

Report on the Preparations for the LWF Twelfth Assembly

I. INTRODUCTION

This report gives an overview of the preparations towards the Twelfth Assembly. It builds on previous reports as well as decisions taken by the LWF Council in previous years.

The report is structured as follows:

1. Some news on the preparations in Namibia
2. Updated Assembly methodology, program and schedule
3. Rules of Procedures and Assembly Committees
4. Assembly communications
5. Logistical preparations
6. Nomination of delegates and Council members; process for nomination of the LWF President
7. Proposed amendments to the LWF Constitution and LWF Bylaws
8. Update on the Pre-Assemblies
9. Council meeting prior to the Assembly
10. Finance and fundraising
11. Conclusion

The chairperson of the International Worship Planning Committee (IWPC) will present the report on the Committee's behalf. (EXHIBIT 11.3)

II. SOME NEWS ON THE PREPARATIONS IN NAMIBIA

It is noteworthy to start this report by mentioning and affirming the committed work of our hosts, the three Namibian member churches organized in the United Council of Churches – Namibian Evangelical Lutheran Churches (UCC-NELC) and the Local Assembly Planning Committee (LAPC). Their work these past months included the following:

- Promotion of the Assembly through visits of congregations across the country and the production of Sunday school materials and other educational materials on Lutheranism and the Reformation;
- The “Launch” of the Assembly on 2nd June 2016 was sponsored by the Vice-President of Namibia, Mr Nickey Iyambo, and supported by the LWF through the participation of the LWF President. The launch is to be held in order to generate public awareness and support of the Assembly among government ministries, local businesses, the ecumenical community and the wider public.
- Assisting in the procurement of equipment and services for the Assembly
- Fundraising targeting local businesses: the LAPC is raising EUR 65'000 or its equivalent in-kind as the hosts' contribution towards the Assembly

- Securing the acceptance by the President of Namibia, His Excellency Hage Geingob to host a reception to welcome participants to the Assembly on 10 May 2017. The LWF is honored with the acceptance of the President of Namibia to host us.
- The construction of a website for UCC-NELC which includes a section on the Assembly preparations in Namibia
- Recruitment of volunteers for the Assembly and preparation of training sessions with them.
- Negotiation process regarding entry visas for Assembly participants.
- Working closely with public authorities in order to ensure the safety and security of Assembly participants

The LWF remains grateful for the way in which our hosts are investing themselves into the preparation process of the Assembly.

1. Updated Assembly methodology, program and schedule

Assembly schedule

Further work has gone into planning the methodology of the Assembly as well as its program and schedule. Building on the documents approved by the Council at earlier sessions, the Assembly schedule (EXHIBIT 11.2) has been revised in order to give more time for plenary sessions and village groups. The purpose is to allow for a clearer process, more time for discussions in plenary and groups and a more realistic allocation of time for the lunch break (which is normally required for Assembly committees to meet). More specifically,

- The workshops have been integrated as part of the Omatala and this change has released more time for plenary sessions to engage on the theme of the day and prepare the village group discussions. It has in addition given more time for village groups to meet.
- The Assembly starts in the morning with Opening Worship on the 10th May instead of the afternoon. An induction session has been included to help participants to get an overview of both process and location.
- The Africa-Namibia Celebration of Cultures has been shifted a day earlier and connected with the Night of Choirs. Thus, there is no program in the evening of the Reformation Sunday.

Methodology and process

The document *Overall Concept and Methodology of the Twelfth Assembly* which was presented and adopted at the last meeting has been revised and is now called, *Twelfth Assembly Process and Methodology*. The updated document is offered as an item for information (EXHIBIT 11.1).

A notable change is a tighter and clearer articulation of the overall flow and structure of the program and more specifically the thematic components and the link between the worship & bible study, the thematic plenary sessions, the village groups, the workshops and the Omatala. The concept for the Assembly Study book has been revised accordingly so that it supports the Assembly process and the discussion of the daily themes. Clear objectives have been formulated for village groups and the Omatala which includes

workshops. Process-oriented guide questions were developed for the village groups and together with the objectives these will support the Village Group moderators in ensuring meaningful discussions.

