

THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

Meeting of Council

Geneva, Switzerland

18 - 22 June 2015

MINUTES



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

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"Hope does not disappoint (Romans 5:5)"
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1. WORSHIP LIFE AND SPECIAL EVENTS

- (1) The Pre-Council meeting of Women and Youth had taken place on 17 June. The Opening Service took place on 18 June at 9:00 a.m. in the chapel of the Ecumenical Center. Presiding Bishop Helga Haugland Byfuglien from the Church of Norway delivered the sermon. Council participants were invited to worship with local congregations on Sunday 21 June in the Saint Pierre Cathedral in the old town of Geneva. On plenary days, morning and evening prayers, as well as the Bible studies were prepared by staff from the Department for Theology and Public Witness and Terri McArthur from the local Evangelical Lutheran Church of Geneva. During the committee meetings, devotions were conducted by these groups in their respective meeting rooms. The closing devotion was held in the plenary.

2. FORMAL OPENING OF THE BUSINESS SESSION

- (2) LWF President, Bishop Dr Munib Younan, from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, welcomed all participants and officially opened the meeting on 18 June at 10:00 a.m. in the Visser't Hoof Hall of the Ecumenical Centre.
- (3) He expressed gratitude for the Eucharistic service which would guide the participants through this day of meetings, and people in general through hopeless situations in the hopeless world. He thanked Presiding Bishop Helga Haugland Byfuglien, Church of Norway, and Bishop Aaron Chuan Ching Yap, Lutheran Church in Malaysia for the service and for those who participated, assisted and prepared it. Many Brazilian songs had been chosen as 18 June was a day of prayers for Brazil.

3. ROLL CALL

- (4) LWF President gave the floor to LWF General Secretary. He reported that apologies had been received from the following Council members and Advisers as indicated in Exhibit 3 Participants List: Ms Daniëlle Dokman, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname, Bishop Em. Geza Erniša, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovenia, Archbishop Antje Jackelén, Church of Sweden, Bishop Em. Dr Zephania Kameeta, Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, Ms Eva Bithi Kisku, Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church, Ms Jenette A. Purba, The Indonesian Christian Church, Bishop Jahrianson Saragih, Simalungun Protestant Christian Church, Ms Christina Soren, Northern Evangelical Lutheran

Church, India, Mr Elijah Zina, Lutheran Church in Liberia, Mr Francis CHAN, Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong, Mr Johan Ehrning, Church of Sweden, Ms Anastasiya Piddubaska, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States and Ms Johanna Van der Sluis-Reuvers, Protestant Church in the Netherlands. As the quorum with more than half of the voting members was reached, the Council met constitutionally.

- (5) The President acknowledged the presence of, and warmly welcomed, the following special guests: Dr Emma Nangolo, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), who is the chairperson of the Local Assembly Planning Committee; Ms Margareta Grape and Rev. Prof. Dr Cristina Grenholm, Church of Sweden as well as Mr Girma B. Bati, The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.
- (6) The President then asked Phyllis M. Brewah to update the Council on the present situation with respect to the Ebola disease in Sierra Leone. She reported about the very difficult situation the people of Sierra Leone were facing and that it took a longtime for the local government to take it seriously, take appropriate actions and to ask for outside help. She extended her sincere thanks to LWF General Secretary who had called her personally to inquire on how she was during the crisis in November. She thanked everyone who prayed, and the prayers are still needed. Now thousands of orphans remain. The economy has suffered and many challenges remain.
- (7) Bishop Dr Younan assured her that the Communion would hold her in their prayers. He said that it was difficult to understand the situation, but that all were feeling the danger and the seriousness of it. He expressed his gratefulness to all the churches who helped during this ordeal and who brought assistance to all those in need.

3.1 *Greetings*

- (8) Representatives of Christian World Communions and ecumenical bodies presented their greetings and offered reflections on this year's theme, "Hope does not disappoint."
- (9) Monsignor Dr Matthias Türk, representing the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU), said the ecumenical landscape that includes more than 50 years of dialogue between Roman Catholics and Lutherans had altered, creating a foundation for spiritual communion. "Today we note a fundamental transformation of what used to be rigid frontlines between churches and communities of opposing confessions. Despite continuing differences in various questions of faith, our life as ecumenical partners is characterized by cooperation in all possible ways," he said. Monsignor Dr Türk affirmed cooperation between both partners for a shared commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. He remarked "Lutherans and Catholics will for the first time be able to experience a joint ecumenical experience, not in the form of a triumphal celebration, but as a confession of our shared faith in the Triune God".
- (10) The relationship between Anglicans and Lutherans has grown into a communion of love and trust that includes the giving and receiving of gifts, said Rev. Canon Dr John Gibaut, director for Unity, Faith and Order at the Anglican Communion. "Many of the blessings, challenges and opportunities before you as a communion of churches are ours as well. If we truly learn to live into mutual accountability, perhaps we can begin to bear one another's burdens and so lessen each other's loads," Gibaut said on behalf of the Communion's Interim Secretary General, Rev. Canon Dr Alyson Barnett-Cowan.
- (11) Dr Henk Stenvers, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Europe Representative, said the process of reconciliation on which the Lutheran and Mennonite traditions embarked in 2009

offers hope. Likewise, the Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Mennonite conversation on baptism in an open atmosphere brings new hope that further steps on the road of reconciliation can be made. Before concluding, Dr Stenvers observed that "The world in which we live is in turmoil. That is something so many of us experience every day. And when we walk with God, we can only bear witness to the hope that is within us."

- (12) In his greeting, the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) General Secretary, Rev. Chris Ferguson, said that his presence at the Council meeting illustrated the continuing commitment of the Reformed and Lutheran traditions to grow together in unity and service. "We find the hour is right with the massive threats to life besetting the *oikoumene* - that we for the sake of God's creation find new and deeper ways to serve together to do justice following Jesus Christ," the WCRC leader emphasized.
- (13) Upcoming dialogue with Lutherans gives Evangelicals hope of better understanding one another and facing challenges constructively, said Jean Daniel Plüss of the European Pentecostal Charismatic Research Association. "We want to address areas of concern and envision ways for common witness, in such a way that both our churches will be enriched," he said.
- (14) Ms Natasha Klukach, program executive for Church and Ecumenical Relations at the World Council of Churches (WCC) noted that the LWF and WCC share in the common vision of creating opportunities to reflect together and collaborate in mission. "In a world where there are too many places of brokenness and division, together we strive to be witnesses of our common faith, seeking healing and wholeness, justice and peace," said Ms Klukach, who brought greetings from the WCC General Secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, and from the Moderator, Dr Agnes Abuom. LWF's leadership in diaconal ministry, especially in "working with refugees and migrants, is an inspiration to the ecumenical movement," she added.
- (15) The freedom sparked by the Reformation movement brought hope to the world at a time of transition and social instability, and the times are right again for such inspiration, said Rev. Dr Guy Liagre, General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches (CEC). Hope, he said, is an active word that promises grace and peace for the world. He spoke of the great opportunity for the Lutheran communion as it approaches its 12th General Assembly and the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. Concluding, Dr Liagre said that today's social imbalances call for hope. He prays that the ecumenical regional organizations will be able to give a new impulse to hope, that can only be lived out of grace.

4. ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND TIME SCHEDULE

The Council

- (16) **VOTED:** to adopt the Agenda and Time Schedule with the understanding that in the course of the meeting further changes might be made as required.

4.1 *Adoption of Proposed Rules of Procedure for LWF Council Meetings*

The Council

- (17) **VOTED:** to approve the proposed Rules of Procedure for LWF Council Meetings as presented.

4.2 *Code of Conduct for Participants in Events Organized by the LWF*

- (18) The General Secretary explained the reason why the Code of Conduct had been revised. Up to now, the Code of Conduct had focused on sexual abuse, abuse of power and harassment. These points have been kept in the current Code of Conduct. However, its scope has been widened to include fraud and corruption, in the context of abuse of power as well. As mentioned in the relevant exhibit, there is more support now in terms of how to deal with these situations, with forms to be completed, if needed. The response team will now be well equipped to handle the issue concretely.
- (19) The Meeting of Officers had commended the updated version to the Council for adoption.
The Council
- (20) **VOTED:** to approve the updated Code of Conduct for Participants in Events Organized by the Lutheran World Federation; and
- (21) to appoint the following persons as the response team:
Dr Minna HIETAMÄKI
Rev. Naoki ASANO

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE 2014 COUNCIL MEETING

- (22) Since no amendments had been presented,
The Council
- (23) **VOTED:** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the LWF Council in Medan, Indonesia, 12 - 17 June 2014, as circulated.

6. UPDATE ON THE MEETING OF OFFICERS AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- (24) The Minutes of the Meeting of Officers and Board of Trustees on 12 – 14 November 2014 had been shared with the Council on 1 May 2015. The LWF President Bishop Dr Younan gave a brief oral update about the discussions and decisions taken by the Meeting of Officers and Board of Trustees preceding the Council (17 June). The sessions included preparation for the Council, updates from the regions, decisions on personnel, and the current situation of the Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem.

7. APPOINTMENT OF AD-HOC NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

- (25) The Council appointed the following members of the Ad-hoc Nominations Committee for the duration of the meeting with the task to discuss matters referred to it from the plenary.
The Council
- (26) **VOTED:** to appoint an Ad-hoc Nominations Committee for the duration of the meeting with the following members:
Ms Anna-Maria KLASSEN (female, lay) (chair)
Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. EATON (female, ordained)
Bishop Dr Tamás FABINY (male, ordained)

Mr Warime GUTI (male, lay)

Ms Magnea SVERRISDOTTIR (female, lay)

Rev. Dr Gloria ROJAS VARGAS (female, ordained)

Rev. Dr Samuel DAWAI (male, ordained)

with the task to discuss matters referred to it from the plenary.

7.1 *Election of Council member in replacement of Bishop Melvin Jiménez*

- (27) Following the resignation of Bishop Melvin Jiménez (male, ordained) from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Costa Rica as Council member, the Latin America & the Caribbean region proposed replacing Bishop Jiménez by Mr Michael Ram (male, lay) from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana (EXHIBIT 7.1 + Annex).

The Council

- (28) **VOTED:** to elect Mr Michael Ram (male, lay) from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana as Council member in replacement of Bishop Melvin Jiménez (male, ordained) from the Lutheran Costa Rican Church.

7.1.1 **Appointment of Mr Michael Ram as chairperson to the Committee for Advocacy and Public Voice**

The Council

- (29) **VOTED:** to appoint Mr Michael Ram as chairperson to the Committee for Advocacy and Public Voice

7.1.2 **Appointment of Mr Michael Ram to the Standing Committee for Constitution and Membership**

The Council

- (30) **VOTED:** to appoint Mr Michael Ram to the Standing Committee for Constitution and Membership

7.2 *Election of Council member in replacement of Rev. Dr Augustine Jeyakumar*

The Council

- (31) **VOTED:** to declare vacant the LWF Council seat of Rev. Dr Augustine Jeyakumar, since he has stated that he can no longer be present for his term of office (cf. LWF Constitution section VIII(1)).

7.2.1 **Appointment of Council member Rev. Naoki Asano as chairperson to the Committee for World Service**

The Council

- (32) **VOTED:** to appoint Rev. Naoki Asano (male, ordained) from the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church as chairperson of the Committee for

World Service in replacement of Rev. Dr A. G. Augustine Jeyakumar (male, ordained) from The Arcot Lutheran Church (India).

