

THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

Assembly Planning Committee

Geneva, Switzerland

11 – 13 February 2014

REPORT



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The Assembly Planning Committee (APC) appointed by the Council in June 2013 held its first meeting on 11 -13 February 2014 in Geneva. The composition (see list at the end of the report) of the committee includes 7 members, one member from each of the seven LWF regions, plus one member of the host church and two consultants due to their involvement in the organization of the previous Assembly. Four of the members are Council members.

1. OPENING

Rev. Dr Kjell Nordstokke, chairperson of the Assembly Planning Committee, explained that as Rev. Agnes Pángyánszky had to withdraw from the Committee it had been agreed that Bishop Dr Fabiny would attend this meeting to facilitate the transition whereas Ms Kinga Pap was attending as observer until her appointment to the committee by the Council in 2014. The Assembly Planning Committee was able to meet with the Namibian ambassador to the United Nations Sabine Böhlke-Möller who was invited for common lunch.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ASSEMBLY PLANNING COMMITTEE

The chairperson referred to the Terms of Reference which had been approved by the Council in 2013 together with the composition of the committee. After this meeting a report will be presented to the Council in June 2014. The next meeting will take place in February 2015 in Windhoek, Namibia which will result in a second report to the Council in June 2015. The General Secretary added that this time it had been decided for financial reasons to have a smaller committee with only one member instead of two from each region.

3. LESSONS LEARNT FROM PREVIOUS ASSEMBLY

The General Secretary explained that it was important to take into consideration the lessons learnt from the previous Assembly. For this reason all the evaluations of the previous Assembly as well as the Report of the Assembly Review Committee had been made available to the Committee. A summary of the evaluation was prepared and offered to the Committee for better overview of key issues to consider.

4. FRAMEWORK OF LWF TWELFTH ASSEMBLY

4.1 *Documents and decisions framing the LWF Twelfth Assembly*

Introducing the framework for the 12th Assembly, Martin Junge observed that LWF Assemblies are an important landmark on a journey in the life of the Communion of churches reaching far beyond its legislative function. He underlined the significance of the five elements that will frame the Assembly preparation process, that are:

- a. The LWF Strategy 2012 – 2017
- b. The Special Committee Report “500 Years of Reformation”
- c. The Budget for the LWF Twelfth Assembly
- d. Nature, Powers and Purpose of the LWF Assembly as stipulated in the LWF Constitution and Bylaws

e. The venue and time frame of the Twelfth Assembly

While the LWF strategy frames 'who we are' and 'what is ahead of us' a broader reflection was necessary to look further than the Twelfth Assembly: what is binding us, where do we see ourselves working together in 2018 and beyond?

The LWF Council endorsed the concept that the LWF Twelfth Assembly is closely connected to the 500th anniversary of Reformation and becomes a major opportunity for the entire communion to jointly engage in the anniversary.

A Special Committee – 500 years of Reformation developed an overall approach of the LWF towards the 500th anniversary of Reformation and in line with the intention to closely connect the Assembly and Reformation anniversary the Special Committee's report offers directions to include the reformation anniversary in the planning of the Twelfth Assembly.

In this spirit, the goals, values, and the theme as outlined in the Special Committee's Report for the Reformation anniversary will also be the basis for the Twelfth Assembly and therefore will serve as guiding principles that will frame the assembly preparation process. Together with the LWF Strategy these two documents are the most important tools for the APC forming the groundwork towards the Twelfth Assembly.

In the ensuing discussion it was underlined that the ecumenical aspect of the Reformation anniversary was extremely important. Austria was named as example where three churches, the Lutheran, the Reformed and the Methodist are jointly preparing the anniversary celebrations.

Many preparation processes were on-going in various parts of the world but competition and a multiple number of anniversaries were not good and should be avoided. The LWF does not hold the monopoly on reformation.

Appreciation was expressed on a WCC initiative to convey a world conference of faith and order to reflect on renewal, reformation and what it means in the life of the church.

There was concurrence that the various processes leading towards the Reformation anniversary should complement each other and that it would be harmful if preparation processes in different regions would compete with each other. The African context of the Reformation anniversary (in view of the Assembly in Windhoek) has to be affirmed and efforts were to be made to link preparation processes of all areas and contexts. There should be a common global ecumenical approach.