Compared to past Assemblies, there will be 20 village groups at the Twelfth Assembly. This larger amount has been chosen to reduce the number of participants of the village groups. This in turn will secure meaningful interaction in the groups, an aspect that was rated as not very satisfactory at the last Assembly because of size and process. Village groups won't meet under a specific theme, but will gather under the daily theme and work in parallel.

Keynote address

The work to secure the acceptance of a keynote speaker, who was approached earlier this year, remains ongoing. The Council will be informed by the General Secretary as soon as the keynote speaker is confirmed.

2. Rules of Procedures and proposed composition of the Assembly Committees

In coming up with the Twelfth Assembly's Rules of Procedure, those used for the Eleventh Assembly were used as a basis. Therefore, some portions from the previous Assembly's Rules of Procedure have been adopted because they remain relevant for the Twelfth Assembly. However, some aspects have been revised those for the sake of ensuring a sound process, effective decision-making and meaningful outcomes of the work of the Assembly through its committees.

There is an important change introduced in the procedure to elect the new Council. While the regions will remain responsible to put together their slate of nominees to the Council, the Assembly will elect each candidate individually. A booklet with the names, pictures, short biographical data and areas of expertise will be made available to the delegates. With this modification, the authority of the Assembly as highest decision making body in the LWF is safeguarded, and dissatisfaction expressed at the Eleventh Assembly in view of the procedure followed for electing the Council is addressed. This new procedure will in addition support the regions in their effort to propose strong candidates to the Council, and align their slate to policies of youth and women's participation that LWF member churches want to adhere to.

The resulting draft (EXHIBIT 11.4.) will be presented by the Standing Committee for Constitution and Membership for approval by the Council.

The Assembly will fulfill some of its most important tasks through its Committees. It is therefore vital to determine early on who will constitute the Committees. A list of names for the Assembly committees will be submitted to the Nominations Committee who will finalize the recommendations for Council approval (EXHIBIT 11.5).

3. Possible amendment to the LWF Constitution and LWF Bylaws to be proposed to the Twelfth Assembly in 2017

It is now one year before the next LWF Assembly. Proposed amendments to the LWF Constitution, and corresponding amendments to the LWF Bylaws, should be prepared so that the 2016 Council meeting can propose amendments to the Assembly and allow time for any such changes to be discussed within the member churches and regions.

To date, these are the areas where the Committee has proposed amendments:

- a. Simplification and delegation of the appointment authority for executive staff
- b. Replacement of a Council member
- c. Re-definition of the LWF regions

In addition, the General Secretary's report includes a paper on Proposals for a reorganized LWF Governance. Council EXHIBIT 9.6.2 gives details of these proposed changes. If the Council approves, these proposals would require amendments to the Constitution and/or Bylaws in these areas:

- a. Specifically defining the Council's role in providing strategic direction for the LWF
- b. Reducing the size of the Council
- c. Renaming the Meeting of Officers, to return to "Executive Committee"; and defining its role in providing oversight of the Communion Office and in monitoring resources
- d. Redefining the composition of the Executive Committee

The Committee will review and discuss the language of possible amendments to the LWF Constitution and Bylaws, to reflect these changes. EXHIBITS 11.6 and 11.6.1 includes amendments already tabled by the Committee in previous Council meetings and new amendments in view of the report on Proposals for a reorganized LWF Governance.

4. Nomination of delegates and Council members; process for nomination of the LWF President

Nomination of delegates to the Assembly

The nomination process has been proceeding, thanks to the support and follow up provided by Area Secretaries. As of 10 May the progress stands as follows:

- A total of 289 delegates has been nominated out of which 124 are women (43%) and 165 are men (57%)
- Out of the total, 57 delegates belong to the youth category. Among them 33 are female and 24 male. Seven of these delegates are ordained of which 5 are women.
- 41% of female delegates are ordained while 75% of the male delegates are ordained.
- To date, the numbers of nominated delegates per region are as follows: Africa 85 (29% of the total Assembly participants), Asia 71 (25%), Europe 98 (34%), Latin America and the Caribbean 19 (7%) and North America 16 (6%).