7.2.1 **Appointment of Rev. Dr Suneel Bhanu Busi to the Standing Committee for Constitution and Membership**

The Council

- (33) **VOTED:** to appoint Rev. Dr Suneel Bhanu Busi from the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church to the Standing Committee for Constitution and Membership.

7.3 ***Appointment of Adviser in replacement of Bishop Cindy Halmarson***

The Council

- (34) Following the resignation of Bishop Cindy Halmarson (female, ordained) from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada as Adviser, the North American region proposed replacing Bishop Cindy Halmarson by Rev. Katherine Altenburg (female, ordained) from the same church.
- (35) **VOTED:** to appoint Rev. Katherine Altenburg (female, ordained) from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada as Adviser in replacement of Bishop Cindy Halmarson (female, ordained) from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

7.3.1 **Appointment of Rev. Katherine Altenburg the Committee for Advocacy and Public Voice**

The Council

- (36) **VOTED:** to appoint Rev. Katherine Altenburg from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada to the Committee for Advocacy and Public Voice.

7.4 ***Election of Council member in replacement of Rev. Martina Berlich***

- (37) Following the resignation of Rev. Martina Berlich (female, ordained) from the Evangelical Church in Central Germany as Council member, the LWF National Committee in Germany proposed replacing Rev. Berlich by Rev. Eva Hadem from the Evangelical Church in Central Germany.

The Council

- (38) **VOTED:** to elect Rev. Eva Hadem (female, ordained) from the Evangelical Church in Central Germany as Council member in replacement of Rev. Martina Berlich (female, ordained) from the Evangelical Church in Central Germany.

7.4.1 **Appointment of Rev. Eva Hadem to the Finance Committee**

The Council

- (39) **VOTED:** to appoint Rev. Eva Hadem from the Evangelical Church in Central Germany to the Finance Committee.

7.4.2 Appointment of Rev. Eva Hadem to the Standing Committee for Constitution and Membership

The Council

- (40) **VOTED:** to appoint Rev. Eva Hadem from the Evangelical Church in Central Germany to the Standing Committee for Constitution and Membership.

7.5 Further replacements of Council members and Advisers

The Council

- (41) **VOTED:** to refrain from filling vacancies of Council members and Advisers that occur after the Council in 2015.

7.6 Information about replacements of two CWS members

- (42) The Council was informed that Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) appointed as of 2015 Ms Patricia Maruschak as CLWR representative at the Committee for World Service in replacement of Ms Elaine Peters. Dan Church Aid (DCA) appointed Ms Lisa Henry as DCA representative at the Committee for World Service in replacement of Ms Birgitte Qvist-Sørensen.

8. ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

- (43) Vice-President Bishop Dr Frank July chaired the session. He introduced the LWF President, Bishop Dr Munib Younan, and invited him to present his address to the Council. The President delivered his address in which he reflected on the thematic focus of the Council "Hope Does not Disappoint" (EXHIBIT 8).
- (44) Several participants expressed appreciation for a challenging address which focused on many serious issues, drawing attention on the fact that we are in a world full of conflicts. We are immersed in it and we need to come together with a strategy to respond to these conflicts. The President's call to come together as Christians with those living in conflict and to work for liberation was also appreciated. This needs go beyond what we are seeing, addressing the secondary players affected by these conflicts, and tertiary players who are benefitting from them. We need to find strategies to address them.
- (45) Participants also expressed the need to think about the role of a moderating church, which is credible and from which moderation can be accepted.
- (46) The link between hope and reconciliation and of hope and communion expressed by the President in his address was appreciated, especially in the context of nations who are trying to come to terms with their history of abuse and discrimination of part of their own population, through Truth and Reconciliation Committees.
- (47) Participants highlighted appreciation for the challenge the President put to the Council when stating that people in different parts of the world facing difficulties and affected by injustices, especially women, are not waiting for another LWF policy paper but for our action. Hopefully the LWF can bring contributions to the society as a whole. The idea on having a consultation on how to live alongside the reality of Islam was commended. The theological reflections in the President's presentation were well received as resource for further thinking.

- (48) A Council member from Papua New Guinea thanked the President for his speech. He commented that most people around the world facing challenge expect action more than words. In the Pacific, due to climate change some countries may not exist in 20 years. What is hope for them? He expressed his expectation that by the end of this Council there will be some outcome to give hope to the people, and peace to see the changes and move with them.
- (49) The President responded that in 1955, at the time of the Marangu conference, none of the churches were independent, today all are. There has been a communion supporting the churches to stand on their feet and go forward. Today these churches are struggling with Ebola, poverty, HIV/AIDS and extremism. What are sister churches and development agencies doing to strengthen the mission of those churches in need?
- (50) The President stated that he is not utopian, but has hope. Sometimes he feels there is a stronger player in this world that cares more for financial resources than for human beings. He stressed the need to dialogue on our common future with moderate Muslims, Jewish, Christians, to bring about justice and peace.
- (51) In his travels, when speaking with church leaders he observed that it seems there is not enough coordination among seminaries. Sometimes theology is taught but not leadership, prophetic leadership which has something to say on how to live together with others. This is a responsibility of our communion.

The Council then

- (52) **VOTED:** **to receive the Address of the President with appreciation.**

9. REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

- (53) On behalf of the Council and Communion, the President congratulated Rev. Martin Junge for having received a Doctorate Honoris Causa from Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.
- (54) The LWF General Secretary, Rev. Martin Junge, submitted his report as outlined in EXHIBIT 9ff. Some of the exhibits listed under his report were discussed by specific committees in order to bring recommendations to the Council.
- (55) A speaker thanked very much the General Secretary for making the communion come alive. She expressed appreciation for the reminder that refugees are human beings, not statistics, and quoted "statistics are human beings with dried tears".
- (56) Appreciation was expressed for the recognition that UNHCR gave to faith based organizations and the LWF for the work done as a communion. The LWF was the first Faith Based Organization (FBO) which went to help and support churches and people during the Liberian war and the Ebola crisis. She encouraged the communion to always be visible and proclaim the Gospel, even in face of crisis, confident in the love and faith of Christ.
- (57) A participant from Nigeria thanked the President and the General Secretary for their concern for Nigeria, and the concern of the Communion Office, expressed through the solidarity visit made in March 2015. She mentioned that areas in conflict need the support of the global communion, and that Nigeria suffered the consequences of the cartoons targeting Islam. It was stressed that the consequences of whatever is done in Europe are suffered in other parts of the world, by those who live closely with people of other faiths.
- (58) A speaker from Madagascar expressed appreciation for the concern for diakonia for the whole church and for theological concerns too. He called attention to the need to connect the

theological schools, especially in Africa to be more relevant to the theological and diakonic work of the church. Church sustainability is a great concern in Madagascar, more awareness on sustainability is needed.

- (59) Another participant from Eastern Europe thanked the General Secretary for raising the issue of migration and refugees, which is a global issue. He stated that sometimes it is difficult to follow decisions of some governments who shut down to migrants and refugees and called for churches in these regions to raise their voices against hostility. It was suggested that it could be very helpful to the churches if the LWF could offer supporting material and guidance on this issue.
- (60) A speaker thanked for lifting the importance of public voice and who we are, especially that we are the grassroots. She recalled that in 2013 a statement was passed to encourage churches to bring to UN the voice of grassroots, and mentioned that in collaboration with WICAS this is done at the CEDAW meetings annually in New York. She stated that this is good representation on how the support of leadership permeates the grassroots.
- (61) It was mentioned that the participation of each one in the communion makes us feel accompanied by the communion. A participant from Chile noted that the evangelical churches in Chile are feeling the need for an internal reformation towards the Gospel. There is an opening to start working towards the 500 anniversary commemorating the Reformation in gratitude to God and the global communion.

The Council then

- (62) **VOTED:** **to receive the Report of the General Secretary with appreciation and refer relevant matters arising from it to the Committees for discussion and appropriate action.**

9.1 *Implementation of the LWF Communion Office Operational Plan 2013 - 2014*

- (63) The General Secretary, Rev. Martin Junge, provided a report to the Council about the implementation of the LWF Communion Office Operational Plan 2013 - 2014 (EXHIBIT 9.1). The report was discussed in the respective committees and a recommendation for Council action was brought by the Finance Committee (see item 16, paragraph nr 199).

9.2 *Study Document of the Self-Understanding of the Lutheran Communion*

- (64) Dr Minna Hietamäki, LWF Council Member and chairperson of the study group on "The Self-Understanding of the Lutheran Communion," introduced the study document (EXHIBIT 9.2). She described the process during the last 18 months in which the document has been developed and outlined the key points of the document. The Council in 2013 requested the LWF General Secretary to establish the study group in order to engage the member churches in discerning how to deal with differences while upholding their commitment to being a communion of churches.
- (65) The study document defines communion as a gift and a task that is lived out in both unity and diversity. Explaining further what task it entails, it discusses the questions of autonomy and accountability, shared decision making, disagreements in the communion and five key theological resources that can guide the communion in discerning life together amidst diversity. In these five sections, it affirms shared convictions based on Lutheran confessional writings and Scripture, and highlights issues that require further conversation.

- (66) Plenary discussions following Dr Hietamäki's presentation focused on the document's relevance to the communion and its churches, and on the process of discussing it further in the respective church contexts. It was affirmed by several speakers that this document provides a good theological framework for understanding relationships in the ecclesial communion of the LWF. It was underlined that the document offers perspectives on how the LWF engages in robust relations, and also asks the question what this really means for the member churches.
- (67) The history of the 1990 General Assembly resolution on LWF as ecclesial communion was recalled, as well as the decision of the LWF Council meeting in 2002 to make this visible in the phrase "A Communion of Churches" that goes with the name "The Lutheran World Federation".
- (68) A number of comments pointed out that this document gives member churches a task ahead to spell out what the notion of mutual accountability means for their communication and their decision-making. It was suggested that the document has the potential to provide a framework for conflict-resolution, both on regional and on global levels. Differences between member churches will always be there, the question then would be: How, within this theological framework, does the LWF deal with these differences when they become conflictive? What is the role of the LWF Communion Office in such processes?
- (69) Dr Hietamäki responded to a question on the absence of a concrete proposal on how to discuss and appropriate the document in a local context. She noted that the group's mandate did not focus on the process beyond the adoption of the document by Council, but on producing content that would serve as an incentive for discussion. A Council member proposed that seminaries that are training pastors be also introduced to the document, and that ways be found to have workshops in order to popularize the document.

The Council

- (70) **VOTED:** to receive the study document of the Self-Understanding of the Lutheran Communion with appreciation;
- (71) to ask the Communion Office to prepare a process with questions and timelines for further reception in LWF Member Churches;
- (72) to send the study document to Member Churches for further studies; and
- (73) to encourage the Member Churches to discuss the study document during the Pre-Assemblies as a preparation for the LWF Twelfth Assembly in 2017.

9.3 *Towards a Sustainable Projection of the LWF and its Communion Office*

- (74) The General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge presented a comprehensive concept towards a sustainable LWF for discussion (EXHIBIT 9.3). He mentioned that the aim is to look for a concept of sustainability which reflects who we are. The President invited for inputs.
- (75) Appreciation was expressed for the broad and wide range of sustainability description and asked who is tending what sustainability is, the Communion Office, the Meeting of Officers, the Finance team? Clarification of the process was requested before deciding on 2016.
- (76) A Council member was intrigued by the concept of volunteer network, how is envisioned, how does it fit in the fundraising strategy of LWF?

