



# Advocacy Framework

Action for Justice from Local to Global



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

A Communion  
of Churches

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Cover photo: LWF youth have significantly advanced the communion's advocacy priorities including climate justice and peace building. Photo: LWF/Johanan Celine P. Valeriano

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# FOREWORD

The Lutheran World Federation's (LWF) commitment to advocacy dates back to the early decades of the organization. The calling to seek justice, peace and reconciliation has been one of the major priorities. It is also LWF's strong conviction that the public engagement of Christian communities responds to the calling to serve the neighbor and be transformative agents in the world. (Rom 12:2)

I am happy to present the LWF Advocacy Framework. It builds on the LWF Strategy and the LWF World Service Global Strategy, as well as resolutions and commitments of the Twelfth Assembly in 2017 and of the LWF Council.

The thematic issues covered in this framework are defined around the LWF's strategic priorities. While several other important LWF themes and topics are not featured, they are important in our societies and are nevertheless part of the advocacy principles and approaches presented.

As succinctly elaborated in this framework, the LWF considers advocacy as part and parcel of its holistic mission. Nearly all of the 148 member churches, present in 99 countries, and LWF's World Service country programs are engaged in advocacy. It is our sincere hope that this advocacy framework will be a useful tool for their work and for many of our partners.

In addition to the clear and straightforward explanation of what advocacy entails in the current global political contexts, this framework aims to deepen LWF's obligation to further activities that affirm human

rights. The document specifically explores the theological foundations of advocacy from the perspective of Lutheran theology and identity. It also offers a reflection on the added value of advocacy for churches' witness in the world.

The establishment of the Action for Justice (AFJ) unit as LWF's advocacy hub in 2020 marked a significant step towards consolidating the organization's advocacy and policy engagement and strategically and comprehensively rooting it in the work of the member churches and World Service country programs.

Our joint action for justice strengthens the global and local advocacy work of the LWF member churches and the Lutheran communion.

I am grateful to AFJ for leading the development of the advocacy framework and the momentum this brings to LWF's overall advocacy work. I also recognize other colleagues in the Communion Office who contributed to the framework.

I want to express gratitude to the Expert Advisory Group that provided guidance and support towards writing the framework. It is my strong belief that churches make a unique and positive contribution to a more just, peaceful and reconciled society through their advocacy.

I therefore commend this publication to LWF's member churches, the World Service country programs and our partners as a resource that will strengthen our advocacy work and inspire collaboration and action for justice.

Rev. Anne Burghardt  
General Secretary  
The Lutheran World Federation



The calling to seek justice, peace and reconciliation has been a key priority of the LWF. Photo: LWF Archives

# BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

## The context

The world is constantly changing. This has social, political, economic, and environmental impacts on people and communities. Among the most critical shifts in the global context today are the growing contempt for, and violations of, human rights; the rise of religious nationalism and populism; the negative impact of social media and the spread of misinformation; the ramifications of violent conflicts; the effects of climate change; the mass displacement of people; growing inequalities; and the shrinking of democratic and civic space. The COVID-19 pandemic, which shook the world in 2020, has further revealed the weakness and vulnerability of public health and economic systems globally, and exacerbated existing challenges.

*The Lutheran World Federation Advocacy Framework* is designed as one of the tools to guide the communion's response to challenges in the world today. Advocacy in The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is rooted in the witness of member churches at the local, national, regional, and global levels, and in the work and experience of LWF World Service and its partners. Advocacy is carried out in these contexts by individual rights holders, groups, communities, and institutions at different levels.

The advocacy framework is a tool that supports implementation of the *LWF Strategy 2019-2024* and the *LWF World Service Global Strategy 2019-2024*, and derives its mandate from decisions, policies, and declarations that have been made by the LWF Assembly and Council. It does not create new areas of work that are not already covered in the strategies and decisions mentioned above.

Advocacy enhances the humanitarian and development work of the LWF by addressing the root causes of oppression and injustice through capacity strengthening of member churches and support for World Service country programs. LWF advocacy contributes to World Service country programs and to

member churches' vibrant presence and witness in the world. Gender justice, and youth leadership and participation crosscut LWF advocacy work.

As a communion of churches present in all regions of the world, the LWF brings added value to advocacy on multiple levels: rootedness in communities; deep and broad knowledge of, and experience in, humanitarian and development work; global reach and access to key decision-making processes; life-affirming and transformative theology that calls for human dignity, justice, peace, reconciliation, and care for creation; and rich ecumenical, interfaith, and civil society collaboration.

## Overall goal

The goal of LWF advocacy is to safeguard human dignity by promoting justice, peace, and reconciliation at local, national, regional, and global levels. This is done through the witness and work of member churches and World Service country programs as well as in collaboration with stakeholders in the ecumenical family, faith-based organizations (including interfaith), civil society actors, governments, the United Nations (UN) and its specialized agencies, and other partners.

## *Our understanding of advocacy in the LWF*

The LWF sees advocacy as an integral part of its holistic mission in the world and as a key expression of its calling as church in society. Advocacy, as a public and prophetic voice, and as action for justice, is a critical pillar of being church, along with service to those in need and the proclamation of the Gospel. As a global communion of churches that is involved in humanitarian and development work, advocacy is an important tool for addressing the root causes of poverty, humani-

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tarian crises, and other challenges communities face. Advocacy is, therefore, an important tool for tackling injustices and their causes.

Advocacy in the LWF is inspired by the biblical prophetic tradition that commands people of faith to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God (Mic 6:8). Prophetic action includes seeking the peace and well-being of the places and communities we are part of (Jer 29:7). Our advocacy follows the example of Jesus Christ, who preached the good news of freedom for the poor and the oppressed (Lk 4:17-19).

## Guiding principles and values

LWF advocacy is inspired by faith, and grounded in Holy Scripture and Lutheran theology, and applies the

human rights-based approach in its policies, analyses, campaigns, and messaging. In addition, the following principles and values underpin all LWF advocacy:

- Dignity and justice for all
- Compassion
- Respect for diversity
- Inclusion and participation
- Transparency and mutual accountability
- Solidarity and connectivity



*Liberated by God's grace, a communion  
in Christ living and working together for  
a just, peaceful, and reconciled world.*

*– LWF Vision*

E V E R Y

**HUMAN**

H A S

**RIGHTS**

Human rights are universal and  
inalienable. Photo: Markus Spiske/  
Unsplash

# APPROACHES AND METHODS

The LWF in its *Advocacy Handbook* (2018) has defined advocacy as:

... organized actions, whether at local, national, or international level, by ordinary people, associations or organizations that aim to bring about change in policies, practices, or value systems that perpetuate injustices in order to safeguard dignity and human rights of all.

Since we can neither directly change the laws of a country nor create global policy frameworks, we influence those who can through our lobbying, campaigning, media engagement, policy dialogues, and other actions. This is advocacy. In our community-centered and human rights-based approach to advocacy, we empower rights holders, communities, and local institutions to advocate for changes in local and national laws, policies, and practices.

LWF uses the following approaches and methodologies in its advocacy.

