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For Immediate Release

Church Of God In Christ Charities Donates \$250,000 for African Tsunami Relief

Bishop Gilbert E. Patterson directs funds to UNFAO and Horn Relief in Somalia

(August 8, 2005- WASHINGTON, D.C.) Bishop Gilbert E. Patterson, international presiding bishop of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. (COGIC), and the COGIC Charities Board of Directors met Wednesday to present \$150,000 to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO) and \$100,000 to the Horn of Africa Relief and Development Organization working in Somalia. COGIC is the nation's fourth largest religious denomination and the fastest growing African-American Pentecostal organization. COGIC leaders and members hope the combined donation of \$250,000 will help improve quality of life for residents of the East African coast that was devastated by a tsunami last year. The funds are earmarked for restoring damaged roads and bolstering the local fishing economy.

“One of the most neglected dimensions of the [tsunami] crisis was its impact on Africa,” said Patterson, who is also the chairman of COGIC Charities. “With this gift today, we seek to lift the veil of invisibility that hid from the world the suffering of the tsunami victims of African descent. These victims were ignored as the world focused its attention on other areas in Asia. The Church Of God In Christ, Inc. has had a long history of quiet social activism. This monetary gift is a tangible expression of God’s love for all humanity and particularly the people of Africa.”

Patterson explained that partnerships with the UNFAO and Horn Relief are natural outgrowths of COGIC Charities’ larger and growing social vision. The non-profit organization seeks to partner with non-governmental agencies around the world that focus on serving the needs of people of African descent.

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During last year's tsunami, an estimated 600 boats were lost or destroyed. In addition, 75 percent of fishing gear was lost or damaged. The UNFAO will coordinate restoration activities to support fishermen by replacing their equipment before the next fishing season, which begins in October.

Horn Relief will direct its efforts toward the immediate reconstruction of roads in Hafun, Somalia. Because of its location, Hafun is often exposed to strong winds. With the exception of the main road between Hafun and Boosaaso, road infrastructure in Hafun was considered inadequate before the tsunami. This disaster has highlighted the critical importance of road construction and improvement to ensure quick access during disaster response. Improved roads will also provide market access for the area's main source of income, the fishing industry.

"We continue to support our global mission's initiative by assisting in areas we believe are critical to human existence and quality of life," Patterson said. "The Church Of God In Christ and its charitable agency will maintain a global presence to relieve human suffering with our focus on the people of Africa."

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