- (77) The General Secretary mentioned that the Communion Office Leadership Team (COLT) discussed on how to present this issue to the Council. COLT tried to lay a foundation and general understanding on sustainability. It is important to hear the Council on these very sensitive issues, trying to avoid making mistakes. The intention is to generate a shared understanding of, and process on enhancing sustainability. The process has to be developed before the Meeting of Officers in November 2015 and the next Council in June 2016. The General Secretary is receiving observations on issues that fall under his mandate and listening to them to incorporate them into the development of the process. Since governance has to be involved in the process, the General Secretary called for the advice of the Vice-Presidents and the chair of the Finance Committee when developing the document. Finance challenges were taken into account and the role of the Finance Committee was discussed. This needs to be clear by the end of August.
- (78) Rev. Junge also mentioned that the Communion Office has the responsibility to develop proposals to move on, but definitely documents have to be seen, understood, owned by the Council before being adopted, to ensure good expert support in difficult questions and involve governance for ownership.
- (79) Gratitude was expressed for this good document and it was asked how it would be implemented. Concern was expressed about the concept of location of the Communion Office and the many indicators needed to be taken into account. Who will deal with this question? The Council member expressed complete confidence in staff, but those who work here represent their own interests and of their regions. How these interests could be combined, including all the interests that may exist, in a transparent way? He stressed the need to have a group to discuss all these points, to follow this major challenge.
- (80) The General Secretary observed that the seven regions in the Communion are represented by the Vice Presidents and the Chair of the Finance Committee to whom proposals will be made, and other stake holders may be also identified to discuss this issue.
- (81) Another Council member was glad that the issue of sustainability is given attention, since when there are financial difficulties the temptation is to thin cut in a lot of areas, keeping the structure unchanged but unable to deliver. She called for caution about involving a whole cohort of volunteers, who can add burden to the member churches; she would rather continue sending that money to the LWF directly.
- (82) A Council member mentioned that she works with volunteer network in her church. Volunteers make churches to work. This network creates extra cost and responsibility. The risk is that some volunteers want to do their own thing, not necessarily what is needed and when it is needed. It is important to encourage strategies.
- (83) The General Secretary stressed the importance of hearing more voices on the issue of volunteers, which may be helpful. He continued saying that the LWF is a communion of churches, which works through and with constituted churches, but it is also a reality that people who got in contact with LWF want to continue cooperating. So it will be good to clarify and structure this, in order that volunteers do not contradict what churches do. Member Churches may have a great interest in exposing their members to the LWF, so the LWF becomes meaningful to them. The volunteer network will not replace the work that has to be done in the Communion Office. But structures and resources have to be developed to attend the concerns of churches in a strategic way.
- (84) A Council member from Asia expressed appreciation for Sunday worship with members of local congregations; he realized that in Geneva and Japan there are similar issues such as aging of

membership and fewer young people in the churches. He questioned the viability of the suggested volunteer network, expressing concern on how to frame this sustainability program while struggling with reaching out to younger people, and his fear that this may become a burden to the congregations.

- (85) A Council participant mentioned that change is good, but in her context it is very hard with fundraising. The issue of volunteers can be complicated, and it does not work so well in Sweden. The Nordic region discussed the Sustainability document and will continue to do so with the Communion Office at the beginning of 2016 in order to fill into the Council meeting next June.
- (86) It was suggested that this document should be adopted by the churches, as their departments' agenda as the LWF Gender Policy document was.
- (87) Another Council member encouraged the process of sustainability to be extended and include more the member churches, even when this may be difficult to implement before the next Council session discussion process. She mentioned the interest of young people to become more involved in the work of the LWF, asking how they can participate. What other opportunities would be for young people besides participating in the Council and the activities of the youth office? Their participation could be good to enlarge the possibilities, even when it is difficult to coordinate the efforts between staff and volunteers for a good result.
- (88) It was mentioned that the greater challenge is that this idea is based on a strong understanding and practice of stewardship of time and resources, and asked what to do with the Member Churches who do not have that understanding, before starting the process.
- (89) The General Secretary mentioned that the reality of fewer youth is evident in many churches. The idea is not to impose burdens to churches, but hopefully to invigorate them with new impetus. The fact that the LWF was able to connect so well to young people through the Young Reformers Network could be a resource to churches. This system of resources can be offered to each other. It is true that we have to see the level of ambition of what we want to achieve and its viability. Realities vary a lot in regards to volunteers. It is important to clearly reflect on what will be proposed to the Young Reformers Networks after 2017; what will be their space, when they have been so much involved, without disturbing the understanding that LWF is a membership organization, working through Member Churches.
- (90) It was stressed the need to look at the theological roots for our actions.
- (91) A Council member from Central and Eastern Europe noted that it is very important that theology is mentioned and stressed. As an example, he felt that in the sermon during the joint worship at the Cathedral there was not enough exegesis on what unites us as a communion; therefore it is important to stress theology. We need to identify what we want to change, what we want to reform. Is it only technical matters, or how to find more young people, or do we want to change the content? We do not want to turn the gospel upside down and reform everything. As Lutherans we need to stress what the theology of Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, and Sola Scriptura meant 500 years ago. When talking about sustainability we have to stress also theological content.
- (92) A Council Adviser appreciated the fact that the critical points in order to go forward are mentioned in the text. He stressed the need to be careful in this critical situation, not to insist so much in structures but also on content. It is important to look at how what we do impacts the whole world, i.e. debt relief, climate change, leading role in dialogue with Catholics, and concentrate in what we do well. He expressed having difficulties to see that the budget for theology has been reduced, and sees this as a dangerous signal to outside. He suggested

improving internal communications and the need to share the experiences of different churches - those which are growing and those declining in membership, exchanging practices, learning and benefitting from each other.

- (93) It was said that this document helps all churches in the regions to reflect about their opportunities and possibilities. These need to be identified, so they can be put at the service of the communities. This document calls for an internal reflection, so we can recognize ourselves as a communion, we are all necessary in order to make the body work. We can reflect in our churches on what we have to offer to the communion. The communion needs each one of us; maybe we need to strengthen the internal reflection in our churches.
- (94) A Council member expressed appreciation for this important and relevant document as how face important changes. She mentioned that in Iceland the question of sustainability is omnipresent, and it is important for her church to look at itself as sustainable church within the communion. The Church in Iceland has many volunteers, with their hearts with the LWF, but many times there is no space for them to use their gifts and treasures.
- (95) The General Secretary expressed paying attention to the remark on how to connect this with what the LWF does. This document needs to be read in conjunction with the Self-understanding of LWF, otherwise it has no sense. The theological question of stewardship has to be considered. This is not just a technical management issue, but expresses the theological identity of who we are as communion. He mentioned that it was important to frame the theological understanding of sustainability, what we need to sustain is not structures but mission, continue to be able to deliver according to our mission. We need to analyze the reasons for the decrease of funding for work with member churches, and identify what is it that we need to be focusing in the future and how do we sustain together our journey.
- (96) The refocusing of DMD is taking into account the growth and decrease of member churches, but it is still necessary to explore how we will make this happening.
- (97) On engagement of Member Churches, the General Secretary mentioned the need to initiate a conversation on how do we sustain together and how to nurture that discussion locally. The LWF has to bring back the participation of individuals and see how this does that go back to the member churches.
- (98) On the other hand it was mentioned that the volunteer network could be a good opportunity for small churches to contribute beyond finances. In a small federation everything is done on volunteer services, beside the work of pastors. Young people can be part of some concrete projects; it is possible to mobilize them in project related work.
- (99) It was noted that the report stresses that the LWF is seen as a resource for empowerment of Member Churches. This encourages young people in her region. She agreed on the need to share experiences among Member Churches. Many people do church work exclusively based on volunteers' work and contributions, offering their time beside their jobs. She called for sharing of experiences of different networks, i.e. women, youth, communications, etc. to show the commitment of individuals to the LWF Communion.
- (100) The General Secretary mentioned that this is the other side of the discussion in the LWF; making a more formal volunteer network will help to acknowledge better those networks already existing. Those who are not employed by the churches give their extra time, and this has to be recognized.
- (101) It was reminded that sustainability is not only a question of getting, but also of losing resources and stressed the importance of reviewing our procedures in regards to the use of resources.

- (102) The General Secretary said that it is important to pay attention to how the resources are used, especially as preparing for the Assembly in Namibia, that is why it was decided not have a mega meeting. He also mentioned the need to address the issue and to find more ecologically responsible ways for the LWF Council to function within a sustainable structure.
- (103) Another comment observed that part of supporting the LWF sustainability is to address the question of what is Lutheran today? We need to know today what Luther's teaching was, and to discuss challenges such as a world which does not believe in God. Looking at the projections to the Assembly he sees that the question of atheism is not touched in our programs, we should address it not to live in a fictitious world, trying to define topics we thing are crucial for people. He suggested broadening the issues to be considered when talking about sustainability.
- (104) The General Secretary expressed the commitment to continue working with the President, the Vice Presidents and the chair of the Finance Committee to make this more concrete and developed, before being sent to the Council.

The Council

- (105) **VOTED:** to endorse the visions for a sustainable projection of the LWF and its Communion Office as outlined;
- (106) to include inputs and contributions expressed during the Council discussions;
- (107) to develop processes and actions towards the implementation of the proposals; and
- (108) to request the General Secretary to present a report to the Meeting of Officers in November 2015 and to the Council in June 2016.

10. REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON FOR THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- (109) The President invited the chairperson of the Finance Committee, Ms Christina Jackson-Skelton, to present her report (EXHIBIT 10).
- (110) A PowerPoint presentation highlighted the key points of the report.
- (111) In the fiscal year 2014, The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) total income reached EUR 116.22 million through generous contributions from member churches, church-related agencies, the United Nations, EU & US government funding sources and other partners, as well as individual donors. Compared to the budget of EUR 87.68 million, the organization realized a favorable variance of EUR 28.54 million (33%) and an increase of EUR 10.53 million (10%) compared to the previous year.
- (112) The LWF's consolidated financial results for 2014 have contributed to the stability of the organization, supporting LWF's commitment to ethical practices and regulatory compliance.
- (113) LWF reserves increased from EUR 22.3 million to EUR 26.6 million, before the restatement of pension liabilities under IAS (19) for the year 2014.
- (114) Membership income increased in 2014 compared to the previous year from US\$ 3.18 million in 2013 to US\$ 3.21 million in 2014, an increase of US\$ 29,000. Unfortunately, due to the negative affect of the US\$/EURO exchange rate, the income gain was not realized upon conversion.