Area Secretaries are following up with churches so that the policy regarding quota for women and youth participation is met. It is worth mentioning that member churches in some regions have fully fulfilled the

women and youth quota and therefore additional regional delegates for those regions might no longer be needed. This is a strong sign of commitment by the churches to our policy of promoting youth and women's participation.

The online registrations will start on 1st September.

Nomination of Council members

The letter calling for nominations to the next LWF Council was sent on 14 December 2015. As approved by the Council and mandated by the LWF Bylaws (section 10.1.1), the regions will have a pivotal role in bringing together their regional slate, and do so by taking into account relevant policies regarding youth and women's participation.

It is important to mention in this context that the regions should only propose their slate for Council members. Council Advisers are not to be included in the slate proposed by the regions. Council Advisers are chosen by the new Council based on the expertise that they could provide to and which is lacking in the Council. Their selection therefore is the result of a stocktaking exercise undertaken early on in the life of the Council. The identification of gifts, expertise and professional knowledge will be included in the nomination forms for Council members, thus making the mapping of these resources to the new Council easy.

Nomination process for the next LWF President

Earlier this year the Meeting of Officers was informed by the General Secretary of a proposed process for the nomination and election of the new President of the LWF, whose term will start at the conclusion of the Twelfth Assembly and end on the last day of the Thirteenth Assembly.

The timeline for the process is based on the experience of previous Assemblies. For the Twelfth Assembly, a letter will be sent to member churches on 1st October 2016 inviting member churches to propose nominees for President. The result of the nominations process and the names of the candidate(s) will be announced to member churches in writing by 31 March 2017.

Assisted by the Vice-Presidents of the LWF, the General Secretary will be responsible compiling the nominations and updating them on its progress. The nominee(s) will be given an opportunity to address the Assembly prior to the election.

5. Assembly Communications

Communications is a key component for a successful Assembly. A designated webpage for the Assembly is being launched in May 2016. Social media has been included as a firm component building up momentum towards the Assembly. A count-down to the Assembly was launched on Instagram and Facebook, which has enjoyed positive reception among users. The branding of the Assembly is following a comprehensive approach, seeking coherence (webpage, stationary, promotional items)

The Seven Years “From Stuttgart to Windhoek” is in production. As indicated earlier, it will be short and concise, with carefully developed layout for easy reading. The outline for the report can be reviewed under EXHIBIT 11.7.

A list of basic documents to be produced for the Twelfth Assembly has been developed. This includes the Assembly Handbook, Study Book, Stuttgart to Windhoek Report, Worship and Music Book and a resource guide for Bible studies. The plan is to make some of these available in PDF and on the website before the Assembly and hard copies will be handed out upon registration onsite.

6. Logistical preparations

Accommodation

The main venue for accommodation is the Safari Hotels where meetings will take place. Safari is only guaranteeing 60% of their hotel rooms or 339 rooms in total both at the Court and the Hotel. Negotiations are currently under way with other hotels close to the Safari and in the city center for some 400 more rooms that will be needed in order to accommodate other Assembly participants. Safari has also promised to inform the LWF by September if they are able to release more rooms for the Assembly.

Wi-Fi and equipment

In February this year, a technical survey of the Assembly venue was conducted and meetings with Internet and equipment providers also took place.

Wi-Fi and Internet connection in Namibia is offered by one provider – Namibia Telecom. A preliminary list of the IT needs for the Assembly was shared with the company. Work with the company is ongoing so that the conditions are secured for a successful running of the Assembly in view of Wi-Fi needs, both in view of staff and logistical work, as well as for Assembly participants.

