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Cardinals see Vatican progressing on finances

John L. Allen Jr. | Feb. 16, 2012 NCR Today

ROME -- Facing a series of highly public leaks concerning alleged corruption in Vatican finances, a body of cardinals from around the world who advise the Vatican on economic matters today said they believe the place is moving in the right direction.

tIn a statement released following a meeting of the Council of Cardinals for the Study of the Organisational and Economic Problems of the Holy See, the cardinals said they wanted to recognize ?an ongoing commitment to improve the administration of the goods and resources of the Holy See.?

tThe council met Monday and Tuesday in the Vatican, along with the Secretary of State, Italian Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone.

tThe council includes cardinals from ten different countries, including Germany, France, Australia, South Africa and Venezuela. No American cardinal was in attendance.

tIn recent days, a mushrooming leaks scandal has featured seemingly damaging revelations about the Vatican?s financial administration, and also raised questions about whether the Vatican is truly committed to a policy of transparency and collaboration with external regulatory bodies.

In each case, the Vatican has issued unusually detailed point-by-point explanations or rebuttals, insisting that it is fully committed to reform. It?s also reiterated its desire for compliance with transparency benchmarks such as those established by the Financial Action Task Force, a secular inter-governmental body.

Aside from Bertone, the council of cardinals heard from Italian Archbishop Giuseppe Versaldi, head of the Vatican?s Prefecture for Economic Affairs, and new Cardinal Giuseppe Bertello, president of the government of the Vatican City State.

The statement said the cardinals reviewed a draft of the Vatican?s consolidated budget for 2012, expressing ?pleasure at the forecast results,? but also concern for the impact of the global economic crisis, ?which has not spared even the general economic system of the Vatican.?

The cardinals also expressed gratitude for contributions from individual Catholics around the world, and urged them to continue.

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