

Africa's Catholic bishops have welcomed plans to host the next SIGNIS World Congress in Kigali in 2026, according to the president of SIGNIS Africa, Fr. Prof. Walter Chikwendu Ihejirika.

Ihejirika expressed gratitude to SIGNIS World for entrusting Africa with the global gathering of Catholic communicators and promised participants a uniquely African experience. The congress is scheduled for Aug. 3-8, 2026.

SIGNIS, the World Catholic Association for Communication, is a Vatican-recognized international network of Catholic media professionals working in press, radio, television, cinema and digital media. The association has regional groups, including SIGNIS Africa, and collaborates closely with the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM).

Ihejirika said it was important to first seek the blessing of Africa's bishops, who met in Kigali this month for their SECAM Plenary Assembly. He noted that SIGNIS has been working with the bishops through the Episcopal Commission for Communication (CEPACS).

"We came to inform the Bishops of Africa about our SIGNIS World Congress, scheduled for Kigali in August 2026," Ihejirika said. "We are grateful that the SIGNIS World President and Secretary-General also attended the plenary to share our plans."

The congress will bring together Catholic communication professionals and practitioners from across the globe, as well as Vatican officials, African church leaders and local Rwandan authorities. Ihejirika said the event will also be open to communicators from other Christian denominations who share SIGNIS's vision of promoting peace, reconciliation, cultural harmony and environmental sustainability.

The 2026 theme is "*Digital communication for communion, equity, and environmental well-being.*" Environmental activists are also expected to attend.

Every four years, SIGNIS holds a general assembly to elect new leadership, making the Kigali congress both a networking platform and a key decision-making event for the organization.

Ihejirika acknowledged that organizing the congress is a major undertaking and called for partnerships with church bodies, donor agencies and other organizations.

“Most of the participants, especially those coming to Rwanda for the first time, will experience Africa in a completely different way—far from the negative stereotypes,” he said. “I can assure them of a warm, friendly and unforgettable immersion into African culture.”