life at all levels (communities, sectors, provinces, sections).
4. Encourage an intercultural perception that goes beyond nationalism and groupism and promote solidarity by avoiding the nationalisation of personal problems and stereotypes linked to a group of confreres from certain countries.
5. Reaffirm the spirit of community: remember that we do not act as individuals, but as a community, team or Society.



**The General Council approves these recommendations.**

## 5. IDENTITY AND FORMATION OF THE BROTHERS



Brothers are a precious gift and an integral part of the Society. They embody the missionary spirit through their service, skills and sense of brotherhood. The Society must renew its view of brothers, paying attention to the language used. It must clearly support their initial and professional formation and entrust them with significant roles in leadership and mission. In doing so, we affirm that their vocation is essential. Their state of life enables the Society to live out its missionary vocation in diverse ways, united in the same mission for Christ, Africa and the African world. It is necessary to make their contribution more visible and better integrated into the life of the Society.

The report of the committee, chaired by the coordinator of the brother candidates, was presented to the General Council and the Plenary Council.

The formation of the brothers is intended to be holistic, harmoniously integrating the human, spiritual, theological, and professional dimensions to fully prepare them for the service of the mission. From the outset, Brother candidates are accompanied in discerning their professional orientation so that their formation responds concretely to the demands of the mission. They follow the same initial formation as Priest candidates, receiving a common foundation in spirituality, theology and community life before pursuing specialised professional formation in line with their vocation and the concrete needs of the mission. Professional skills are particularly valued because they enable the brothers to contribute to the Society's mission in tangible ways.

## Recommendations

1. That all candidates follow the same formation during the first and second phases. During the second phase, those who feel called to become brothers will make their choice officially known. After their stage, the brother candidates will spend at least one year in a fourth-phase formation house (CL 139). If a specialised formation is necessary, the taking of a temporary oath will be considered at the end of a thirty-day retreat (CL 63).
2. The role of the Coordinator of Brother Candidates should be better defined.

## Decisions of the General Council:

1. **The General Council will define the role of the Coordinator of Brother Candidates.**
2. **The General Council decides to implement the formation programme for candidate brothers as expressed in recommendation no. 1. In cases where the brother candidate already has professional training, he may take the Perpetual Oath.**



## 6. FORMATION IN VIEW OF PROPHETIC WITNESS



### 6.1. Vocational Promotion, Initial and Specialised Formation

Our initial and specialised formation continues to progress with a renewed vision and commitment. The various meetings of formators with the SIF over the last three years have highlighted the prophetic witness recommended by the General Chapter. The ongoing revision of the Vade-Mecum for initial and specialised formation aims to ensure greater consistency and higher quality throughout all phases of formation.

The Society is grateful for the many vocations. Currently, about 570 young people are in formation. They are accompanied by 72 confreres. Formation communities are present in several African countries, India, the Philippines and Mexico, reflecting the international and missionary outreach of the Society. This wide network not only demonstrates the continuing relevance of our missionary charism but also reflects the Church's call to intercultural and global solidarity.

Specialised formation responds to the needs of the mission. However, there are difficulties when provinces send confreres for studies but then do not assign them to positions that correspond to their specialisation. To maintain the international and intercultural vision of the Society, ongoing collaboration between the General Council and the provincials/section delegates remains essential.

To promote a formation in view of prophetic witness, the General Council established the M.Afr. Session on Formation (MSF), a reflection group composed of experienced confreres, to transmit the

spirit of formation and the charism of the Society to the new formators. The first sessions of the online programme were met with great enthusiasm, but there was very little participation from the formators since then.

### **Recommendations**

1. That formators work more as a team.
2. Promote holistic formation that takes into account in a balanced way the human, spiritual, apostolic and intellectual dimensions of the candidates.
3. Take seriously the criterion of health in the selection of our candidates, as missionaries often have to work in demanding environments.
4. Make MSF training compulsory for all formators and review its methodology to ensure the active and effective participation of all formation teams in the formation houses.

### **Decision of the General Council:**

**The General Council will ensure that the MSF is reorganised so that all formators can benefit from it.**



## 6.2. Ongoing Formation

The Society organises sessions in Rome for confreres in transition (aged 60-65) and for the elderly; in Jerusalem, for renewal; second-term sessions for young confreres; and ICOF in Arusha in English and in Abidjan in French.

Unfortunately, the provinces/sections have proposed very few confreres for the sessions, to the point that some are taking place with too few participants.

It is necessary to change the way confreres perceive these sessions. They are not primarily intended to address personal problems, but rather to allow confreres to pause, renew themselves, in order to serve better.