- (115) The Twelfth Assembly approved budget was EUR 2,994,964. Against this budget we have received pledges of EUR 2,353,366. In 2014, the actual Assembly income received was EUR 541,626. The expenses incurred in 2014 for the Assembly preparations and planning meetings were EUR 108,065. These expenses were paid from the 2014 Council budget, which was not used due to the hosting of the Council meeting in Medan by the Lutheran Churches in Indonesia.
- (116) The LWF Endowment Fund is a separate legal entity; its results are not consolidated within the LWF financial statements. The Report of the LWF Endowment Fund Board is in Exhibit 16.2. Contributions to the Endowment Fund in 2014 were CHF 68,948. In 2014 the investment performance of the portfolio in 2014 was positive with a net return of CHF 947,799.
- (117) The 2014 Operating Reserve of the Endowment Fund showed a positive balance of CHF 1,134,323 that is available for distribution as per the distribution policy. The total assets of the Endowment Fund are CHF 14,777,811, including the endowment benefiting the LWF that is held in the ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust.
- (118) The LWF Staff Welfare Plan – Pension fund was affiliated to the Stiftung Abendrot pension fund in January, 2012. All assets and liabilities were taken over by the Stiftung Abendrot and an agreement was signed by the LWF and Abendrot Foundation.
- (119) LWF is only liable to pay the monthly employer contributions to the fund and no longer liable for managing the pension funds nor for any under coverage in pension funds. According to the valuation report, the pension fund performance in 2014 was 4.8 % and the coverage level for LWF pension reached 103.3 %, with the value of assets estimated at CHF 38.69 million.
- (120) The recent Swiss National Bank decision (January 2015) to abandon the cap on the value of the Swiss Franc against the Euro has adversely affected the 2015 budget. However, in view of the strong performance and systematic, disciplined and proactive approach by the Communion Office Leadership Team, LWF has successfully managed the risks of heavy losses in exchange rates. Their attention to this issue was timely and their communication was thoughtful and strategic. The situation will continue to demand the attention of leadership and its impact on future sustainability must be considered.
- (121) Ms Jackson-Skelton concluded by offering her thanks for the staff leadership and the wise counsel and commitment from member churches.
- (122) Following the presentation, it was observed that income for the Department for World Service (DWS) has increased whereas the other departments all experienced a decrease. The Council needs to be conscious of this changing financial picture and the effect it has on the nature of the organization.
- (123) Ms Jackson Skelton thanked for the observation. We should celebrate the increase in income and activity of DWS. We should be conscious also that the decrease in the other departments is in real terms, not only as a percentage of overall income.
- (124) On the question of reserves, it was also asked whether there was a target amount for each department to achieve. The chairperson said that more-detailed information could be made available if it would be helpful.

The Council

- (125) **VOTED:** to receive the Report of the Chairperson for the Finance Committee with appreciation and refer it to the Finance Committee and other Council Committees for discussion and appropriate action.

11. LWF TWELFTH ASSEMBLY

- (126) The session was chaired by the Vice-President for Africa, Presiding Bishop Dr Alex Malasusa. He invited Dr Emma Nangolo, Chair of the Local Assembly Planning Committee (LAPC), to greet the Council.
- (127) Dr Nangolo greeted the members of the Council and thanked the General Secretary for his invitation to attend the Council meeting. The LAPC was constituted by the United Church Council of the Namibian Evangelical Lutheran Churches (UCC-NELC) to prepare the Assembly on behalf of the hosting churches. Its work consists mainly of promoting the Assembly to local Lutheran congregations all over the country, to the different government ministries, the diplomatic corps as well as the churches and ecumenical community in Namibia. For the LAPC, organizing the Assembly means “facing and confronting the challenges of racial and ethnic division together”. Healing and reconciliation are at the heart of the work of the LAPC.
- (128) The Chairperson thanked Dr Nangolo and invited Rev. Dr Kjell Nordstokke, Moderator of the Assembly Planning Committee (APC) to present the APC report to members of the Council.
- (129) Rev. Dr Nordstokke clarified that his report on behalf of the APC was to be the second and final report of the Committee as its mandate finishes with this Council meeting in Geneva. He reminded Council members of the first report presented at the meeting in Medan where some fundamental decisions such as those relating to the theme and member church representation have been taken. Rev. Dr Nordstokke reassured the Council that the after having met in Windhoek last March, the choice of Namibia was a very wise one. The three Lutheran churches will be “magnificent hosts”. He recalled the Sunday worship during the APC at a local congregation “with more than a thousand people singing to God and sharing in the bread of life.” This experience is a promise of “exciting moments in Namibia and a wonderful opportunity to celebrate its journey of hope” in 2017. He also stated the conviction that the steps undertaken at the Communion Office and in Namibia so far are where we should be at this point in time preparing for the Assembly.
- (130) Rev. Dr Kjell Nordstokke led Council members through his report and recommendations that required Council action.

11.1 *Twelfth Assembly Concept Note*

- (131) The Concept Note provides a framework and ideological platform of the Assembly. It communicates well to member churches and gives a clear articulation of the role of pre-assemblies. It also affirms the vision of a joyful, transformative, outward-looking and forward-looking Assembly.

The Council

- (132) **VOTED:** **to adopt the Twelfth Assembly Concept Note (EXHIBIT 11.1.1) and encourage its continued use while preparing for and communicating about the Assembly.**

11.2 *Communion Office Operational Plan for the Twelfth Assembly*

- (133) The Operational Plan provides a roadmap for how the Communion Office intends to deliver on the Assembly's goals and objectives across the departments.

The Council

- (134) **VOTED:** to approve the Twelfth Assembly Communion Office Operation Plan for 2015-2017 (EXHIBIT 11.1.2).

11.3 *Overall Concept and Methodology of the Twelfth Assembly*

- (135) The Overall Concept and Methodology builds on the Concept Note and offers insight into the various processes before and during the Assembly. While many issues will still require further decisions and adjustments, this document serves as a good framework for further planning on the content and methodology of the Assembly and its related processes.

The Council

- (136) **VOTED:** to approve the Overall Concept and Methodology of the Twelfth Assembly (EXHIBIT 11.1.3) as the document that serves as the basis for further developing the program and methodology of the Assembly.

11.4 *Criteria for selecting a keynote speaker*

- (137) The Criteria for selection of keynote speaker serve as guidelines for the Communion Office to approach potential speakers.

The Council

- (138) **VOTED:** to approve the criteria for selecting a keynote speaker as presented in EXHIBIT 11.1.4.

11.5 *Draft Assembly Program*

- (139) The Draft Assembly program was developed taking into account the lessons learned from the Stuttgart Assembly. The Assembly Planning Committee noted that this is merely a first draft and that further revisions will be needed in the months to come.

The Council

- (140) **VOTED:** to approve the draft of the Assembly program (EXHIBIT 11.1.5) as a basis on which further revisions and improvements could be made until a final draft is presented to the Council at its meeting in 2016.

11.6 *Worship, devotion and prayer*

- (141) Rev. Dr Nordstokke informed the Council that the International Worship Planning Committee will be presenting its report to the next Council meeting in 2016 where more detailed information about the program of worship and prayer will be given. The chairperson of the International Worship Planning Committee (IWPC) joined the APC meeting in Windhoek who updated the Committee on the outcome of their first IWPC meeting held in Geneva last March.

11.7 *Guidelines for Council Membership*

- (142) The Guidelines for Council membership have been drafted in order to assist member churches in their task of nominating candidates for the LWF Council. The document articulates the roles and expectations of Council members and the expertise required in ensuring effective leadership.
- (143) It was clarified that the Guidelines would be translated into the LWF official languages and shared with the member churches together with the request for nominations before the Pre-Assemblies.
- (144) The question of preparation and training of Assembly delegates was raised. In response, the General Secretary highlighted the important role of the member churches and the pre-Assemblies in equipping delegates so that they understand their role as well as the procedures that would guide decision-making and voting during the Assembly.
- (145) In regards to nomination of Council members, it was proposed that regions appoint their own nominations committees to look at nominations and make proposals to the member churches in their region. The Area Secretaries will make sure that these committees are established. It was further clarified that last-minute nominations at the Assembly will be the responsibility of a Nominations Committee appointed by the Assembly.
- (146) A friendly amendment was proposed in order to give member churches and potential Council members a realistic picture of the frequency and duration of Council meetings. It was agreed to include this information in the document.

The Council

- (147) **VOTED:** to adopt the Guidelines for Council Membership (EXHIBIT 11.1.6) to be sent to LWF member churches when approached to propose nominations for the Council to be elected during the Twelfth Assembly.

11.8 *Twelfth Assembly Fundraising Strategy*

- (148) The Twelfth Assembly Fundraising Strategy affirms that the main source of support for the Assembly are the member churches and outlines other channels through which further fundraising will be carried out.
- (149) In the discussion related to this point, a request was made to link Assembly expenses to projects that could help member churches apply for funds so that they could commit the full cost of their Assembly fees. In response, the General Secretary offered his support and commitment to tailor requests to member churches' needs. With this,

The Council

- (150) **VOTED:** to approve the Twelfth Assembly Fundraising Strategy (EXHIBIT 11.1.7) and support the main lines of action presented in the fundraising strategy.

11.9 *Policy on Subsidizing Costs of Delegates to the Twelfth Assembly*

- (151) A Policy on Subsidizing Costs of Delegates to the Twelfth Assembly is being tabled for the first time. This policy builds on the framework of rights and responsibilities of member churches and recognizes mutuality as defined in the LWF Strategy. As a policy, it will guide and ensure transparency in decision-making.
- (152) In the discussion related to this point, a question on participation of retiring Council members at the Assembly was raised especially if they have not been appointed as delegates by their member church.
- (153) A question was raised on the issue of ensuring equal participation of women and youth in relation to the Policy. The General Secretary clarified that the Constitutional mandate to ensure one delegate per member church will be respected. This policy covers only the second delegate and, if possible, a third or fourth one. The Policy clearly states that a major consideration will be in respect of existing policies that define quotas of youth and women representation and these policies will be respected. If problems around this arise, these problems will be tabled at the 2016 Council and appropriate recommendations will be put forward.

The Council

- (154) **VOTED:** to approve the Policy for Subsidizing Costs of Delegates to the Twelfth Assembly (EXHIBIT 11.1.8).

The Council

- (155) **VOTED:** to receive the Report of the Assembly Planning Committee as presented in Exhibit 11.1 with appreciation; and
- (156) to thank the Assembly Planning Committee for their work.

- (157) In concluding his report, Rev. Dr Nordstokke thanked the members of the Council for the trust that was extended to the APC. He said that despite the short period of its mandate important work has been done a much progress has been achieved. He thanked the consultants who were helpful in facilitating the discussions during the meeting and asked members of the APC who were also Council members to stand up to be acknowledged. Dr Nordstokke added that the APC trusts the Council will provide guidance for the work that needs to be done. As the APC concludes its mandate, it pledges ongoing prayers for a joyful, transformative, forward-looking and outward-looking Twelfth Assembly.

12. LWF BUDGET 2016

- (158) The General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge presented the LWF Budget 2016
- (159) By means of a Power Point presentation he provided the highlights of the LWF Budget 2016 which amounts to EUR 119,681,230. He noted that the Budget 2016 presents some challenges such as expanded funding for the Ecumenical Commemoration of the Reformation Anniversary in 2016, the sustainability of the programs and structures, the uncertainty of the exchange rate and balancing income with expenditures. It is expected to receive full membership fees to balance the budget. The budget figures are targets to be fundraised. In case the actual income is less than planned, the expenditures will have to be adjusted accordingly.

- (160) The General Secretary explained the Budget approval process. Each committee will discuss their Program Plans and Budget and forward the action to the Finance Committee, which will bring within their report a recommendation to the Council (see item 16.7).
- (161) In the ensuing discussion, concern was expressed about the decline of resources, pointing out that three of the strategic priorities only receive 11% of the income.

13. COMMITTEE FOR THEOLOGY AND ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

- (162) The chairperson of the committee, Bishop Dr Milos Klátik, presented the Report of the Committee for Theology and Ecumenical Relations (CTER).

