NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Majority of bishops' conferences, except Africa, draft abuse policies

Carol Glatz Catholic News Service | Jul. 10, 2012

VATICAN CITY -- The majority of bishops' conferences in the Americas, Europe and Asia have complied with a Vatican mandate to draw up anti-abuse guidelines, said the Vatican's top investigator of clerical sex abuse.

Without counting Africa, "more than half of the conferences responded" by the May deadline, Msgr. Charles Scicluna of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith said in an interview with the Italian monthly Catholic magazine *Jesus*.

All those who did not send in their proposed guidelines would be getting "a letter of reminder," he added.

The Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, quoted from the interview Tuesday and said the congregation received an encouraging number of responses from Anglo-Saxon countries, "but also Europe, Asia and Latin America have high percentages of responses."

While the result is gratifying, Scicluna said in the interview, Africa "has a particular situation with great difficulty in church structures," presumably referring to the lack of needed communications and other infrastructure that help a nation's bishops draw up national policies.

Evaluating each country's proposed policies and guidelines for dealing with cases of clerical sexual abuse of minors will take "at least a year," and that process will not begin until after the summer, he said.

More than 4,000 cases of sexual abuse have been reported to the doctrinal office the past decade, the office reported earlier this year. Those cases revealed that an exclusively canonical response to the crisis had been inadequate and that a multifaceted and more proactive approach by all bishops and religious orders was needed, said the former prefect of the congregation, U.S. Cardinal William J. Levada.

Countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia and Germany are among those with the most comprehensive and binding guidelines or norms, but in many cases, those norms came only in the wake of revelations in the media of abuse, the cardinal said.

Bishops' conferences have been encouraged to develop "effective, quick, articulated, complete and decisive plans for the protection of children," bringing perpetrators to justice and assisting victims, "including in countries where the problem has not manifested itself in as dramatic a way as in others," the Vatican said in November 2010.

Source URL (retrieved on *07/10/2014 - 09:41*): http://ncronline.org/news/accountability/majority-bishops-conferences-except-africa-draft-abuse-policies