## Theological underpinning and faith-inspired advocacy

*Advocacy in the LWF flows forth from faith and is grounded in Scripture and a Lutheran theology of human dignity, justice, peace, and reconciliation.*

The LWF sees advocacy as its prophetic diakonia<sup>1</sup> (a term used for service inspired by Jesus and the prophets who confronted those in power and called for changes in unjust structures and practices). This prophetic role is a key expression of LWF's calling as church in the public square. As a communion of

churches that is involved in humanitarian and development work, LWF addresses root causes of poverty, and other challenges communities face. Advocacy is an important tool to tackle injustices and their causes.

## The human rights-based approach

*LWF advocacy promotes the protection of human rights of all people, particularly those that are marginalized, oppressed, and vulnerable to injustices.*

The human rights-based approach is a process that includes the identification of groups or individuals (rights holders) and those who have the duty and responsibility to respond to, and ensure, the fulfilment of their human rights (duty bearers). It is primarily based on international legal frameworks such as international human rights law, whose obligations are legally binding for states, and must be observed at local, national, and international levels of governance.

In the human rights-based approach to advocacy, corresponding duty bearers and their obligations are identified, and the rights holders are empowered to claim their rights. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948, the universal and inalienable rights of all human beings provide the foundation for freedom, justice, and peace in the world. The human rights-based approach is founded on universal values such as human dignity, freedom, equality, and non-discrimination.

LWF advocacy focuses primarily on protection of the marginalized, excluded, or discriminated in society. This includes discrimination based on gender, disability, race, religion, and other social, economic, and political dimensions. In addition, the approach is linked to, and articulated through, Lutheran theological foundations and reflection on the role of the church in the public space.

<sup>1</sup> *Diakonia in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment. An LWF Contribution to the Understanding and Practice of Diakonia*

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## Gender mainstreaming and gender responsive policy and advocacy

*Gender justice cuts across all LWF's advocacy work, both as an objective and as part of the methodology, specifically to ensure that women and girls take part in LWF advocacy at all levels.*

LWF's understanding of gender justice is rooted in theological principles of the equality of all human beings, and a vision of just relations, to ensure that all human beings enjoy a life of dignity. The organization's gender justice policy provides a framework to take concrete steps towards gender justice. Full and equal partnership between women and men is possible as is the breaking down of gender stereotypes that especially subordinate women and violate their God-given dignity.

The theology of gender justice in the LWF is in line with international human rights laws and standards. The LWF views the rights of women and girls as human rights, and so it applies the human rights-based approach and faith-inspired principles to all its gender justice advocacy and programming work.

LWF envisages a strong ecumenical and civil society gender justice movement that can share resources and methodologies to address gender inequality and injustice in order to contribute to ending gender-based violence and discrimination. Gender justice networks within the LWF play an important role in grounding gender justice and women's empowerment objectives in local contexts.

Engaging men and boys, while remaining accountable to women and girls, will continue as part of LWF's gender justice advocacy. Changing societies to end patriarchy requires the engagement of everyone. No longer can faith communities, societies, and cultures expect women alone to solve unequal power dynamics. Through transformative masculinities, men and boys are an essential part of the LWF's gender justice advocacy.

## Ecumenical partnership, faith-based networks, and civil society action

*LWF advocacy seeks collaboration and partnership with a wide range of actors who share the same vision for human rights for all, a just and peaceful society, and human dignity.*

The LWF is a key member of the ecumenical movement, an active local, national, and global faith-based actor, and a part of wider civil society. The humanitarian, development, and advocacy work of the LWF contributes to the joint efforts of other ecumenical, faith-based, and civil society actors.

For this reason, LWF advocacy will continue to build on existing relationships with other world Christian communions, global and regional councils of churches, interfaith collaboration, and civil society development and humanitarian networks. The LWF plays an important role in wider civil society by providing faith-sensitive approaches to advocacy and amplifying the voices of church leaders, and other faith actors, on key issues affecting society.

## The 'local to global to local' methodology

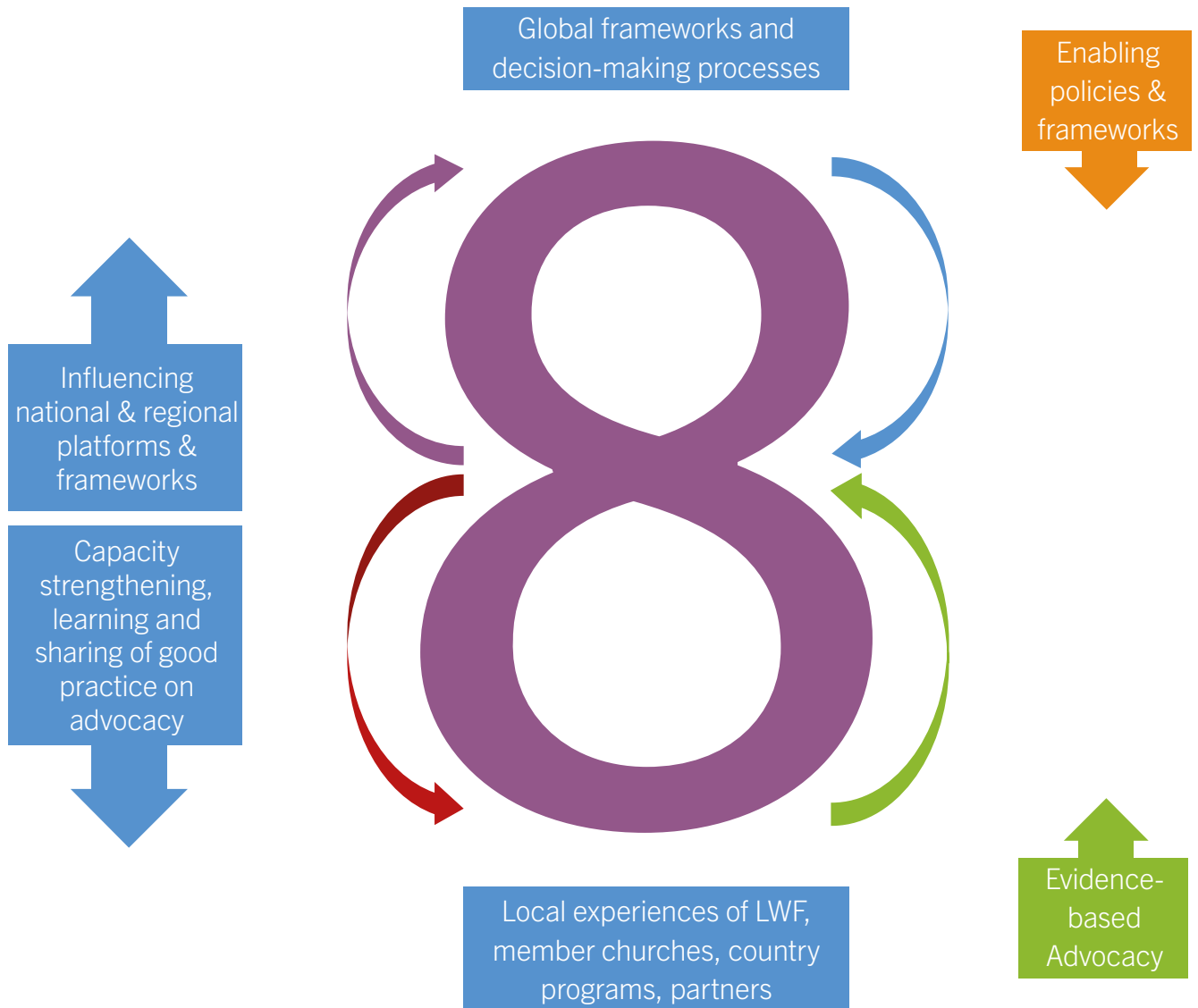
*LWF's advocacy is rooted in the witness of member churches and the experience of country programs, partners, and local communities, and influences decision-making processes at local, national, regional, and global levels.*

The witness, voice, experience, and work of our member churches, World Service country programs, partners, and communities at local and national levels, inform and influence policies, legislation, and decisions at all levels. For the LWF, advocacy is not complete until the global level decisions and outcomes are also implemented at the national and local levels.