13.1 *Report of the Chairperson of the Board of the Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research*

The Council

- (163) **VOTED:** to receive the Report of the Chairperson of the Board of the Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research with appreciation; and
- (164) to express appreciation for the continued support by the Institute for the bilateral dialogues and for its substantial contributions to these dialogues; and
- (165) to thank the Institute for fifty years of faithful service to the LWF in fulfilling its ecumenical commitment and valuable contribution to ecumenical theology; and
- (166) to reaffirm the strong commitment of the LWF to the assessment process which the Institute is about to enter; and
- (167) to recognize that the close cooperation with the Institute will also be of significance in the future.
- (168) The Council was informed about the following points:
- The CTER commended the coherence of the hermeneutics program and requested that the profile of the new program on Theological Education and Formation be sharpened.
 - The CTER expressed the need for the inclusion of interreligious partners and interreligious concerns in the program of the Twelfth Assembly.
 - The CTER expressed the desire that more attention be paid to reception and learning processes of different LWF documents, including the development of specific tools to be used in these processes.

There was no discussion and the Council

- (169) **VOTED:** to receive the Report of the Committee for Theology and Ecumenical Relations with appreciation.

14. COMMITTEE FOR MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT

- (170) The chairperson of the committee, Bishop Niels Arendt, presented the Report of the Committee for Mission and Development.

14.1 *Reducing Income and Budget for the Department for Mission and Development (DMD) (With reference to Council Exhibit 9.1 and CMD Exhibit 5. and 5.1.)*

- (171) The chairperson reported that the committee had extensively discussed and reflected on issues specific to DMD regarding the reducing income and budget frame for the department as highlighted in the Report of the Chairperson for the Finance Committee (Exhibit 10). The committee raised an urgent need for dialogue and action on how the work can be done by the department and that of individual member churches (projects) can be sustained financially and otherwise.

The Council

- (172) **VOTED:**
1. to establish and facilitate a platform for conversations among member churches to
 - a) review the bilateral work being implemented
 - b) ascertain how these activities support the goals in the operational plan related to communion building and holistic mission and
 - c) identify ways to increase revenue for the communion's multilateral agenda through the work of DMD.
 2. to request LWF Area Secretaries to be in conversation with member churches in the respective regions, with a goal to creating opportunity to participate in the financial support of projects from member churches;
 3. to request the Communion Office and the member churches to explore in a working group new ways of cooperation to secure the program work;
 4. to receive the Report of the Director of the Department for Mission and Development and Program Coordinators both with appreciation, but also concern with regard to resources.

14.2 *Other Issues*

- (173) The committee's comments on the President's address were received. The comments highlighted the need for further discussion in the Council for a joint conference of the World Council of Churches on interreligious relations for Christians living in minority contexts in all regions. The committee also acknowledged the importance of coordinating theological education among Lutheran seminaries, networks and educational programs and encouraged the Communion Office to connect the work of the working group on the exchange of personnel in the member churches to the LUTEN processes for a deeper theological input on the theme of mutual recognition of ministry.
- (174) The committee reiterated the concern raised by the General Secretary in his report on the issue of migration and how it is affecting members in the LWF communion of churches. The committee encouraged the LWF to continue reflecting on deeper issues around the question of migration such as internally displaced people, racism and xenophobia and how the communion continues to accompany members dealing with such reality.

The Council

- (175) **VOTED:** to receive the Report of the Committee for Mission and Development with appreciation.

15. COMMITTEE FOR WORLD SERVICE

15.1 *The Report of the Committee for World Service*

- (176) The chairperson of the committee, Rev. Naoki Asano, presented the Report of the Committee for World Service to the Council.
- (177) As per the Council Exhibit 9.3 *“Towards a Sustainable Projection of the LWF and its Communion Office”*, the Committee for World Service wished to underline the importance for the Department for World Service of continuing to be based in Geneva, and specifically referred to point 6.2.2.2 of the above-mentioned Council exhibit:

6.2.2.2 Identifying required conditions and assessing alternative options for the location of the CO and its organizational setup

There are strong historic reasons for the CO to be located in Geneva. The ecumenical motivations for the LWF to be located in the Ecumenical Center, alongside WCC and the ACT Alliance, have been explained earlier. Furthermore, the LWF's commitment to serve refugees and displaced persons, and act on its commitment to human rights, makes it essential for the LWF to have a presence in the city where the major UN bodies related to this work are headquartered.

- (178) The committee added that other important networks such as ICVA, SCHR and CHS are also located in Geneva and are critical for the work of the Department for World Service, as is Switzerland's neutral status and the fact that Geneva is the global humanitarian capital.
- (179) Two issues were referred to the Committee for Finance, firstly on the central services charges and secondly on the accounting standards. The Committee for Finance took action on these issues, as mentioned in the Report of the Finance Committee (EXHIBIT 16).
- (180) The Council expressed its gratitude for the leadership of Dr Tawfiq Nasser, CEO of the Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH), who passed away in May. The General Secretary was invited by the LWF President to give an update on the current situation at AVH. The General Secretary praised the unique personality and outstanding leadership of Dr Tawfiq Nasser, who built a solid system, structure and staffing at the AVH. The functioning of AVH is therefore not directly affected by Dr Tawfiq Nasser's untimely death. The General Secretary informed the Council that a meeting will take place in September in order to appoint a new CEO. The Deputy CEO is currently acting.
- (181) The Council echoed the Committee for World Service in congratulating Ms Maria Immonen for her new position as Director for World Service. A Council member took the opportunity to congratulate her as the first woman in this position, and hoped to see either the General Secretary's or the President's position being held by a woman in the near future.
- (182) Mr Barry Lynam, World Service Finance Coordinator, was also thanked for his service over the last 11 years in Geneva.

The Council

- (183) **VOTED:** to receive the Report of the Committee for World Service with appreciation.

15.2 *Other item*

- (184) The General Secretary presented a video portraying life in Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan by Ms Jenny Moe, Council member and member of the Committee for World Service, from Church of Norway. The soundtrack of the video is a song she composed and donated to the LWF.
- (185) The General Secretary underlined that the number of forcibly displaced people increased in 2015 to 60 million people. The video, filmed by Ms Jenny Moe and two young Syrian refugees, shows the daily life and work of the LWF through the "Peace Oasis" psychosocial project in Zaatari Refugee Camp, Jordan, where 85,000 Syrian refugees currently live.
- (186) The General Secretary thanked Ms Jenny Moe and invited participants to the Council to use and share this video, which is a great tool to create awareness of the situation and fundraise for the humanitarian work of LWF. The video is now available on various media supports, including YouTube and the LWF website.
- (187) The LWF President also thanked Ms Jenny Moe for this gift and the strong message given through this video, underlining that he appreciated the way Ms Jenny Moe used her talent to grasp what the refugees are feeling.
- (188) Ms Jenny Moe thanked the refugees who contributed to the video and LWF staff who helped with the development of this video.

16. FINANCE COMMITTEE

- (189) The President called on the chairperson of the Finance Committee, Ms Jackson-Skelton, to present the report to the Council. Thanking the committee for its diligent work, Ms Jackson-Skelton read the report with its recommendations.
- (190) She then referred to the main areas discussed by the committee and brought as information to the Council: the various Council reports (including the Report on the Implementation of the Communion Office Operational Plan (COOP) 2013-2014), the report of the Finance Office, overview of resource mobilization activities and the LWF fundraising strategy and the fundraising principles and guidelines policy.
- (191) The committee also reviewed the 2015 budget and work plan, the LWF Audited Statements for 2014 and the appointment of the external auditor for 2015. The committee received an update on progress with the cash flow of the Augusta Victoria Hospital. The Terms of Reference for the Committee were discussed and referred to the Standing Committee for Constitution and Membership.
- (192) The chairperson of the LWF Endowment Fund Board, Rev. Dr Robin Steinke, took a moment to update the Council on progress being made with the Endowment Fund. National Bishop Susan Johnson also shared the policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada to give 10% of all undesignated bequests to the LWF Endowment Fund. Finally, Rev. Dr Steinke encouraged member churches to support the Fund financially.
- (193) In conclusion, Ms Jackson-Skelton thanked the staff of the Office for Finance and Administration for their work and guidance to the committee members over the past year.

Discussion and Questions

- (194) On the appointment of the Auditors, clarification was requested on the criteria for selection. Ms Jackson-Skelton said that the track record of PWC had been good and that they had a policy of rotating their staff team to ensure a fresh approach each year.
- (195) On the investment principles and guidelines, a question was raised about the implications given the new policy on excluding fossil fuels. It was agreed that the section “exploitation of natural resources” was sufficient to cover this.
- (196) A participant asked why the Council was required to approve a document that it had not previously seen. Martin Junge acknowledged the point but referred to the Finance Committee decision to have the Investment Principles and Guidelines for the LWF Treasury Funds approved by the whole Council. This request was not foreseen as the meeting was planned.
- (197) On the report on the Augusta Victoria Hospital, it was requested to put on record the Council's gratitude to Dr Tawfiq Nassar who was born, served and died at the hospital.
- (198) The President thanked Ms Jackson-Skelton for the report.

16.1 *Implementation of the Communion Office Operational Plan 2013 - 2014*

The Council

- (199) **VOTED:** to receive the Report on the Implementation of the Communion Office Operational Plan (COOP) 2013-2014 with appreciation.

16.2 *The LWF Fundraising Strategy*

The Council

- (200) **VOTED:** to approve the LWF Fundraising Strategy as amended.

Amended as follows:

- (201) to add the following sentence under no. 3 on cross- border fundraising: “The principle is to work on any cross-border fundraising in partnership and full collaboration with member churches.”
- (202) to add: On strategic Objective number 5 to include: To work in partnership “with member churches.”

16.3 *The LWF Fundraising Principles and Guidelines*

The Council

- (203) **VOTED:** to approve the LWF Fundraising Principles and Guidelines as amended.

Amended as follows:

- (204) to delete the phrase: “and also from Individuals” in the first paragraph of the document.

16.4 *Investment Principles and Guidelines for the LWF Treasury Funds*

The Council

- (205) **VOTED:** to approve the revised document Investment Principles and Guidelines for the LWF Treasury Funds.

16.5 *LWF Consolidated Financial Statement as of 31 December 2014*

The Council

- (206) **VOTED:** to approve the Report of the Auditor on the LWF Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2014; and
- (207) to approve the Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2014 of the:
- Department for Theology and Public Witness
 - Department for Mission and Development
 - Department for World Service
 - Department for Planning and Operations and General Secretariat for the year ended December 31, 2014.

16.6 *Appointment of the LWF Auditor for the Year 2015*

The Council

- (208) **VOTED:** to appoint PricewaterhouseCoopers (Switzerland) as the LWF Auditor in Geneva for the year 2015.

16.7 *LWF Budget and Program Plan for 2016*

The Council

- (209) **VOTED:** to approve the LWF Budget (and Program Plan) for 2016 with expenditure of EURO 119,681,230;
- (210) to charge any possible deficits against the reserves of the respective departments;
- (211) to authorize the LWF Communion Office to fundraise for the LWF Program Plan as presented in Exhibit 12.1; and
- (212) to authorize the Meeting of Officers to approve adjustments to this budget at its next meeting as necessary.
- (213) The Committee for Advocacy and Public Voice requested that the Finance Committee restore the funding for the International Affairs and Human Rights (IAHR) internship, if possible. The Committee did not feel in a position to adjust what is otherwise a balanced budget, but refers the matter back to the Communion Office Leadership Team for consideration. Any adjustments made to the budget should be presented to the Meeting of Officers at its meeting in November.
- (214) The Finance Committee received the report on the Augusta Victoria Hospital (FINCOM Exhibit 10) financial position and on the exploration process for a revised legal set up of the AVH (BOT EXHIBIT 3.4). The same reports were also presented to the LWF Board of Trustees. The committee would like to express gratitude for the ongoing work to minimize the financial risk arising from the AVH's cash flow problems.