The Twelfth Assembly is a golden opportunity for the 3 Namibian churches to express gratitude for the solidarity of the worldwide Lutheran communion; likewise it is an occasion to affirm the important work of missionaries in the past. Moreover, the African venue allows shaping the global aspect of the Reformation anniversary compared to 1917 when the anniversary was seen as a European/North American event. Focusing on Diakonia the Assembly could help strengthening the worldwide Lutheran communion.

In the Latin American region the ecumenical profile of the celebration was important. Moreover the subtheme "Not for Sale" had a significant meaning in this region particularly for women and youth. This was mentioned by committee members from the Eastern European and African region.

As the LWF can't monopolize the Reformation anniversary it would be advisable to include the secular sector. Reformation was an important event in history therefore the civil society needs to be involved. Moreover, for some ecumenical partners it would be easier to participate in a commemoration of the Reformation anniversary rather than celebrating it, for them the difference between commemoration and celebration was significant.

There was consensus that the 12th Assembly was an opportunity to strengthen the communion, addressing internal processes and fragmentation but emphasize the notion of belonging together and celebrate together, not allowing power or money to break the communion. Hence, demonstrating the Lutheran tradition when celebrating would be a strong signal to the outside.

An LWF assessment team visited Namibia in fall 2013 and team members reported of their impressions of the country, the host churches as well as meeting and accommodation facilities. All reports were very positive commending the strong commitment of the three Namibian member churches to make the 12th LWF Assembly a memorable event for the entire Lutheran communion.

Bishop Kameeta, representing the host churches, remembered the missionary background in Namibia, the sad colonial history of the nation with the suffering of the Herero and Nama people, the South African administration and its oppressive apartheid system and the independence struggle of the Namibian population. The reconciliation process that is taking place would add to the Assembly a healing aspect and the commemoration will also be a moment of celebrating healing.

5. ISSUES FOR DECISION BY THE COUNCIL

5.1 *Theme of the Assembly*

The General Secretary explained that for the Twelfth Assembly the approach with respect to the theme was different compared to previous Assemblies. It had been decided to hold the Assembly one year later, therefore in 2017, in order to combine it with the Reformation anniversary. For this reason the Special Committee for 500 Years of Reformation had reflected on a possible theme for the Assembly and for the Reformation Anniversary and had made a proposal. The Assembly Planning Committee reflected on the theme and subsequently proposed the theme and subthemes of the Assembly to the Council for approval.

It is

RECOMMENDED: to adopt “Liberated by God’s grace” as theme for the LWF Twelfth Assembly.

to approve that the three sub-themes to be used to structure the content of the LWF Twelfth Assembly:

- Salvation – not for sale
- Human beings – not for sale
- Creation – not for sale

5.2 *Structure and length of the LWF Twelfth Assembly*

The committee discussed the structure of the next Assembly. The worship life, bible studies as well as village groups all are important elements to make an Assembly a memorable event. Was it meaningful to hold the worship in the morning or rather at the end of the day? Morning worship with the Holy Communion was a wonderful experience to strengthen bonds and to prepare for a day’s work therefore there was consensus that the daily worships during the Assembly should take place in the morning. Morning worships could be led by the regions but should not become a competing tool between regions. Moreover, the local aspect was very important therefore the question was how to bring the Namibian context into the Assembly’s worship life. The question of including a sermon in the daily morning worships was briefly discussed. While long sermons were not necessary in some cultures a sermon must always be included in worships.

The evening prayer should be an opportunity for Assembly participants to come together, praying quietly and celebrate the end of the day in a very simple manner, this may or may not include Eucharist.

The committee then discussed the methodology of bible studies with a focus on the question if they should be part of the morning worship or rather be included in the Village Groups. It was felt that bible studies should provide space for reflection on concentrating on the word of God and linking to the Assembly theme.

It was agreed that the worship committee should look into these concerns and in consultation with the regions develop and propose a plan for the worship life as well as bible studies during the 12th Assembly.