Increasingly, LWF advocacy focuses on regional intergovernmental bodies such as the African Union, European Union, the Organization of American States, Central American Integration System (Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and their relevant institutions and processes.

## Youth-led advocacy and mobilization

*Youth leadership and participation is a cross-cutting LWF priority. Young people need to have a place and a voice in all aspects of church and communion life, including in advocacy at all levels.*



Conceptual framework for the LWF's Local to Global to Local (L2G2L) advocacy approach

Youth play, and will continue to play, a significant role in the life and work of the LWF. Their leadership, creativity, and voices strengthen advocacy and policy engagements at all levels. As youth are the leaders not only of tomorrow, but also today, it is crucial to engage them in advocacy because their decisions and action will affect future policy making. The advocacy work and campaigns of the LWF continuously, and consistently, connect with the Global Young Reformers Network and other networks of youth within the LWF and beyond. The LWF will continue to invest in strengthening the capacity of young people to be advocates and campaigners. For example, LWF's climate justice advocacy work around the annual UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conferences is led by a youth

delegation. In addition, the LWF Peace Messengers initiative uplifts the role of youth in advocacy on peace.

### Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals

*Churches and other faith actors have an important role to play in the implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its Agenda 2030, in view of their history in community development, and their local and global influence and connections.*

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Through its global ecumenical initiative, Waking the Giant, LWF advocates for the implementation of Agenda 2030. The initiative focuses specifically on SDGs that are related to key thematic priority areas in the LWF – gender justice, climate justice, peace, and interfaith dialogue. Waking the Giant encourages and equips member churches and partners to connect at national levels to voluntary national review processes and provides links at the global level to the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

## Advocacy at the UN and global multilateral processes

*The LWF contributes to international multilateral processes through advocacy that makes visible the experiences of LWF member churches, and World Service country programs and the communities they serve, in order to hold governments accountable to their human rights, security, and sustainable development commitments.*

Multilateral connections are key to addressing global challenges and seeking their solutions. For three-quarters of a century, the UN has been the most important multilateral platform for global governance, as well as agenda and norm setting on issues of global governance, development, peace, and security. The UN and multilateralism are facing challenges resulting from the current wave of nationalism, mistrust, and lack of global solidarity.

The LWF has been a key supporter of multilateralism and has contributed significantly to shaping the agenda of important UN processes. Thanks to its accreditation to UN bodies, including the Economic and Social Council, the UNFCCC, and the UN Environment Assembly, the LWF facilitates the participation of advocacy representatives from member churches and communities in UN meetings and processes. LWF's global presence at the UN brings voices and experiences from the local and national levels to international decision-making processes. The human rights and faith-based advocacy approach, is particularly important in this setting.

*LWF's advocacy is rooted in the witness of member churches and the experience of country programs, partners, and local communities, and influences decision-making processes at local, national, regional, and global levels.*

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# THEMATIC PRIORITIES

The Action for Justice unit has been mandated to focus on key LWF advocacy priorities: the protection of human rights and dignity for all; the imperative for gender justice; action for climate justice; interfaith dialogue and action for peace; and humanitarian advocacy.

## I. Protection of human rights and dignity for all

**Objective:** *To promote the application of international human rights instruments in the protection of human rights of marginalized and vulnerable populations through awareness creation, and capacity enhancement of rights holders to engage in human rights advocacy at all levels.*

There has been a pushback on human rights in recent years with duty bearers not only failing to meet their obligation to protect the human rights of their citizens, but in some cases engaging in gross human rights violations. Globally, there are numerous cases of attacks on human rights and environmental defenders, pushbacks against the rights of women and girls, increasing failure to protect the rights of forcibly displaced people, and a general laxity in compliance with international human rights and humanitarian laws. Churches, faith-based organizations, and civil society are faced with a continuously shrinking democratic and civic space, making it difficult for them to hold governments accountable.

The COVID-19 pandemic quickly turned from a public health crisis into a human rights crisis with the spread, and the related response measures, jeopardizing a whole range of human rights. All these culminate in a lack of respect for human rights. Vulnerable people are the most affected by a complex web of intertwined factors such as armed conflicts, climate change, forced displacement, humanitarian crises, bad governance, and poverty.

Women and girls bear the brunt of human rights violations, particularly related to sexual and gender-based violence. Their protection is of utmost importance if they are to enjoy a life with dignity.

LWF human rights advocacy is locally rooted, ensuring that results and impacts benefit and transform local realities, while at the same time it informs global human rights policy and decision-making processes. The LWF will continue with its strategic advocacy focus on the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process through its flagship initiative, Local to Global Rights-Based Approach (RBA L2G), which is implemented jointly by World Service and the Action for Justice unit.

### **Thematic focus and policy areas**

LWF's human rights advocacy focuses on policies and actions to protect respect and fulfill the human rights of marginalized populations, people affected by humanitarian crises, individuals and institutions facing reprisals and shrinking political space, and churches in minority settings facing threats to their freedom of religion and belief. The following areas will be prioritized.

#### **Rights of refugees and internally displaced persons**

Even though their protection is enshrined under international human rights and humanitarian laws, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are some of the most vulnerable to human rights violations. The LWF, through the work of its department for World Service, has served millions of refugees and IDPs in different countries over the last seven decades. Advocacy for the human rights of refugees focuses on full implementation of the UN's 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees. While there is no universal legal instrument for the protection of IDPs, their human rights are en-

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shrined in national and international frameworks. LWF advocacy will engage with regional legal instruments such as the Kampala Convention (formally, the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa), which is particularly important for the African context. In addition, the LWF will advocate for the implementation of the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees. A special advocacy focus will be on the protection of women and children who are vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence, human trafficking, and discrimination.

LWF works with Islamic Relief Worldwide, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, and other faith partners to improve the understanding and support for local faith actors who are engaged in protecting refugees, asylum seekers and migrants as part of the Welcoming the Stranger initiative with the UN refugee agency. In their joint efforts, they are exploring how to create environments that enable faith communities to work together, share learnings, and act on ideas that can be replicated at a greater scale.