The Council

- (215) **VOTED:** to receive the update on Augusta Victoria Hospital with appreciation and affirm the next steps of the exploration process.

16.8 *Issues for discussion by the Council*

- (216) In anticipation of the plenary discussion on the LWF's sustainability, the Finance Committee recognized the financial implications as one of the key components of the whole issue. It expressed its readiness to provide input and assistance to the process.

16.9 *Issues discussed by the Committee - for information to the Council*

- (217) Report of the General Secretary: specifically on the LWF Sustainability Document (Exhibit 9.1)
- (218) Report of the Head of Finance: The committee received an update on the financial management activities with appreciation.
- (219) Resource Mobilization: The committee received an update on resource mobilization with appreciation.
- (220) 2014 Audited Financial Statements of other LWF Entities
- (221) The Committee reviewed the 2014 Audited Financial Statements of the Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research (Strasbourg) and the LWB Stiftung (LWF Endowment Fund).

16.10 *Issues referred to the Finance Committee*

- (222) The Committee for World Service recommended to the LWF Finance Committee to consider whether the current accounting standard (IFRS) is the most appropriate for an international organization such as LWF. This is said in the context of negative reserves being recorded in most departments under the current accounting. The Finance Committee tasks the staff to study and explore the issue and report back to the Finance Committee at its next meeting.
- (223) The Committee for World Service recommends to the LWF Communion Office Leadership Team that a study of the central services charge be undertaken. The Finance Committee affirms this request made to COLT and asks that the findings are shared with the Finance Committee and the Committee for World Service at its next meeting.

16.11 *Issues referred to the Standing Committee on Constitution and Membership*

Terms of Reference

- (224) The Committee welcomed the proposed Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee. Some amendments were proposed that help retain a focus on finances and resource mobilization.
- (225) No other issues were referred to any other Committees.

The Council

- (226) **VOTED:** **to approve the Report of the Finance Committee with appreciation.**

17. COMMITTEE FOR ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC VOICE

17.1 *Public Statement - Advocacy and Action for Climate Justice*

- (227) The chairperson of the committee, Mr Michael Ram, presented the proposed action.
- (228) In the discussion clarification was sought about the reference to advocacy with governments before the August inter-sessional UN climate negotiations. It was noted that the "key countries" involved meant both developed and developing countries.

- (229) A question was raised to the reference to the 2014 Public Statement on Climate Justice and whether it was useful to mention this since the goal of 2050 seemed to not be ambitious enough. It was noted that the committee had not considered the matter but that staff could review this and explore the feasibility of advancing the date.
- (230) Concerning the proposal to encourage others to change their lifestyles, it was stated that “others” meant those outside the LWF Communion. A point was raised that the Council might not be entirely consistent in this appeal inasmuch as one of the meals involved the use of plastic bowls. Staff agreed to take up the issue with the management of the cafeteria.
- (231) A Council member stressed the critical nature toward addressing climate change of the upcoming COP21 to be held in Paris. With some small-island states facing submersion in perhaps as soon as 20 years, the call to churches to engage in advocacy before August was a sign of hope.

The Council then

- (232) **VOTED:** to adopt the following Public Statement:
- “As those who live in the resurrection hope of renewal and restoration for all of God’s Creation, we believe we cannot stand by and ignore the impacts of Climate Change. Creation groans under the weight of human action and inaction (Rom 8:22). [...] We believe that taking global action now can make a difference.”

By recalling these words from our 2014 Climate Justice statement, the Council of the Lutheran World Federation reaffirms our understanding that climate change is a defining issue of our time, that we urgently need to address and tackle it as people of faith, and that it is not too late for meaningful and effective action.

Background

From November 30 to December 11, 2015, the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will meet in Paris, France. It is crucial that an ambitious, fair and binding global climate agreement be adopted. This is a necessary milestone in the long-term international political process.

In the run up to Paris, we acknowledge the report presented by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to the Convention in its June 2015 Bonn session, which qualifies the 2°C limit as “inadequate”, calls to see it as a “defence line that needs to be stringently defended”, and states that “Parties may wish to take a precautionary route by aiming for limiting global warming as far below 2°C as possible”.

The LWF will be represented in key moments in the 2015 climate advocacy calendar, among which are the Bonn session in October and COP21 in Paris.

Speaking Up as People of Faith

"God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good." Genesis 1:10

As a Lutheran Communion, we understand that climate change is an issue that impacts on justice, peace, the care for creation, and protection for all peoples everywhere. We raise a special concern for the most vulnerable, in particular the poor, indigenous people, and the voiceless.

We re-commit ourselves and encourage others to commit to a profound change in our lifestyles and in the broader system of production and consumption. We must live as responsible and accountable citizens of this planet.

We will not stand by and ignore the impacts of climate change. We remain committed to raise our voices together with those of others to ensure positive actions by our leaders that will make possible a safe and peaceful existence for all now and in the future.

We welcome the encyclical of Pope Francis--"Laudato Si' – On the Care of Our Common Home"--as an encouragement for all those struggling for climate justice. With Pope Francis, we believe in humankind's capacity to act and in the expression of hope for the future.

Call for Commitment by the World Leaders at COP21

Based on our understanding of the climate issue as people of faith, and together with our ecumenical partner, ACT Alliance, we call on world leaders to achieve a balanced global agreement at COP21 in Paris by considering the following elements:

A post-2020 framework, enabling ambitious mitigation action in order to limit the mean global surface warming well below 2°C, both through nationally determined contributions and international initiatives.

Commitment to ambitious pre-2020 mitigation action. We remind Parties of the decision from COP17 in Durban in 2011 for developed countries to take the lead up to 2020. This leadership must be demonstrated in the coming years.

Inclusion of loss and damage, due to climate change, in a post-2020 agreement, ensuring that the needs of those people who can no longer adapt to the effects of climate change will be addressed both now and in the future.

Means of implementation, including finance, to enable urgently needed climate action in developing countries. There is both need for a road map towards 2020, to ensure increased levels of climate finance that are predictable and transparent, and a long-term agreement about climate finance post-2020.

Investing in Our Common Future

In our 2014 Public Statement on Climate Justice, the LWF committed to play its part by becoming carbon neutral by 2050. As concrete steps to meet that goal, and as a contribution to the transformation towards a low-carbon economy, we announce that:

- the 2016-2017 Communion Office Operational Plan (COOP) integrates the development of a Climate Justice Policy; and
- it shall be the policy of the LWF not to invest in fossil fuels.

We acknowledge that some of our member churches, as well as the World Council of Churches, have preceded us in deciding not to invest in fossil fuels companies, and that we are joining a broad global movement which is backed by the UNFCCC.

Through this decision, we seek coherence and wish to send a strong moral signal that the world needs to make a transformational change towards a low-carbon economy, phasing out fossil fuels and phasing in renewable energies by the middle of this century.

Call for Commitment by the Member Churches

The LWF Council calls on upon LWF member churches:

- To advocate with their respective governments, especially those in key countries, before the next inter-sessional UN climate negotiations in Bonn at the end of August. A draft advocacy letter for Council members and church representatives will be prepared.
- Not to invest in fossil fuels and to support energy efficiency and renewable energy companies, and to encourage their institutions and individual members to do likewise.

17.2 *Public Statement - Protracted Conflicts and the Over-stretched Humanitarian Response*

- (233) The chairperson presented the proposed action.
- (234) A question was raised about whether it was possible for the Permanent Five members to suspend the use of the veto. In response it was noted that a proposal along these lines had already been made by France and that there was nothing in the Charter to prohibit such a suspension.
- (235) Concern was raised that the proposal lacked a reference to the practice of some governments to use conflict situations to test their new armaments. In response it was noted that this issue had not been raised in the committee discussion although it had been raised in the 2014 Council action related to Syria. Staff was asked to suggest language to address this concern and an amendment was proposed and approved.
- (236) A point was raised that the statement did not address the reasons that people become refugees. There needed to be attention to the importance of sustainable development and development cooperation to prevent these conditions from arising. The chairperson noted that some of these issues were taken up in the subsequent proposed resolution on migrants.

The Council then

(237) VOTED: to adopt the following Public Statement:

The Council of the Lutheran World Federation is alarmed by the latest UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) report, released 18 June 2015. In our world today, nearly 60 million people are forcibly displaced as result of conflicts, persecution, and human rights violations. This is more than at any time since the Second World War. More people had to flee in 2014 than in any other year in UNHCR's records—on average 42,500 people were forced to leave their homes every single day. More alarmingly, the report states that over half of the world's refugees and displaced persons are defenceless children.

While Syria remains the largest single source of global forced displacement, other parts of the world have also seen a sharp increase in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons. Within just the past five years, 15 countries have witnessed fresh conflicts or relapsed into violence.¹ As a consequence, there has been an unprecedented growth in the numbers of refugees seeking safety through dangerous sea journeys, including on the Mediterranean, the Gulf of Aden, and the Red Sea, and in Southeast Asia.

The world's humanitarian responders are over-stretched and unable to properly respond to the needs of those affected by these violent conflicts. The scale of suffering and the necessary response is overwhelming the system. We experience this also at the LWF, where LWF World Service is already working with victims of violence from, *inter alia*, Syria, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Central African Republic, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Myanmar, Colombia, and Central America.

The international community, and especially the United Nations Security Council, has failed to put a halt to a number of these protracted conflicts which have caused massive suffering among civilians. The most prominent example is Syria. This calls for a fundamental shift from business as usual in the way in which the Security Council functions.

Therefore, the Lutheran World Federation Council calls upon the:

United Nations Security Council to:

- Suspend the use of the veto power by the Permanent Five members in matters related to preventing or ending genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity.
- Protect civilians and ensure greater accountability for violations of international humanitarian law.

(1)

¹ Africa (Cote d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Libya, Mali, north-eastern Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Burundi); Middle East (Syria, Iraq, and Yemen); Europe (Ukraine); Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar and Pakistan).

- Set aside its political differences and renew its commitment to finding sustainable resolutions to the current intractable crises by addressing the root causes of conflicts and displacements.
- Mobilize new and increased resources to respond to the needs of the victims of those protracted conflicts.

Parties to the Conflicts to:

- Respect international humanitarian law and facilitate humanitarian access to all people in need without discrimination in the respective areas under their control.
- Protect and promote the safety, space and freedom of humanitarian personnel to carry out their work free of political pressure.

All governments, non-state armed groups and the private sector to:

- Refrain from the transfer and sale of arms to warring parties.

LWF Member Churches to:

Open their doors to welcome the refugees and peoples in need as stipulated in the LWF 2013 and 2014 council statements on “Welcoming the Stranger”.

Provide spiritual, moral, material and other types of support to churches and Christians under persecution in the Middle East region and elsewhere.

17.3 *Public Statement - The Situation in Tanah Papua (Indonesia)*

(238) The chairperson, Mr Michael Ram presented the proposed action.

The Council then

(239) **VOTED:** to adopt the following Public Statement:

The Council of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) expresses its concern about the situation in Tanah Papua (Indonesia).

Since 1963, the people of West Papua have been under the rule of Indonesia. The transfer of power between the Dutch, the United Nations, and the Indonesian government effectively marginalized the voices of the indigenous community. Today, the indigenous people of West Papua face ongoing discrimination, rights abuses, and a culture of fear and violence. Despite the Indonesian government’s emphasis on development for the region, ad hoc programs and solutions have failed to meet the needs of local communities. Moreover, the indigenous people of West Papua feel as though the development process has failed to represent their concerns and in some cases has undermined their livelihoods.