During the past assemblies the village groups formed an important part of the Assembly life in which participants had a chance to meet, connect and interact. Therefore the setup of village groups was crucial, the content, the size of the groups as well as the size of the rooms where the village groups would meet and the language in which the group discussion would be held are equally important elements. Village groups' chairs were members of the editorial committee responsible for the Assembly message. The content of the village groups should link to the Assembly theme, with a special focus on the subthemes.

It was observed that the word *village* had a different meaning in the Namibian context (meeting in the evening around an open fire) therefore it would make sense to look for another word for "Village Groups" taking into consideration the local aspect.

Concluding the morning discussion on the worship life, bible studies and village groups' APC participants affirmed that the 12th Assembly should be a moment of joy and encounter celebrating the gift of communion. The historical dimension was important and should be a crucial part of the Assembly. The Assembly was an opportunity for delegates to play an active role in the life and future of the Federation and their church, therefore their personal involvement was significant. Assembly resources such as song books, worship material and study books on the theme should be made available as early as possible allowing translations into local languages. Enabling the regions to participate and prepare for the 31 October 2017, Assembly documentation should be made available to regional expressions. For churches in the south it was of particular significance that the Assembly is taking place in Namibia. For many Lutherans in the southern hemisphere it had a special meaning, as the struggle of the Namibian people for freedom and liberty was unknown to many of them.

For the European churches it is important to understand that Reformation was not only relevant in European countries but that the Reformation anniversary is a world-wide event with a similar significance in other regions. In the light of permanently decreasing membership of European churches the Assembly in Namibia will be a comforting experience for European delegates as they could bring concrete results back to their home congregations.

All Assembly will be enriched by the African flavor, their music and songs, the Assembly statement and message. It will be a joy for all participants being together in Namibia as a Lutheran communion, as children of God.

Discussions then focused on the decision making process during the 12th Assembly. Assembly decisions were powerful therefore the preparation of delegates was a crucial process building their awareness of their role as decision making body. As many participants are not used to speak in public it would be helpful to organize small meetings during the Assembly to empower them to speak up. The Pre-Assemblies are important tools to prepare delegates and to study and discuss the Rules of

Procedure for Assemblies. Likewise, it was equally important to prepare the village groups' rapporteurs as they are members of the Editorial Committee during the Assembly.

It was proposed to use a video as preparation tool. Before beginning a discussion on major issue, it could also be helpful to allow time for pre-discussion in a smaller circle.

Matters that are put forward for decisions should be clearly identified and described to make the decision making process transparent.

Member churches have to be encouraged to carefully prepare their delegates and the DMD area secretaries should support the churches.

It is

RECOMMENDED: to adopt the following main dimensions to structure the life of the Assembly:

- **Celebration (worship, Eucharist, prayers);**
- **Enrichment, reflection and discernment (Bible studies, small group discussions, plenary discussion, keynote addresses, exposure visits);**
- **Joint decision-making (business sessions for actions on reports, elections, Assembly message, other Constitutional matters);**

to commend to the various Assembly preparatory committees, for their information and consideration, the comments and proposals to be found in the relevant parts of the discussion notes of the Assembly Planning Committees' meetings.

It is

RECOMMENDED: to consider the following specific purposes for the LWF Twelfth Assembly:

- a. **Commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, with special reference to its ecumenical and global contexts.**
- b. **Help empower the Lutheran Communion and its churches as they begin their witness and service for the next 500 years, discerning and sharing how the Lutheran Reformation continues to be alive and active in the church and in the world.**
- c. **Learn about and reflect upon the local context of Namibia and the regional context of Southern Africa, with special reference to reconciliation and healing and to the impact of the involvement of the Lutheran World Federation.**

The financial aspect was a crucial factor when determining the length of the Assembly. Significant time needs to be assigned for the Reformation anniversary while, on the other hand, there are no plans for any public hearings or other actions as in the past. A public event, organized by the three host churches could take place on Sunday, involving local congregations. It was felt that a meeting should not be longer than seven days taking into account that most participants will have to travel two days or more. Therefore the committee members agreed that the length of the Assembly should be reduced by one day, compared to earlier Assemblies.