### **Protection of faith-based actors and civil society human rights defenders**

The role of civil society, including faith-based actors, in human rights work is affirmed in international policy and doctrines. Organizations and institutions grouped together under this term are key vehicles for rights holders to organize themselves and to engage with duty bearers at all levels. In recent years, space for civil society to exist and operate has been severely reduced. The LWF focuses its advocacy towards a free and vibrant civil society as a key component for the realization of human rights. This includes the protection of organizations and individual human rights defenders. The LWF engages with governments, the international community, and other faith-based and civil society actors to oppose policies and laws that undermine the work of civil society organizations. In addition, the LWF monitors developments in contexts where member churches, LWF World Service country programs, and partners report pushbacks and negative trends. Where member churches, country programs, partners, and human rights defenders are targeted, the LWF engages in robust advocacy at international levels, especially through existing UN mechanisms. The LWF joins in advocacy coalitions to defend civil society actors. Noting the sensitivities

associated with this type of advocacy, the LWF will ensure a “do no harm” approach so that its advocacy does not expose the organization and communities it serves and lead to further threats.

### **Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB)**

Faith-based communities and institutions continue to face threats to their right to freedom of religion or belief, and to worship. This is particularly true for churches in countries where they are part of a religious minority. The LWF supports and accompanies its member churches, other churches, and other faith groups affected by violations of their freedom of religion or belief, which is enshrined in international human rights frameworks. A key part of this advocacy involves mobilizing solidarity within the LWF for affected faith communities. International track II diplomacy (contact outside formal government channels) serves as an entry point in strategic country capitals and in the context of the UN. So too does direct engagement with the UN Special Rapporteur on FoRB.

### **Strengthening national and regional human rights mechanisms and legal frameworks**

In addition to international human rights policies and procedures at the global level, regional intergovernmental bodies have established their own human rights mechanisms. LWF’s human rights advocacy aims at engaging with, and strengthening, the application of these regional human rights mechanisms and legal frameworks, including the African Charter on Peoples and Human Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Human Rights Declaration, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the Arab Charter on Human Rights. In addition, the LWF, through its member churches and in partnership with other churches, interfaith actors, and civil society contributes to strengthening national human rights policies and legal frameworks to ensure they are aligned with regional and international standards, and protect the interests of people and communities, particularly the most vulnerable.

### **Global platforms and processes**

The LWF engages in human rights advocacy through human rights education and awareness, empower-

ment, and capacity enhancement. Member churches, country programs, and rights holders are enabled to engage constructively in advocacy, using the local to global to local approach.

The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) plays an important role as the intergovernmental body within the UN system responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights. LWF's special status with the UN Economic and Social Council or ECOSOC, allows it to participate in regular sessions of the HRC, make statements on critical human rights issues, and contribute to the council's resolutions. The LWF plays a role in ecumenical movement and civil society human rights advocacy, and is part of the international human rights community in Geneva.

- The UPR process of the HRC is a mechanism through which the human rights performance of the 193 UN member states is reviewed and governments are held accountable to their human rights obligations at the national level. Together with member churches and other partners, the LWF offers shadow reporting (parallel civil society reporting) and follows up on recommendations to specific countries.
- LWF advocacy targets UN human rights treaty bodies such as the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Human Rights Committee; the Committee on the Rights of the Child; and the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. The LWF engages with these bodies by reporting on priority human rights issues identified by its constituencies, civil society partners, and members of the ecumenical family.
- The LWF engages with UN Special Rapporteurs on themes such as land, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, health, food, education, freedom of religion and belief, internally displaced persons, human rights defenders, and minority issues. In addition, the LWF works with Special Rapporteurs on specific countries of relevance.
- The LWF, through its UN representation office in New York, follows the discussions in the UN General Assembly's Third Committee which handles a range of social and humanitarian affairs, and human rights issues.

- The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) is an inter-agency platform that brings together UN agencies, international non-governmental organizations, and other key actors in the humanitarian sector. As such, it serves an important role in advancing the protection of the human rights of people affected by humanitarian crises. The LWF participates in the GPC and contributes to its advocacy from the perspective of the work of LWF World Service and of churches in emergency situations.

### **Local, national, and regional platforms and processes**

At the local level, the LWF works with, and through, its World Service programs, its member churches and their local partners on human rights issues. At the national level, LWF engages in advocacy in collaboration with other actors within ecumenical and faith-based civil society sectors. This can include working within national councils of churches. At the regional level, LWF ensures advocacy engagement with the African Union, Organization of American States, the European Union, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

## **II. Imperative for gender justice**

**Objective:** *To promote gender justice and women's empowerment from faith-inspired and human rights-based perspectives, drawing from the experiences of LWF member churches and of LWF World Service country programs and the communities they serve.*

The LWF prioritizes gender justice in its work at all levels, as articulated in its Gender Justice Policy and its global strategy. Gender discrimination, sexual and gender-based violence, and the absence of economic justice and women's empowerment remain some of the most pressing challenges in the world today. Armed conflicts, poverty, climate change, forced displacement, and humanitarian crises disproportionately affect women and girls. With the rise in religious fundamentalism, the pushback against human rights in many parts of the world, and the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a growing consensus among different



In Arauca, Colombia, LWF combines human rights' education and livelihoods' support to empower women. Photo: LWF Colombia

stakeholders that the human rights of women and girls have been further eroded.

A core pillar in LWF's gender justice advocacy is the area of transformative masculinities, which involves challenging norms for male behavior of force and domination. This includes addressing theological perspectives that disempower women and girls in churches and in the wider society, and reinforce patriarchy.

LWF's gender justice advocacy contributes to the empowerment of women, girls, men, and boys through advocacy and capacity development. Sustainable development is not possible without the attainment of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

### **Thematic areas of focus**

The LWF will continue to advocate for gender justice and women's empowerment within, and outside of, the communion with a specific focus on the following.

### **The human rights of women and girls**

The promotion and protection of the human rights of women and girls is at the heart of LWF's gender justice work. Through this work, LWF seeks to uphold human dignity and affirm the human rights of every individual. Advocacy for the rights of women and girls promotes the protection and realization of civil and political, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights, as provided for in international human rights instruments. It prioritizes women-specific instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women and the UN's Special Procedures mandate on violence against women. Together with its member churches, country programs and partners, the LWF follows and influences human rights processes, such as the UPR, at national, regional, and global levels. Through its gender justice advocacy, LWF opposes policies, legislation, and practices that threaten the human rights of women, and holds duty bearers to account. LWF member churches, and the ecumenical and interfaith communities are

encouraged to foster commitment to human rights of women and girls from theological perspectives. This includes awareness creation, sex education, and work on transformative masculinities.

### **Economic justice and women's empowerment**

Structural barriers, exclusionary practices, and policies that limit women's equal participation in economic activities exist at different levels. Economic injustices exacerbate humanitarian crises and often multiply the risks for sexual and gender-based violence. Addressing these barriers and their negative impact on women's lives and livelihoods is an important aspect of LWF's gender justice advocacy. LWF works with stakeholders such as local leaders, local service providers, and duty bearers to encourage more equitable and accessible economic services and resources for women. The LWF supports its member churches and local partners in engaging with local and national governments, and the private sector on economic and development policies to ensure that women are included in decision-making processes about economic opportunities. These include policies and structures related to taxes, credit, and local and national budgets. At the international level, LWF challenges the current economic model that has largely left women behind. Together with its ecumenical partners, the LWF will continue its advocacy work for a stronger focus on economic justice for women through the New International Finance and Economic Architecture ecumenical initiative.