We commend the 2014 Memorandum of Understanding between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea and the

Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua and affirm their work based on trust and mutual understanding. We encourage the spirit of their agreement to foster greater cooperation in diakonia, relationship-building particularly with youth, and enhancing formal and informal education. We especially note and support the emphasis between the two churches on continuing a relationship of solidarity, and acceptance of diverse cultures, traditions and spiritual gifts.

We affirm the 2012 Statement of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches which:

- Expressed its deep concern for the deteriorating situation regarding human rights violations in Tanah Papua.
- Requested Indonesian authorities to take necessary steps to release political prisoners, to lift the ban on peaceful assembly of Papuans and to demilitarize Tanah Papua. In this regard, the LWF expresses appreciation for the Indonesian authorities' recent decision to release five West Papuan political prisoners.
- Urged the Indonesian government to initiate necessary steps to enter into dialogue with indigenous Papuan people and to take adequate measures to protect their rights and to provide them with their basic needs and rights as the original inhabitants of Tanah Papua;
- Urged the Indonesian government to ensure that the Indonesian armed forces stop the killing and the causing of serious bodily or mental harm to the Papuan people and the abrogation of their human rights;
- Commended the churches and ecumenical partners who are engaged in global advocacy for peace, security and human rights of the Papuans.

We call on the LWF member churches, and especially those in the region, to:

- Listen to and learn about Tanah Papua, the situation of the indigenous people, their economic and social struggles, the inequities they face and the injustices they experience, and to stand in solidarity with them and raise them up in prayer.
- Acknowledge the Christian churches of Tanah Papua in their struggle for peace and justice, and the work of Christians throughout Indonesia, including Lutherans, to assist Papuan Christian communities.
- Pray for the people and churches of Tanah Papua as they continue to engage in their prophetic witness for peace, reconciliation and hope.

17.4 *Public Statement - The Sin of Racism*

- (240) The chairperson, Mr Michael Ram (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana), presented the proposed action.
- (241) A question was asked about the meaning of racism as a structural sin. In response it was noted that some churches had had a practice of actively excluding people of color or who spoke other languages and that some countries had legal legacies of discrimination to overcome as well.

The Council then

- (242) **VOTED:** to adopt the following Public Statement:

We confess before God and community that racism exists in our member churches and communities. On June 18, 2015, as the LWF Council was meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, a young White man walked into a church in Charleston, South Carolina in the United States and shot and killed nine African American people. This most recent incident is a stark, raw manifestation of the sin of racism, and that denial and avoidance of the persistence of racism are deadly.

As a communion of churches, whenever we are confronted by sin and destruction, we draw first on God, but also on the wisdom and experience of one another. At the 1984 LWF Assembly in Budapest, in response and condemnation to the sin of racism manifested in apartheid, the assembly said, "All people are created in God's image."²

It is tempting to locate evil outside of the beloved community but in this case, this young man and alleged perpetrator is a member of one of our member churches. We know this is not the first time that the sins of racism and violence have been in our immediate community, particularly in the case of apartheid. Yet even so, no one is beyond the bounds of Christ's reconciling and redeeming love.

As was proclaimed by the 1984 LWF Assembly:

"In Christ, the creation broken by sin is restored to fullness as people are reconciled to God and to one another. Through God's gift of the Holy Spirit, the people of God's church are empowered to live as one people celebrating the fullness of God's creation. In Christ all divisions among people are broken down. The church is God's instrument for reconciliation in the world also as it witnesses through its life to the new creation in Christ."³

In the mercy of Almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for the reconciliation of all creation and the entire human community, and for his sake, God forgives us all our sins. In the gift of baptism, we are claimed by Christ. There is nothing that can separate us from the

(1)

² "Racism in Church and Society." LWF Report: Budapest 1984 Proceedings of the Seventh Assembly. February 1985. No. 19/20. p 244.

³ Ibid.

love of Christ. “For [Christ] is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility,” Ephesians 2: 14.

We can and must confess that racism is a structural sin that exists in our churches and communities, and commit ourselves to difficult conversations about the sin of racism and advocacy to overcome it.

We can and must confess and address our individual actions that perpetuate racism, both things done and left undone, in church, society and relationships.

We pray for the intercession of the Holy Spirit to give us the courage and conviction to engage in difficult processes for public, communal acknowledgement, listening, witness, and forgiveness, reflective of the Truth and Reconciliation processes in South Africa and, more recently, Canada. We abide in the promise of Christ’s death, resurrection and redemptive power— for this is the hope, the hope that does not disappoint.

17.5 *Resolution - The Middle East*

- (243) The chairperson presented the proposed action.
- (244) It was suggested that a reference be included to speak against the introduction of more arms to the conflicts plaguing the region and this was added by common consent.
- (245) It was also suggested that, for contextual purposes, reference be made to the LWF’s previous statements on the conflict as well as its prior and on-going commitment to inter-faith dialogue and these were added by common consent.
- (246) There was discussion about the tragic situation in Syria as well as the rise of the so-called “Islamic State”. It was noted that the Council had spoken about Syria in previous years and that it was also referenced in the Public Statement on Protracted Conflicts and the Overstretched Humanitarian Response. It was also noted that there were many extremist groups operating in the region at present and that mentioning one might require mentioning quite a number. A committee member pointed out that the drafters of the proposed resolution had considered this issue and decided not to name specific groups.

The Council then

- (247) **VOTED:** to adopt the following resolution:
- The Council of the Lutheran World Federation, meeting in Geneva in June 2015, has turned its attention again to the grave situation in the Middle East. The Council is deeply concerned about the escalation of violence in the region, the vulnerability of religious and other minorities, and the breakdown of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.
- The current scale of violence and forced displacement in the region is unprecedented: nearly 12 million in Syria (half the population; 4 million are refugees, nearly 8 million internally displaced) and nearly 3 million in Iraq. Other countries in the region, such as Libya and Yemen, have descended into violence. The region needs justice not more arms.

Neighboring countries have been extraordinarily generous. Today, nearly 1.2 million people have been received as refugees by Lebanon, so that one out of every four people in Lebanon is now a refugee. Jordan has received more than 600,000 refugees, so that now one out of every ten persons there is a refugee. Turkey is hosting 1.7 million Syrian refugees. These host countries cannot keep up this level of welcome indefinitely.

Religion has been used to legitimize much of the region's violence. Religious groups have been targeted. In this context, efforts to promote religiously-identified political moderation are struggling against the growth of extremism.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is still unresolved, 67 years since the founding of the State of Israel and 48 years since the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. In the latest Gaza war last year, more than 2,000 people were killed, the vast majority of whom were Palestinian civilians; 490 of these civilians were children. The latest round of peace talks was allowed to collapse. Illegal Israeli settlements continue to be built in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Israeli prime minister has disavowed commitment to a two-state solution. Violence from both sides continues to be perpetrated against civilians.

Drawing on previous statements and commitments made, in particular the need to continue to engage in interfaith dialogue, the LWF Council calls for:

- Urgent international efforts to resolve the region's conflicts through negotiation rather than further violence.
- The LWF member churches to advocate with their governments to ensure constructive engagement and to address the causes of human suffering rather than addressing their effects only.
- Respect for human dignity, equal citizenship, and freedom of religion for all people.
- Generous assistance for refugees, including safe and legal channels to flee. All commitments made to United Nations response efforts should be immediately met. Refugees should be received along the lines of the "Welcoming the Stranger" commitments promoted by UNHCR and affirmed by the LWF. All who have been obliged to leave their homes should be helped to return as soon as possible, in safety and dignity.
- Continued support for a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine, along the 1967 borders, as the best way to ensure the security and well-being of both states. This call includes: a) a demand for the cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the occupied territories; b) a clear focus on the status of Jerusalem in all proposals to resolve

the conflict, with special attention to the religious significance of the city; c) encouragement for member churches to confront religious movements, governments and corporations in their own contexts that directly and indirectly perpetuate the conflict; and d) support for Palestinian efforts to resolve disputes through peaceful means, including the use of United Nations bodies and other international institutions.

- All member churches to accompany strongly the efforts of our member church in the region, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, as it promotes regional ecumenical and interreligious engagement and local ministries of education, health, and prophetic diakonia.

The LWF Council acknowledges with deep gratitude the support for LWF ministries in the region, including the Augusta Victoria Hospital, the Vocational Training Centers, and the humanitarian emergency programs, as well as the support for the ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

17.6 *Resolution - Migrants*

(248) The chairperson, Mr Michael Ram, presented the proposed action.

(249) Reference was made to the movement of persons from Tanah Papua into Papua New Guinea and this was added to the text by common consent.

The Council then

(250) **VOTED:** to adopt the following resolution:

On this year's occasion of World Refugee Day, the Lutheran World Federation Council expresses its deep concern for the increased number of migrants who are forced to undertake dangerous journeys to flee violence, oppression, or economic or environmental hardship. We highlight the need for continued attention to people and communities who are being forced to leave their homes. The LWF, with its long history of caring for refugees and displaced persons, continues to lift up and care for these vulnerable individuals, promoting durable solutions and safety and dignity for all people and communities.

In particular, the LWF draws attention to these vulnerable people:

- Those who are risking their lives to reach Europe, either by land or across the Mediterranean, many of whom are fleeing from violence and oppression in Syria or Eritrea;
- In South and Central America: the indigenous peoples, the children and the other individuals who are fleeing violence and land grabbing, particularly from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua;

- In the Andaman Sea; the Rohingya and Bangladeshi people who are fleeing from oppression or from poverty;
- West Papuan people who have fled into Papua New Guinea from Indonesian political oppression about 20 years ago;
- The asylum seekers who have been imprisoned by Australia on the remote Pacific islands of Manus and Nauru;
- Those people of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic who are suffering from statelessness or being threatened with expulsion.

Given the tragically overwhelming numbers of individuals affected and the global scale of this crisis, the LWF Council calls upon and encourages member churches to:

- Raise a prophetic voice in their regions;
- Work with and advocate for migrants in their countries and within their communities;
- Lift up the best practices put forward in the “Welcoming the Stranger” document, welcoming migrants in their home communities;
- Look for opportunities to build bridges so that migrant people would have the opportunity to return home in safety and in dignity.

17.7 *Resolution - From MDGs to SDGs: Putting Diaconal Participation into Practice*

- (251) The chairperson, Mr Michael Ram (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana), presented the proposed action.
- (252) A question was raised about how one might stay informed about the negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. It was suggested that among the good sources would be the ACT Alliance which has taken a lead in monitoring the deliberations.

The Council then

- (253) **VOTED:** to adopt the following resolution:

In September 2000, world leaders came together at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Expressing their commitment to global partnership, a series of time-bound targets were designed to reduce extreme poverty by 2015. These eight targets became known as the “Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).”⁴

(1)

(1) 4 “Background.” Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015. United Nations. 20 June 2015. <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>.

The MDGs are now regarded by the UN as the “most successful global anti-poverty push in history.”⁵ Although not all countries or people are better off, the MDGs have made a profound difference in many people’s lives. For example:

- Global poverty has been halved five years ahead of the 2015 timeframe.⁶
- Ninety percent of children in developing regions now enjoy primary education, and disparities between boys and girls in enrollment have narrowed.⁷
- 3.3 million Malaria deaths were prevented in the span of 12 years, and lifesaving medicines for HIV are more readily available.⁸

As the MDGs come to a conclusion, the global community is entering the final stages of negotiations on the next set of universal goals, the “Sustainable Development Goals” (SDGs), to be a major part of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The SDGs will guide global anti-poverty efforts through the year 2030. Generally, the SDGs are designed to have a broader focus than the MDGs and are designed to assess responsibility for both developing *and* developed countries to meet the targets once they are agreed upon. The Lutheran World Federation, a communion of churches spanning the globe, is especially well-placed to promote the SDGs from a diaconic perspective.