Namibia is relatively a newcomer in the meetings, incentives, conference and events industry which means that equipment providers are relatively few. However, Windhoek also has an active and dynamic social and cultural life as seen from the number of concerts, outdoor events and corporate gatherings that take place regularly every year.

Procurement

A simplified set of guidelines has been developed (based on the DanChurchAid - DCA guidelines) for the procurement of the products and services needed for the Assembly. A tender process was launched for the Assembly's equipment needs. This included adverts published in 4 major newspapers in Namibia and setting up a CO-based committee whose task is to review the proposals and take the final decision on procurement. For costs below EUR20'000 a more straightforward and simplified procedure is being followed.

Visas

One of the tasks of the LAPC is to assist the LWF in ensuring that the Namibia visas are given to those who need it. A sub-committee within the LAPC, the Government Relations Sub-Committee, was set-up for this purpose. Among its members is the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs. At the meetings with the LAPC last February, the issue of visas for our delegates was raised again, including potential complications that may arise for those who may need a transit visa to South Africa. Assurances were given that the LAPC will assist to ensure securing a Namibian visa for those who need one but would also, through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs help to ensure that the South African Foreign Affairs Ministry is informed of the Assembly and that those transiting in Johannesburg and need a transit visa would also get one. The exact details of the arrangements are still being finalized, so that by the holding of the first Pre-Assemblies in August 2016 (Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean/North America) clear information can be provided to Assembly delegates and participants.

Risk management

Namibia is not a high risk country. There are normal security protocols to be followed as in any other country where international conferences are held and Assembly participants will be clearly advised on these. There are two locations where security issues need to be taken into account:

1. Safari – The Safari Court Hotels and Conference Center has hosted many high level events attended by heads of state and other government ministers. LWF staff has witnessed some of these events in the course of their stay at the Safari. Security protocols at the Safari were discussed with Hotel management. These protocols are convincing.

2. Sam Nujoma Stadium – As with the Safari the Stadium has also hosted presidential and other high level government functions. Part of the deal with the use of the Stadium requires the LWF to contact the police and fire departments as well as ambulance. The Stadium will undergo a rigorous security check before the commemoration. Close cooperation will be required with the management of the Stadium as well as those responsible for public security before and during the commemoration.

With regards to others risks, reference needs to be made to recurring periods of drought that have affected Namibia in recent years. So far, extreme drought similar to what occurred in 2013 has been averted.

7. Update on Pre-Assemblies

At the very early stages of the preparations it was underlined that the Pre-Assembly meetings are part and parcel of the whole Assembly process. How pre-assemblies contribute to a successful Assembly is outlined in the Process and Methodology document.

The work of the past year has been focused on developing a framework that identifies common program elements that will constitute part of the regional pre-assembly agenda. These are:

- Contextual reflection on the Assembly themes
- Taking up major points from member churches' reflections on the self-understanding document
 - Presentation on Namibia and the hosting churches
 - Training on the Rules of Procedure
 - Developing a regional slate of Council nominees

The reflections on the themes and self-understanding document will be synthesized and form part of the Assembly Study Book. The purpose is to illustrate how regional conversations inform the global. This means then that the Assembly Book will be only available at the beginning of March 2017 so as to be able to include the synthesized reflections and the items of importance from all regional Pre-Assemblies. Time has been allocated for the Women's and Youth Pre-Assemblies to present the outcomes of their meetings to the Assembly itself.

The dates of the Pre-Assemblies have been scheduled as follows:

- Asia: 15 to 19 August 2016, Bangkok
- Latin America & the Caribbean and North America: 29 August to 2 September 2016, Suriname
- Europe: 31 January to 2 February 2017, Malmö
- Africa: 5 to 11 February 2017, Johannesburg
- Youth Pre-Assembly: 3 to 9 May 2017, Ondangwa (Namibia)
- Women's Pre-Assembly: 4 to 9 May 2017, Windhoek

8. Council meeting prior to the Assembly

With the support of the Meeting of Officers a needed clarification was reached in view of the conflicting information provided earlier regarding both the application of the subsidy for Council members, and their participation at the Assembly.