### **Ending sexual and gender-based violence**

Violence against women and girls is one of the major human rights violations of this generation. It undermines the well-being, human rights, and health and dignity of women and girls all over the world. The LWF believes that sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is at pandemic proportions globally and that every effort must be taken by all to urgently eradicate them. Therefore, it works with stakeholders to ensure that women and girls are protected, and that justice is served on behalf of victims and survivors.

LWF's advocacy is rights-based, survivor-centered, and supports community-based protection. In addition, it applies age, gender, and diversity approaches to prevention and response. In LWF World Service humanitarian operations, a dedicated advocacy

agenda is aimed at the prevention of SGBV in contexts of displacement, conflict, natural disasters, and other crises. At the international level, the LWF engages with intergovernmental and multilateral processes and frameworks that address SGBV. Together with its ecumenical partners, the LWF will continue mobilizing and campaigning during the annual campaign 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

LWF brings its faith and theological perspectives on SGBV as it seeks to protect women and girls by addressing harmful legislation and policies, and by challenging practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriages. Advocacy on these issues draws attention to repressive models of masculinity and fosters collaboration with men and boys as potential change agents.

### **Mainstreaming gender in the Sustainable Development Goals**

As the most important sustainable development blueprint that brings together all countries of the world under one vision, the UN Agenda 2030 and the SDGs have a significant influence on gender justice. As gender justice is central to the achievement of each of the goals, the LWF advocates for the universal implementation of the agenda. Nevertheless, a strategic priority is on SDG 5, which specifically focuses on the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. The LWF will utilize local and international advocacy platforms to promote and enhance the engagement of member churches and country programs in meeting this goal.

LWF's gender justice advocacy will also speak to SDG 13 on climate action, SDG 10 on reducing inequalities, and SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions because of their relevance for gender justice and women's empowerment. The Waking the Giant initiative serves as a platform for gender justice advocacy in the context of the SDGs.

### **Global platforms and processes**

The ECOSOC Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is an important global platform for LWF's gender justice advocacy as it provides faith-based and civil society organizations a unique opportunity to influence the UN agenda and to ensure that the

Beijing Platform for Action is integrated into Agenda 2030. The LWF continues to accompany member churches, country programs, and partners in local and national level advocacy related to the CSW, as well as to empower its delegates to engage meaningfully at the global level. In-country advocacy provides local gender justice advocates an opportunity to influence member states' dialogue and to encourage the implementation of agreed CSW conclusions. Generation Equality Platforms, which are an offshoot of the CSW, provide another avenue for global engagement.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the UPR – mechanisms are central to holding governments accountable to their commitments to the rights of women and girls. Through CEDAW and UPR, LWF and its partners can make recommendations to governments to ensure the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls.

In addition, LWF's gender justice advocacy engages with the UN Security Council (UNSC) on the issue of women, peace, and security. The LWF is an active member of the NGO Working Groups of the UNSC and will continue working with other faith-based organizations and civil society to advance the protection of women and girls in conflict situations.

### **Local, national, and regional platforms and processes**

The local advocacy of member churches and LWF World Service country programs is essential in contextualizing global processes and instruments, strengthening local networks, giving visibility to rights holders and local advocates, and identifying good practices and concerns to be shared at the global level.

Working with ecumenical and civil society partners, the LWF lobbies governments and intergovernmental bodies on the full implementation of national, regional, and international instruments on gender justice. Regional bodies, such as the African Union and European Union, provide spaces for engagement.

Where possible, LWF will translate all relevant gender justice resources and tools to local languages to allow for ease of access by member churches and others. Working in close connection with regional gender justice networks, and other civil society and

faith-based organizations, continuous support and capacity development can be provided.

## **III. Action for climate justice**

**Objective:** *To promote climate justice by amplifying the voices of communities affected by climate change impacts through theologically grounded and human rights-based advocacy, mobilization, campaigns, and action at local, national, and global levels.*

Climate change is one of the most significant threats to lives, livelihoods, nature, and the planet. It disproportionately affects poor and marginalized people and communities. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which is the leading scientific community on the issue, has confirmed that current change in the climate is anthropogenic (caused by human activities).

Climate change undermines human rights and threatens progress on the sustainable development agenda by contributing to increasing food insecurity, inequalities, conflicts, disasters, and humanitarian crises. Urgent and ambitious policies and actions are vital to maintaining the goal of the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5°C, beyond which the world will face catastrophic climate crises.

Since its Sixth Assembly (1977) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the LWF has been engaged in theological reflections on the care of creation and the responsibility to respond to ecological challenges. Several LWF councils and assemblies have issued statements and resolutions related to climate change and care for creation. For example, in 2014, Council called for action to initiate, or strengthen, policies and practices aimed at the LWF becoming sustainable and eco-friendly, with the goal of carbon-neutrality by 2050.

In June 2015, the LWF took a policy decision to not invest in fossil fuels as part of its long-standing commitment to climate justice and was part of high-level advocacy by faith and spiritual leaders at the Paris Climate Summit (COP 21). More recently, the Twelfth Assembly (2017), in Windhoek, Namibia, called on LWF member churches to engage more deeply in addressing climate change.

The LWF affirms and supports the Paris Agreement as a pivotal global framework for addressing climate change and seeks its full implementation, particularly

through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and long-term emissions reduction strategies (LTS). The LWF advocates for climate justice in the context of the SDGs, and particularly SDG 13 on climate action.

### **Thematic focus and policy areas**

LWF's climate change advocacy follows a justice perspective, which recognizes that people and communities that have contributed the least to the climate crisis bear the worst of its impacts. This advocacy approach inspires the LWF to examine and address intersectional dimensions of climate change, such as its impact on human rights, gender, and intergenerational justice. It further seeks to hold accountable countries that are responsible for much of the greenhouse gas emissions, and to require the international community to prioritize financial, capacity, and technological support for developing countries.

LWF's climate justice advocacy is rooted in eco-theology. In Genesis 1, God declared that each part of

creation is inherently good, meaning that we should regard the creation as an interdependent web of relationships, and should cultivate and keep it. According to the New Testament, the good news of God's reconciling and life-giving communion is not meant only for human beings, but Jesus says: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15). The apostle Paul affirms that the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God... in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God (Rom 8:19, 21).

By exploiting creation, humans cause loss of habitats and biodiversity, and serious suffering for other human beings. The effects of climate change offer examples of how an ecological issue is, at its core, a matter of justice and peace.

### **Youth-led action and intergenerational justice**

Youth-led advocacy, mobilization, and engagement in climate action, including as the main LWF delegation to the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC, remains a strategic priority for LWF climate



LWF's delegates join in climate justice advocacy at the COP 26 in Glasgow, Scotland. Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert

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justice advocacy. LWF will advocate and campaign for policies and actions that protect young people from present and future impacts of climate change on their lives and livelihoods. Further, LWF advocates for the full participation of youth in climate change related decision-making, including through enabling them to provide solutions. The intergenerational justice perspective amplifies the voices of LWF church leaders who are using their positions and influence to advocate for the protection of future generations.