It is

RECOMMENDED: to approve the following duration of the Twelfth Assembly:

9 May 2017	Meeting of Officers
9 May 2017	Pre-Assembly Council meeting
10 - 16 May 2017	Assembly
17 May 2017	Post-Assembly Council meeting

5.3 **Composition of the LWF Twelfth Assembly**

The Assembly Planning Committee reviewed a list of the different categories of participants. Compared to the previous Assembly *Ecumenical Guests* and *Official Guests* had been separated and *Official Presenters* and *Local Volunteers* had been added.

The nomination of delegates is stipulated in the LWF Constitution and Bylaws. Moreover the Council is responsible for recommending proper distribution within delegations observing the Federation's principles regarding gender balance as well as youth and lay participation.

In view of allowing also agencies to fully participate in the Assembly with voice and vote, member churches should be encouraged to nominate staff from their related organizations as an official delegate. It would also be helpful if some of the delegates had some expertise as communicators.

The General Secretary observed that the Delegates should be the main body of the Assembly and they should not be outnumbered by the other categories. A balance of categories will have to be worked out to ensure a smooth running of the business session of the Assembly. It was mentioned that it should be opened for day visitors without giving it a «Kirchentag» character.

It is

RECOMMENDED: to approve the categories of participants for the LWF Twelfth Assembly as outlined in Council Exhibit 12.1.1

5.4 **Proposed key for nominating delegates**

The Assembly Planning Committee received the nomination key used in the previous Assembly. The key is the basis for issuing invitations to member churches to nominate their delegates. An additional exhibit was shared indicating the membership figures of 1 January 2014 and the possible numbers of delegates based on the mentioned key.

The criteria of appointing Assembly representation is stipulated in the LWF Constitution. In addition the decisions taken by the Eighth and Ninth Assemblies regarding gender balance and youth participation are guiding principles that frame the key for nominating delegates. Due regard is to be given to the size of member churches but the significance of regions should be an important aspect as well. While churches in Africa have considerably grown in the past, the statistics reflect a number of new churches in Asia. On the other hand the number of member churches had decreased in Europe where some churches have gone through merger processes. The regional balance as applied for Stuttgart should be maintained and member churches are invited to look at the composition of their delegations on a more regional level, and cooperate with minority churches of their region.

The gender balance and youth participation was of particular concern. It was observed that in many churches the leadership was male, while female and youth aren't always represented in the local structures of the church. The churches' autonomy was acknowledged likewise there was a political dimension to the issue and churches need to be urged to apply the quota within their churches. The

Council should encourage member churches to put the nomination key into practice in line with the LWF principles regarding male/female and youth and lay participation.

The purpose of the additional regional seats is to provide space for regions to comply with policies regarding women's and youth participation in LWF governing bodies. Hence, they will be used to match the policy of at least 40% women's participation, and 20% youth participation. It is within the regional expressions and their given structures and processes that these seats will be allocated. It is furthermore proposed that the additional regional seats are offered to churches or sub regions, which because of their size would have only reduced possibilities to participate at the Assembly.

Exhibit 12.1.2 provides detailed numbers based on the 2013 membership figures as published in LWI 02/2014 which will be the basis for the Assembly 2017.

It is

RECOMMENDED: to approve the revised key for the nomination of delegations as follows:

Church Membership		No. Delegates
Up to	25,000	1
25,001 -	100,000	2
100,000 -	500,000	3
500,001 -	1,000,000	4
1,000,001 -	2,000,000	5
2,000,001 -	3,000,000	6
3,000,001 -	4,000,000	7
4,000,001 -	5,000,000	8
5,000,001 -	6,000,000	9
6,000,001 -	7,000,000	10

Additional Regional delegates for gender and youth balance: Africa: 8, Asia: 8, Europe: 6, LAC: 6, North America: 4

Total delegates: 370 (approximate 167 men, 131 women, 72 youth (40 young men and 32 young women))

5.5 *Nominations and Elections Process*

The Committee briefly reflected on the role of regions regarding the nomination process of Council members, the President and Vice-Presidents. While gender and generational balances have to be observed, the main criteria to nominate a person should be her/his expertise and qualification not because of age or gender. It was suggested that a short overview over the CV of slated candidates for the Council be offered by the regions, including also the areas of their expertise so as to be able to do a good allocation of Council members to committees. Moreover, the required balances should be ensured within the regions. It seems that in the past it happened that missing female nominations in one region were balanced by another region by presenting a mostly female slate. It was also underlined that the Assembly should have the authority to reject a proposed slate, which means that the members of the Nomination Committee should be well aware of expectations.