Clarification was reached because the Exhibit 12.1.1 approved by the Council in 2014 made reference already to the fact that LWF Council members participate *ex-officio* at the Assembly, and that their costs for transportation and accommodation are covered by the LWF. On this basis, the Meeting of Officers took action to amend the Exhibit 11.1.8, aligning it to what was stated in Exhibit 12.1.1, thereby correcting the factually wrong information originally contained in the amended exhibit.

In view of the financial constraints that the LWF faces to cover the costs of the Assembly, the Meeting of Officers furthermore approved an amendment to the aforementioned Exhibit 12.1.1 clarifying that the subsidy applies for the 48 Council members only, hence not to Council Advisers. The rationale behind this decision is the fact that Committees, with two exceptions, don't meet in the one-day meeting that the Council holds prior to an Assembly, but that Council Advisers are appointed to the committees. At its one-day meeting, the Council will basically deal with last-minute Assembly matters, receive the audited financial statement for 2016, and approve the budget for 2018.

The Committees that will have to meet prior to the Council are the Committee for World Service, and the Finance Committee. In the case of the first committee, important decisions in view of country programs, their strategies and their budgets need to be taken, reason for which this committee always has needed to meet twice in the year. In the case of the Finance Committee, there are actions required both in view of audits 2016, and budget 2018. The fiduciary responsibility of the whole Council on these very important and sensitive matters needs to be adequately prepared by a thorough analysis and scrutiny by the Finance Committee.

The decision not to include Council Advisers was indeed a hard decision, in view of the many valuable contributions that Council Advisers have made throughout the process of this Council through their work at committees. Yet, financial realities continue imposing restrictions which require difficult decisions.

9. Finances and fundraising

Reminders are being sent to member churches on Assembly fee payments. Out of EUR2'353'366 that have been pledged, to date, EUR1'270'781.61 have been received. Fundraising is being undertaken to raise the additional EUR300'000 (which is the difference between the amount expected to be raised from Assembly fees and the total of the budget) that is required by our budget.

The proposal made at the 2014 Council to work with churches or related organization to creatively explore possibilities of raising financial support for specific program components of the Assembly has been implemented. A good example is the partnership developed with NCA / Church of Norway to work on a project for the Omatala on the issue of global inequality and its link to the theme, Human Beings – Not for Sale. More similar opportunities like this are being pursued that would help both to foster learning at the Assembly and at the same time help with raising the needed income for the Assembly.

The policy on subsidies highlights the twin dimensions of rights and responsibilities of membership to the LWF. At best, the policy opens the door for dialogue with member churches on this issue and hopefully it will also strengthen solidarity between the member churches and the LWF.

The annotated agenda of the Council includes two items that have come to the attention of the Communion Office as it sets out to apply the subsidy policy. These relate, on the one hand, to the appointment of family members as delegates to the Assembly and, on the other, to subsidized delegates requesting to be accompanied by their spouses (at their cost). In both instances, we are seeking the Council's wisdom and guidance. A Communion of Churches sticking to its values of accountability and transparency won't find it difficult to understand and endorse these proposed additional policy lines.

III. CONCLUSION

Overall, the planning and preparatory processes are on track. The focus of the work these next two months is to finalize the list of resource persons and Village Group facilitators, including the detailed methodology for each session. The drafting of basic documents for the Assembly is on course. Preparatory work both in

Namibia and Geneva will become more and more intense but there is reason to be excited and hopeful that the objectives for the Twelfth Assembly will be fully met.

The next Council meeting will be in Windhoek just a day before the Assembly. We pray that God's grace and faithfulness will accompany us in our journey towards the Twelfth Assembly. An Assembly that will stand out as a joyful, transformative, forward and outward looking gathering of Lutheran churches journeying in Christ as a communion that lives and works together for a just, peaceful and reconciled world.