### **Adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and resilience building**

Enabling communities to live sustainably, and in dignity, despite the impacts of climate change is an important pillar of climate justice. LWF advocacy and policy engagement under this theme focuses on ensuring that policies and resources are in place to support adaptation, build community resilience, and reduce risks related to climate change impacts. In the context of the Paris Agreement, LWF advocacy prioritizes the work on National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). In addition, LWF advocates for the UN's Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

### **Addressing climate-induced loss and damage and displacement**

With the growing realization that some climate change impacts are so grave that they lead to huge economic and non-economic losses and damage, such as loss of territories due to sea-level rise or desertification, there is an urgent need to support and protect communities on the frontlines. Averting, minimizing, and addressing climate-induced loss and damage, particularly where it affects marginalized communities, is an important objective of climate justice advocacy.

The LWF, its member churches, and World Service country programs and partners collect evidence and testimonies of climate-induced displacement and other forms of loss and damage. Through advocacy and mobilization, the voices of the affected are amplified. LWF engages with the Warsaw International Mechanism for loss and damage (established by COP 19), particularly its executive committee and the structures related to displacement and risk management.

### **Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to keep global warming below 1.5°C**

Under this theme, the LWF will push for ambitious commitments for the reduction of emissions, specifically through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Since the establishment of the Paris Agreement on climate change, governments have successively made weak commitments and have continued on a trajectory that could lead to temperature rise of more than 3°C. The LWF strongly supports the scientific imperative to keep maximum temperature rise at 1.5°C, a target beyond which the world will face massively destructive climate change impacts. The principle of common, but differentiated responsibilities that is enshrined in the UNFCCC plays an important role in climate justice. Therefore, LWF will continue to push for developed countries to take the lead and show by example, given their responsibility for climate change and given their financial and economic capabilities.

### **Global platforms and processes**

While LWF advocacy follows global climate change negotiations under the UN's Conferences of the Parties (COPs), the work around the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change at national levels is gaining in importance and this is where most of LWF's climate justice advocacy will focus. Climate justice advocacy will also continue at the UN Human Rights Council in the context of the implication of climate change on human rights. Important arenas for global-level advocacy on climate justice include the UN Environment Program (UNEP), particularly its Faith for Earth initiative and the UN Environmental Assembly. The LWF will continue to play an active role in the Geneva Interfaith Forum on climate justice, the UNFCCC Interfaith Liaison Committee, and other ecumenical, faith-based, and civil society coalitions.

### **Local, national, and regional platforms and processes**

Given LWF's eco-theological approach to climate justice, member churches are at the center of its advocacy. Churches will advocate for support from





Participants in an LWF-supported interfaith project targeting youth in Indonesia. Photo: A. Yaqin

their local and national governments in the push for climate policies and actions. In addition, advocacy dialogues, education, and awareness campaigns will target youth and learning institutions. The LWF will take part in collaborative advocacy campaigns and mobilization with other churches, faith-based organizations, and civil society. Climate justice advocacy will be implemented by LWF World Service country programs, especially when it relates to humanitarian operations and livelihood programs.

#### IV. Interfaith dialogue and action for peace

**Objective:** *To promote peaceful, inclusive, and just societies through faith-inspired, theologically grounded, human rights-based advocacy, and interfaith collaboration at the local, national, and international levels.*

Violent conflicts and wars continue to jeopardize the lives and livelihoods of millions of people around the

world. Harmful forms of nationalism with ethno-religious dimensions, shrinking of civil society space, digitalization of communication with implications for how public opinion is shaped (or manipulated), and politicization of religion by religious and political actors are some of the most concerning threats to peaceful and inclusive societies. Society is increasingly confronted with misinformation and narratives of hostility, particularly in social media. Faith leaders and communities have not been spared from growing polarization, yet their voice and influence are critical.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for face-to-face interaction between people of faith and has severely limited the abilities of faith communities to continue traditional approaches towards peace building, cohesion, and interfaith dialogue. Like many other faith communities, LWF member churches, many of whom are in the global south, are confronted by socio-political power dynamics that often constrain their freedom of religion and discourage interfaith neighborliness. The challenges of rising populism and political discourses that contribute to social hostility, rather than social cohesion, are an ongoing threat all over the world.

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Meanwhile, religious leaders, faith-based organizations, and religious communities are increasingly recognized as vital partners and contributors in building sustainable societies and working for justice and peace. Their contributions include initiatives to counter extremist elements in society. They model ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, and solidarity, as well as cooperation with like-minded groups within all sectors of society. The humanitarian and development sectors have come to acknowledge the important role of faith for the people they serve, and the responsibility and capacity of faith groups to address conflict and promote social cohesion.

LWF's interfaith and peace advocacy emerges from the experiences of member churches and its World Service country programs, and from collaboration with ecumenical, interfaith, and other partners. In addition to connecting with global norms, platforms, and processes, such as the UN's Agenda 2030, international humanitarian law, and international human rights law, LWF's advocacy for building peaceful and inclusive societies globally is committed to transforming local realities.

### **Thematic focus and policy areas**

LWF's interfaith and peace advocacy focuses on actions that advance interfaith (including interethnic) solidarity, dialogue, and collaboration; the contribution of faith actors in public engagement on policies and social developments that are harmful to inclusive citizenship and peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society; and strengthening the participation and leadership of women and youth in peacebuilding. This advocacy work is closely related to the work of public theology, which provides theological grounding and connection to the member churches' reflection on their public role in society. The following areas are focused on.

#### **Enhancing the contribution of faith and interfaith actors in peacebuilding**

Since its foundation, the LWF has engaged in peace work. Its accumulated experiences and knowledge over seventy years demonstrate commitment. LWF played a pioneering role in interfaith dialogue and continues to be active in promoting the role of religious leaders in addressing xenophobia, ethnic, and religious discrimination, and misinformation. LWF's

advocacy for peace is embedded in protection, social cohesion, and faith-sensitivity in humanitarian and development work. LWF supports ongoing efforts to strengthen the link between interfaith solidarity and collaboration, and the right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB). Under this theme, LWF advocacy focuses on the role of faith and interfaith actors in the promotion of peace, inclusive societies, and social cohesion. It amplifies the positive contribution that faith actors can make to the many situations of conflict, violence, fragility, and hostilities in the world today. A specific focus is the role of faith actors in the global peace and security agendas.

#### **Advancing the role of women and youth in inclusive peacebuilding**

Violent conflicts disproportionately affect women, youth, and children. Their protection and participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding are key priorities for the LWF in the context of interfaith and peace advocacy. These priorities are shared by the United Nations and are an important objective enshrined in the UN Security Council resolution on women and peace and security.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the protection and participation of young people in the context of peacebuilding and conflict transformation connects creative initiatives in local and national realities to UN Security Council resolutions on their role. Young people are uniquely placed to bring innovative approaches to understanding marginalization and violence in society due to their technological adeptness and growing interconnectedness.

#### **Confronting racism, xenophobia, intolerance, and hate speech**

LWF's interfaith and peace advocacy work complements its work on public theology which supports churches, theologians, and interreligious partners in engaging with religious communities to publicly denounce racism, xenophobia, hate speech, and other manifestations of intolerance and discrimination. This enhances a collective interfaith and civil society contribution to justice, peace, and reconciliation, and includes engagement with SDG 16 on peaceful, just, and strong institutions.

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<sup>2</sup> Security Council Resolution 1325.