### Recommendations

1. Remind confreres of the importance of ongoing formation for their personal well-being and the development of their skills.
2. Each province and section should identify at least one confrere per year to attend the sessions organised by the Society.

### Decision of the General Council:

**The General Council asks provincials and section delegates to propose the names of confreres in October for participation in the various sessions organised by the Society.**



## 7. WELL-BEING OF CONFRERES



We recognise that the Society does its best to care for all confreres.

The explicit inclusion ‘self-care’ of confreres in the discussions and recommendations of the Chapter is new. This reflects a careful reading of the signs of the times. Given that personal well-being is primarily an individual responsibility, the self-care team aims to raise awareness among confreres of its importance and to share information to help them gain a comprehensive understanding. To carry out its mission, the team needs the collaboration of provincials and section delegates, as well as all confreres.

However, despite all the efforts made by the Society, some confreres are sometimes left to cope with their difficulties and lack of selfcare on their own; this is often due to their own indifference as well as that of the confreres around them.

Taking care of oneself also means taking care of one another.

## Recommendations

1. Promote the attitude of the Good Samaritan: live in solidarity with confreres who are fragile and in difficulty.
2. Do not be afraid to make comments or reproaches to a confrere in difficulty.
3. Communicate our feedback to the 'Self Care' team in order to help them better meet our expectations.



**The General Council approves these recommendations.**

## 8. GOVERNANCE



### 8.1. Managing our Human Resources Towards Mission as Prophetic Witness

In line with the objectives of the 2022 General Chapter, we asked ourselves how to move from a purely ‘managerial’ leadership to a prophetic leadership based on animation and coordination.

We recognise several achievements, including the existence of statutes at the Provincial and Sectional levels, the integration of non-natives into leadership roles, ongoing formation initiatives, and increased participation by confreres in discernment.

However, we also note significant shortcomings: lack of vision and long-term planning, lack of leadership formation, insufficient monitoring of our missionary insertions and a lack of listening and respect.

We recall that our identity as Missionaries of Africa leaders is to be animators at the service of fraternity, communion and the charism of our Society. Our leadership is grounded in sincere fraternal love for our confreres, a culture of dialogue and respect for the dignity of each confrere, and governance based on planning, stability, and the development of clear, apostolic projects at the service of the mission entrusted to us.

## Recommendations

1. To be prophetic, leaders should apply the positive change they wish to see in others (walk the talk/lead by example).
2. Have regular formation sessions and other resources on leadership.
3. Ensure smooth transitions (handover) to avoid the loss of institutional memory and enable the mission to continue smoothly.
4. Familiarise themselves well with the Society's administrative procedures.



**The General Council approves these recommendations.**

## **8.2. Managing our Material Resources in View of Mission as Prophetic Witness**

Our discussions highlighted the efforts and limitations of the Society's financial management at the service of the mission.

Fundraising initiatives have been carried out, particularly through parish activities and the generosity of certain donors, but the amounts raised remain very low compared to the actual needs, especially for formation. Some parishes, provinces and sections have achieved modest results, while efforts to reduce expenditure are evident. The Society has continued to put in place the structures and facilities necessary for accommodation and income generation. Substantial investments have been made to support the mission.

However, there remains one significant difficulty: despite the primary responsibility of Christian communities to support their pastors, most confreres in parishes still depend financially on the Society. This calls for greater awareness in this area to ensure greater involvement of our parishes and Centres.

Significant progress has been made in remitting salaries and allowances to the Society, a sign of growing awareness. The management of the means of transport remains problematic despite the existence of guidelines in the provinces and sections, hence the need for regular reminders for more responsible use.

The reflections by the committee recommended by the Chapter (8.2 recommendation 6) led to the conclusion that, although our (centralised) financial system remains valid, certain practices, such as the distribution of EVAF, may need to be reviewed in depth if no progress is made in securing alternative funding for our apostolate.

Finally, the high level of financial dependence on the Society, estimated at 70%, remains a concern and requires concrete responses, including better training for confreres in financial management, more rigorous management, a better understanding of the relationship between mission and finances, and strict compliance with guidelines on transparency and integrity.

## Recommendations

1. Gradually prepare our affluent parish communities to take full responsibility for the material well-being of our confreres. This means that confreres serving in affluent parishes should no longer depend on the Society for all their expenses. Let this become a reality for the entire Society by the General Chapter of 2028.
2. Avoid misunderstandings and resistances by clearly explaining to confreres the financial challenges facing the Society, so that the management of our material resources becomes a collective responsibility.
3. Encourage annual fundraising for the Society.
4. Encourage a simple lifestyle and dare to beg for the Society.

## Decision of the General Council:



**In each Province and Section, identify parishes and missions that will begin to be fully self-supporting by 2027.**

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