The LWF, a founding member of the ACT Alliance, acknowledges with appreciation the advocacy efforts of ACT and its members, including those from within the Lutheran communion, to encourage the adoption of a Post-2015 Development Agenda that leaves no one behind. The LWF affirms especially ACT’s strong support for the inclusion of several cross-sectoral themes in the post-2015 framework: good governance (promoting governmental transparency, accountability and anti-corruption initiatives), sustainable environment (progressive climate and other policies that contribute to sustainable development and justice for the poor), inequalities (advancing equal access to essential services,

(1)

5 “The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014.” End Poverty 2015 Millennium Campaign. UNMC. 20 June 2015. <http://www.endpoverty2015.org/en/2014/07/07/the-millennium-development-goals-report-2014/>.

6 “The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014.” Research & Publications. United Nations Development Programme. 20 June 2015. <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/mdg/themillennium-development-goals-report-2014.html>.

7 Ibid.

8 “United Nations Millennium Campaign.” Facebook infographics. 20 June 2015. <https://www.facebook.com/mcampaign/photos/a.10152238025342496.1073741830.9053837495/10152236309257496/?type=3&theater>.

particularly for society's most vulnerable), and conflict and fragility (supporting peace building and conflict resolution as key dimensions of holistic development policy-making).

The LWF Council calls on the LWF member churches to:

- Stay informed about the final stages of the negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, of which the SDGs are a significant part,
- Advocate in their national contexts for full funding and support for the SDGs, beginning in relation to the Third International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in July in Addis Ababa, and
- Encourage the inclusion, within the diaconal and theological work of the member churches and the LWF Communion, of story sharing, advocacy, and efforts toward implementation of the SDGs.

17.8 *Resolution - Commending the People of Nigeria*

(254) The chairperson, Mr Michael Ram presented the proposed action.

(255) A Council member expressed concern that there was no reference to the situation in Burundi where tensions were running high in advance of planned presidential elections. He also was concerned about a lack of reference to the International Criminal Court and the need to respect its procedures. Both matters were added by common consent.

The Council then

(256) **VOTED:** to adopt the following resolution:

The Lutheran World Federation Council congratulates the people of Nigeria for conducting free and fair, democratic and peaceful elections on 28 March and 11 April 2015. In particular, we commend the former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan, for graciously abiding by the results of the elections, congratulating his opponent and urging his supporters to accept the results.

Elections in Africa have in many cases been the source of or catalyst for civil wars, instability and bloodshed, such as the current situation in Burundi. Despite the fact that many African countries have, in one form or another, institutionalized multiparty democracy and therefore regular elections, these elections have not changed the nature of politics in many countries away from the politics of ethnicity, exclusion and corruption.

Against this background the recent peaceful elections and transfer of power in Nigeria represent a leap forward for Africa in the direction of democracy and respect for the voice of the people.

We therefore call upon:

- The African Union and its Regional Economic Communities to encourage necessary political reforms for free and fair, democratic and peaceful elections, as well as respect for the International Criminal Court and its procedures, in order to reduce election-related conflicts and bloodshed.
- The Government of Nigeria to continue making efforts for the immediate release of the abducted Chibok girls. We commend the current president, Muhammadu Buhari, for his initial steps of relocating the command centre for the fight against Boko Haram to Maiduguri.
- The LWF member churches to continue to pray for peace in Nigeria and improved inter-faith relations among Nigerians.

Lastly, the LWF Council extends its appreciation to the LWF General Secretary, the Rev. Dr Martin Junge, for his solidarity visit to northern Nigeria and to the Rev. Dr Alex Malasusa, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and Vice-President of the LWF, for his solidarity letter to the people of Nigeria on behalf of the Lutheran Council in Africa (LUCA).

The Council

- (257) **VOTED:** to receive the report of the Committee on Advocacy and Public Voice.
- (258) A Council member requested that a theological framework be developed to undergird future actions by the Council from the committee. She felt it was important to do because there wasn't clarity about the biblical basis or Lutheran heritage from which the Council is commenting on matters of justice and peace. She requested that the Communion Office prepare such a framework, in consultation with ecumenical partners, so that the rich Lutheran tradition of speaking about public issues would be better evident and more robust.

18. STANDING COMMITTEE FOR CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP

18.1 *Terms of Reference for Council Committees*

- (259) The chairperson, Ms Colleen Cunningham, presented the proposed report of the Standing Committee for Constitution and Membership.

The Council

- (260) **VOTED:** to approve the Terms of Reference as found in Exhibits 18.1 through 18.3 and 18.5 through 18.7 as well as Exhibit 18.4 as revised.

18.2 *Membership Matters*

The Lutheran Church of the Republic of China (LCROC)

- (261) The chairperson introduced the proposed action with respect to the application of the Lutheran Church of the Republic of China (LCROC) to become a member church of the Lutheran World Federation.

- (262) It was noted that the LWF had received the application for full membership of the Lutheran Church of the Republic of China, dated 27 April 2015. This church grew out of the work of missionaries of the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, who came to northern Taiwan in the early 1950s. The LWF currently has two member churches in Taiwan, the Taiwan Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church of Taiwan (Republic of China). These churches have endorsed the application of the LCROC.
- (263) The LCROC is a small church, with 570 members in 10 congregations. It is served by 4 ordained pastors and 9 full-time evangelists. Its bishop is Dr Nong-Ruay (Ray) Chen. It carries out a Christian radio program called Voice of Salvation. The church is now financially, administratively, and organizationally independent from the Norwegian Lutheran Mission. It cooperates with the other Taiwan Lutheran churches in the China Lutheran Seminary.
- (264) The church was visited this year by the LWF Secretary for Asia, Dr William Chang, and by the Rev. Selma Chen, a member of the Lutheran Council in Asia (LUCAS). The LWF Asia Secretary writes: "The whole Lutheran communion in Taiwan, including the seminary, are in high spirit at the Asia Church Leaders Consultation affirming their part and role in the Asia communion. The "coming home" of LCROC is very much celebrated and anticipated even as the seminary reclaims its history with LWF."

The Council

- (265) **VOTED:** **to welcome with joy the Lutheran Church in the Republic of China (LCROC) into membership in the Lutheran World Federation.**

18.3 *Issues for discussion by the Council*

- (266) There were no issues for which the Committee had requested Council discussion.

18.4 *Issues discussed by the Committee - for information to the Council*

- (267) The Committee informed the Council that it again discussed possible amendments to the LWF Constitution and Bylaws with respect to: 1) simplification and delegation of the appointment authority for executive staff; 2) replacement of a Council member; and 3) re-definition of LWF regions. The text of these proposed amendments was shared with the Council for information in Exhibits 18.8 and 18.9. The timeline is that at its 2016 meeting, the Council would formally recommend Constitution and Bylaws amendments to the Assembly.
- (268) In addition to these proposed amendments, which had been discussed at the Committee's 2014 meeting, the Meeting of Officers had requested the Committee to consider a constitutional amendment to allow for the early termination of office of a Council member. The Committee reported to the Council that was of a mind to recommend that section VIII(7) of the Constitution be amended to add the words, "Council members or of", with the entire section reading as follows:

7. The term of office of Council members or of persons elected by the Council may be terminated before expiration by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Council.

- (269) The Committee informed the Council that it will review at its 2016 meeting the Rules of Procedure for the 11th Assembly in 2010 considering what adjustments should be made for the formulation of the Rules of Procedure for the 12th Assembly in 2017.

- (270) The Committee reported that it had heard progress reports about the applications for full membership of the Church of the Faroe Islands and the Uganda Lutheran Church. It was updated about the membership interests of the Evangelical Lutheran Indigenous Church of Ecuador, the North American Lutheran Church, North Western Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church (India), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Gambia, the Evangelical Church of Maraland (India), and the six successor churches to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States.

18.5 *Issues referred to the Meeting of Officers*

- (271) The Committee reported that it had not referred any issues to the Meeting of Officers.

19. STANDING COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNICATIONS

- (272) Ms Anna Maria Klassen, chair of the committee, presented the report.

- (273) The Council took note of the issues discussed by the committee.

The Council

- (274) **VOTED:** **to receive the Report of the Committee for Communications with appreciation.**

20. PERSONNEL MATTERS

- (275) The Council met in an Executive Session with a separate Agenda.

21. REPORTS FROM LWF NATIONAL COMMITTEES

- (276) In keeping with Article IX of the LWF Constitution, National Committees had been requested to submit annual activity reports.

- (277) The Council was informed that the reports had been received from the National Committees of the Netherlands and Germany. The reports, presented for information to the Council, were received.

22. DATE AND PLACE OF COUNCIL MEETING IN 2016

- (278) Bishop Dr Younan noted that it had been decided to hold the next Council meeting on 16 – 21 June 2016 in Wittenberg, Germany. On behalf of the Evangelical Church in Central Germany, the Council member Rev. Eva Hadem, the Vice-President Bishop Dr July and the National Committee in Germany, Oberkirchenrat Norbert Denecke, extended an invitation to all Council participants to attend an open program prior to the Council from 13 – 15 June 2016 which should be seen as an invitation by the Lutheran World Communion to join in the call of the WCC 10th General Assembly in Busan for a "Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. Many ecumenical guests are expected to attend.

- (279) The President thanked for the invitation to this important event.

- (280) The General Secretary indicated that detailed information will be shared soonest about the exact schedule as the Meeting of Officers and the Pre-Council Women and Youth are scheduled to take place 15 June 2016. The Council will take place as planned on 16 - 21 June 2016.

23. OTHER BUSINESS

- (281) In the interest of safety, a participant suggested to provide at the beginning of each LWF event/meeting some evacuation instructions in case of any emergency.

24. CLOSING

- (282) Before the Council concluded its meeting with a closing devotion, President Bishop Dr Younan noted that the Council had grown into a big family over the last five years. It was not about official relations of churches, it was about being friends and being brother and sisters in Christ.
- (283) He said that the picture of Jesus and his disciples in the turbulence of the Sea of Galilee, as related in the reading of the Gospel (Psalm 107:23-31) at the Sunday Service, continued to be a living picture today. While we see all the violence around us we wonder where God is and why does it happen. Jesus is in our midst where he wants to give us strength in these difficult times, and because of this we are living in communion with a shared mission. The hope of Christ never disappoints us. Bishop Younan encouraged all participants to continue being a witness wherever they were not forgetting that they are not alone.
- (284) Bishop Dr Younan expressed gratitude to all Council members, Advisers, National Committees, guests and partner agencies for their commitment for the communion.
- (285) He thanked all ecumenical representatives who came from various churches to greet the Council. Their messages are important to show our ecumenical commitment.
- (286) The President thanked those who prepared the worship services, the Bible studies and the music which deepened our spirituality.
- (287) Furthermore, he expressed thanks to all staff involved in the preparation of the well-organized Council. A special thanks to the General Secretary for keeping up his vision for the communion despite his busy travel schedule and for his valuable leadership.
- (288) In addition, he recognized the hard work of the interpreters. The General Secretary informed about the passing away of the Spanish interpreter Ms Kathrin Deuss who had still been in Medan despite her illness. With her strong statement: I want to live until the last day, he reminded of her commitment.
- (289) The President called for the closing worship and officially closed the meeting, adjourned at 4 p.m. on 22 June 2015.