A particular interest for LWF's advocacy under this theme is the growing intolerance towards refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers. Part of this work, therefore, involves engaging with, and connecting member churches and country programs with, processes related to the UN's Global Compact on Refugees and Global Compact for Migration. Furthermore, together with ecumenical and interfaith partners, LWF raises the visibility of faith actors in the media and broader public sphere to address issues of security, violent extremism, hate speech, and threats to democracy and inclusive societies.

### **Global platforms and processes**

The LWF, together with other faith actors, amplifies the critical role and contribution of faith communities and religious leaders in peacebuilding. This includes participating in the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and the annual Geneva Peace Week. The LWF is also a member of interfaith networks that focus on peacebuilding, including the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development, and the G20 Interfaith Forum. LWF connects experiences and concerns that emerge from member churches, country programs, and our partners to these networks.

At the UN level, LWF's interfaith and peace advocacy is reflected in ongoing work on the UN's Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Refugee Forum. LWF also continues to engage with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and build on *Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders*, which was developed in 2013 together with other faith groups.

LWF's interfaith and peace advocacy contributes also to the UN Agenda 2030, with a specific focus on SDG 16, and to the World Health Organization (WHO) faith-based community of practice for communications.

### **Local, national, and regional platforms and processes**

The local advocacy of churches is essential in contextualizing global processes and instruments, strengthening local networks, giving visibility to local advocates,

and identifying good practices and concerns for profiling at the global level. Examples of such work include A World of Neighbors in Europe (aimed at strengthening interreligious relations between faith-based actors working with, and for, migrants and refugees in Europe); Symbols of Hope (LWF's program supporting the work of member churches in Africa on migration); and Waking the Giant initiative.

Working with ecumenical and civil society partners – in-country and in the regions – the LWF will lobby governments and intergovernmental bodies on the full implementation of national, regional, and international instruments on peaceful societies, and promote inclusive citizenship.

## **V. Humanitarian advocacy**

**Objective:** *To enhance the protection of, and support for, people and communities affected by humanitarian crises, including through holding governments and other actors accountable to international humanitarian law and human rights law, and adherence to humanitarian principles.*

LWF World Service country programs and emergency operations, and many of the member churches are in regions where inequality and political marginalization persist, and where governments often are party to conflicts or lack the political will or capacity to respond to disasters and humanitarian emergencies. Countries that are highly exposed to climate change, conflicts, and political instability are particularly weak in fulfilling the rights of their citizens and protecting the human rights of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants within their borders.

In many cases, humanitarian crises lead to, or are a result of, violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Therefore, the protection of the human rights of affected populations is very important. Furthermore, challenges related to access, dwindling funding, and attacks on humanitarian workers have increased in recent years, putting the support and protection of populations affected by emergencies in jeopardy.

The COVID-19 pandemic further compounded the global humanitarian context by limiting the avail-



Rose Nathike Lokonyen, Olympic athlete and South Sudanese refugee, speaks at the 2018 consultation of the Global Compact on Refugees, in Geneva. Photo: LWF/ Peter Kenny

ability of financial resources for other humanitarian emergencies and negatively impacting the ability of humanitarian actors to support affected populations.

LWF advocacy provides support to the humanitarian operations of World Service and the emergency preparedness and response work of LWF member churches. This advocacy is based on humanitarian principles, international law, and other legal obligations. In addition, the LWF contributes to policy-making processes and discussions within the humanitarian sector, notably in collaboration with UN, non-governmental, and faith-based partners. LWF will continue to link actions at the grassroots levels to international policy discussions.

### **Thematic focus**

#### **Protection of the most vulnerable**

People, particularly those who are vulnerable, can be exposed to violence, coercion, and deprivation during conflicts and disasters. Children, women, refugees, internally displaced people, people with disabilities, and minorities are often at a higher risk of

being abused or exploited. For the LWF, advocacy for protection is centered around holding governments and other duty bearers accountable for the protection of the human rights of people affected by crisis. The application of human rights instruments such as international laws for human rights, and laws for refugee and humanitarian protection, are key to protection advocacy. The LWF believes in the importance of community-based protection and engages in capacity building and empowerment of affected populations because they are key agents in their own protection. Given the specific vulnerability of children in emergencies, child protection is an important objective in LWF operations and advocacy.

#### **Prevention of sexual and gender-based violence**

Sexual and gender-based violence has reached catastrophic proportions and, in recent years, it has become a key challenge in humanitarian crises. The LWF considers the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as an imperative. In accordance with LWF's gender justice policy, advocacy is both inward looking, particularly focusing on the role

of member churches in the prevention of SGBV, and outward looking, focusing on the role of the humanitarian and development sectors, local and national governments, and the international community in establishing and implementing relevant policies and legal frameworks to address SGBV. As part of the organization's broader gender justice advocacy agenda, LWF will join efforts with other organizations to raise awareness of SGBV through campaigns such as 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, International Women's Day, and engagement with the UN's Commission on the Status of Women.

### **Mental health and psychosocial support**

People who are victims, witnesses, or survivors of violence and humanitarian crises are often traumatized by the experience. This influences their mental health and psychosocial well-being and their vulnerability to mental health problems. The humanitarian sector is increasingly becoming aware of the impact of crises on individuals and communities, and the need to prioritize their mental health through psychosocial support and other approaches. As a faith-based organization, the LWF recognizes the importance of the well-being of the whole person and calls for the prevention of psychological and mental health crises as part of emergency preparedness and humanitarian response. In addition, LWF draws attention to the unique role and opportunity of faith actors to apply faith and spiritual resources to support people facing mental health and psychological challenges.

### **Humanitarian access and protection of aid workers**

The concept and principle of humanitarian access refers to both the ability of humanitarian actors to reach affected populations and the ability of the affected population to access assistance and aid in times of emergencies. There has been a concerning trend in recent years where humanitarian actors have been systematically denied access either by states or other actors, particularly those involved in conflicts. The LWF advocates for policies and practices that enable unfettered humanitarian access and notes that without access, people may lose their lives. The politicization of humanitarian assistance and misinformation about the role of humanitarian actors may exacerbate the negative perception of humanitarian workers by states and

communities. In this regard, LWF's advocacy and policy engagement calls for the protection of humanitarian workers and operations from targeted attacks.

### **Role of faith actors**

Faith-based organizations, including local faith actors, are some of the most important stakeholders during humanitarian emergencies. Their innate nature and profile as community structures that are present before, during, and after crises make them invaluable to people in need of assistance. Even so, the role and contribution of faith actors is yet to be fully appreciated and supported. LWF advocates for the inclusion of faith actors in decision-making processes, funding, and the recognition of their unique contribution at all levels.

### **Global platforms and processes**

LWF's humanitarian policy and practice advocacy engages with discussions and decision-making processes within the global humanitarian system and prioritizes support for its relationships and roles within the sector. The key institutions and networks for LWF advocacy include, **the UN humanitarian coordination system**, which incorporates the:

- Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), which serves as an important institution for engagement in advocacy related to World Service operations and the humanitarian work of member churches.
- UN refugee agency, UNHCR, with its focus on advocacy and policy work related to refugees and internally displaced people. This includes the Global Refugee Forum and Executive Committee sessions, where global solidarity and support for refugees and internally displaced people are discussed.
- UN Human Rights Council and other relevant human rights instruments and mechanisms offer forums where the LWF can focus its humanitarian advocacy on specific countries. In cases where humanitarian crises are linked to political and security dimensions, the LWF engages in advocacy specifically through the NGO Committee.

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- Global Protection Cluster which aims at strengthening system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies.

Other relevant UN actors with which the LWF collaborates in advocacy include the: World Food Program, UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), WHO, International Organization for Migration, and the Inter Agency Standing Committee.

**Civil society and non-governmental networks:** The LWF continues to serve as an active member of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), a voluntary alliance of nine of the world’s leading humanitarian organizations.

Similarly, the LWF engages in the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) as a platform for advocacy, particularly when joint civil society messaging is necessary.

**Ecumenical and interfaith networks:** In addition to being an internationally recognized humanitarian actor, the LWF is also part of ecumenical and interfaith humanitarian response and collaboration. Over the years, the LWF has developed meaningful collaboration with other faith-based humanitarian actors includ-

ing ACT Alliance, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Caritas Internationalis, and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS). Through these networks and alliances, the LWF engages in joint advocacy and policy work at all levels.

### *Local, national, and regional platforms and processes*

At the local level, LWF World Service country programs and emergency operations, and LWF member churches work with people and communities affected by humanitarian crises. LWF prioritizes the capacity strengthening of populations to advocate for themselves, particularly with local and national duty bearers. The advocacy of local and national organizations, including local faith actors, is supported even as the LWF takes part in international coordination and collaboration among non-governmental organizations. At the regional level, LWF takes part in advocacy towards regional humanitarian, peace, security, and human rights processes such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa, African Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Organization of American States, and European Union.

*The Action for Justice unit has been mandated to focus on key LWF advocacy priorities: the protection of human rights and dignity for all; the imperative for gender justice; action for climate justice; interfaith dialogue and action for peace; and humanitarian advocacy.*



Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert



# COMMUNICATIONS FOR ADVOCACY

LWF's public voice is one of its most important tools for advocacy and awareness creation. In a world that is increasingly bombarded with information overload, misinformation, fake news and hate speech, it is now more important than ever before that the voices which support justice and human rights are amplified. To build, and contribute to, a narrative of justice, peace, and reconciliation, LWF advocacy utilizes communication channels and innovations in its thematic campaigns, advocacy events, reports and publications, and media engagements. Communications for advocacy aims at increasing awareness of pertinent issues and inspiring action among the target audiences.

## Thematic campaigns

Under the leadership of the Office for Communications, in coordination with the Action for Justice unit, the LWF will design thematic campaigns annually for the purpose of consistent and continuous engagement on an advocacy issue. These campaigns will take advantage of key moments such as political events, international days, UN processes, and religious seasons as leverage and mobilization opportunities. The engagement and participation of the LWF constituency, particularly member churches, country programs, and ecumenical partners is a priority in the thematic campaigns. Innovative social media and digital campaigns will be designed, where appropriate, as part of LWF advocacy communications.

## Advocacy events

The LWF, as a global actor in the faith, humanitarian, development, and advocacy sectors with operations and presence at local and national levels, has significant convening power. When engaging with international processes and conference such as those

hosted by the UN, the LWF organizes side events, parallel events, and other sessions in order to showcase perspectives that could influence policy, political debates, and decisions. The LWF organizes advocacy and communications events as independent events outside of UN processes, as necessary.

## Reports and publications

Policy development and policy dialogues are a core part of LWF's advocacy as they provide a direct avenue for contributing to topical issues at all levels. LWF's faith identity, constituency, and rootedness in communities give it a unique approach and position on political, development, and humanitarian issues, which is presented through research, reports, and publications. In addition, public statements on emerging issues are written and issued by the LWF. For effective advocacy, LWF statements, reports and publications will serve as contributions for longer-term engagements and not simply one-off messaging.

## Press and media engagements

Noting the important role of traditional and new media, including social media, in informing, educating, sensitizing, and influencing people and agendas, LWF advocacy will include a media engagement strategy. Through the Lutheran World Information (LWI) services, LWF web sites, and social media platforms, advocacy messages are disseminated to relevant audiences. Opportunities will be sought for LWF spokespersons and representatives to be featured in media outlets as a strategic way to contribute to ongoing debates, and to present the communion's position on issues of interest.

Head teacher Daw Ma Saw Myint at the LWF-run temporary learning space for adolescent girls in Myanmar.  
Photo: LWF/S. Thandar



# CAPACITY STRENGTHENING AND LEARNING

Capacity strengthening is an important element in LWF's advocacy strategy and focuses on three aspects—firstly, the development of tools to support the advocacy of member churches, country programs, and partners; secondly, a range of training and experiential learning processes; and thirdly, building advocacy coalitions and networks at all levels.

## Training and experiential learning

The training and learning is based on curriculum and pedagogical development within the LWF Capacity Development Hub and utilizes best practice in capacity development including experiential learning, digital/virtual education, coaching, and peer education. The training processes is about advocacy as a method, policy areas, and thematic content, as well as explicit links to theological underpinning and framing relevant to faith communities. This training links directly with the advocacy work of LWF member churches and country programs.

## Development of tools

To enable effective and impactful advocacy, LWF will invest in the development of advocacy tools for the communion office, member churches, country programs, and other partners. Thematic policy briefs to enhance the understanding of LWF constituencies about key technical and thematic policy issues will be developed. These will include shadow reports, and theological underpinnings and analysis on key policies and legislation relevant to LWF's work. In addition, advocacy manuals and guidelines for international events, processes, and delegations; audio-visual materials; toolkits; and digital and social media content, will be developed.

## Building advocacy networks

The Action for Justice unit serves as a platform for collaborative and innovative advocacy not only for LWF, but also for the ecumenical family, faith communities, and civil society. This is important because the collective voice of non-state actors on issues of human rights, justice, and peace is required now more than ever before. To bring this vision to reality, the LWF engages with the various thematic Action for Justice networks; LWF youth advocacy networks; ACT Alliance Communities of Practice and Reference Groups; Eritrea Advocacy Group; the Ecumenical Strategic Partnership; the UN Security Council NGO Working Group; Faith in Beijing; and CEDAW, among others.

## Partnerships and resource mobilization

LWF recognizes partnerships and alliances for advocacy as an important part of strengthening capacity for advocacy, particularly in view of the technical skills and resources that partners bring on board. To support LWF's advocacy work and to bring it to scale, a range of resource mobilization and funding strategies is essential. LWF's advocacy work includes raising funds and resources to enable member churches, country programs, and local partners to implement their advocacy initiatives. This will take into consideration the interconnection between LWF member churches and World Service country programs; relationships with agencies, and other partners; and the requisite capacities and support to manage funding dedicated to advocacy. The LWF Action for Justice unit, in collaboration with key actors within the LWF, will develop funding options directly related to the thematic priority areas.









The Action for Justice hub leads LWF's advocacy, focusing on human rights, climate justice, gender justice, interfaith and peace. In the unit's work, the witness, voice, and decades of experience of LWF member churches, country programs and communities inform and influence policies, legislation and decisions.

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THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

A Communion  
of Churches