In order to reduce Council costs, it was proposed that the size of the Council, particularly the number of Advisers should be given due attention.

5.6 ***Logo for the Assembly and Reformation Anniversary***

The Assembly Planning Committee received a proposal for the logo for the LWF Twelfth Assembly. The logo was based on the new LWF logo which had been approved by the Meeting of Officers by mail vote in January 2013. The logo for the Assembly includes the colors of Namibia which are blue for the ocean, orange for the desert and green for the vegetation. It also includes elements of the 11th Assembly in Stuttgart 2010. The Committee received the proposal with gratitude. Some minor amendments were suggested. Some revised proposals were presented and the Assembly Planning Committee was pleased with the outcome and chose one version for approval by the Council (Council Exhibits 12.1.3 – 12.1.5 including explanations).

It is

RECOMMENDED: to approve the Logo for the LWF Twelfth Assembly as presented in Council Exhibit 12.1.3;

to approve the Logo for the Reformation Anniversary as presented in Council Exhibit 12.1.4.

5.7 ***Budget of the Assembly***

The Committee received a revised Assembly Budget. The preliminary Assembly budget of USD 2,050,000 had been approved by the Council at its meeting in June 2012. With the decision by the Council in 2013 to hold the Assembly in Windhoek, Namibia further information had become available to enable the presentation of a more realistic budget to the Assembly Planning Committee.

This revised budget had been based on information and elements known prior to the Assembly Planning Committee. The Communion Office was aware that the Assembly Planning Committee would take a number of decisions during its meeting which would have an impact on the presented budget. For this reason the revised budget was presented and explained on the first day of the meeting. This budget was calculated taking into account the following elements:

In the ensuing discussion it was stressed that 97% of the income for the last Assembly was contributed by only 15 member churches out of 140. This was a fragile situation and it was recommended to find a way to share the cost more equally and on more “shoulders”. It was suggested to consider an increase of the registration fee. The registration fee for the last Assembly was EUR 115.

Another way of sharing the costs is to ask the delegates to share twin rooms at the Safari Hotel where the Assembly will take place.

After the Assembly Planning Committee had taken action on the length of the Assembly and the ceiling of the number of delegates, a revision of the budget was presented. This Assembly budget of EUR 3,029,742 with an expected income of EUR 2,940,742 and a deficit of EUR 88,501 was accepted with the understanding that it may need to be readjusted with the following assumptions and elements to be taken into account:

1. **The member churches will be urged to look into ways of assuming financial contributions** towards the participation of their delegates at the Twelfth Assembly.
2. **This budget requires willingness of Assembly delegates to share rooms** during the duration of the Assembly.

3. **The member churches will be requested to cover all the local costs arising prior to the travel to the Twelfth Assembly in Windhoek** (i.e. local transportation, visa arrangements)
4. **Assembly fees** for each member church shall be based on **the fair share membership calculation**.
5. **The maximum number of official delegates** shall be **431**
6. **Registration Fee** at the 12th Assembly shall be Euro 120.
7. For the Communion Office to further work on the criteria and calculations on the **subsidy of official delegates to the 12th Assembly**
8. **Length of the Assembly** shall be 7 days.
For budgetary calculation purposes, to use 9 days which shall include arrival and departure times, pre Council meetings, post Council meetings, etc.

The Assembly Planning Committee noted that:

- the Income is a projection and discussions with member churches and other contributors are still to take place;
- other detailed expenses are still to be outlined as soon as preparatory Committees meet and plans are firmed up;
- fundraising has to commence soonest to support the budget; and
- to inform the churches immediately of the fees (after Council approval)

The Finance Committee will bring a recommendation for action by the Council through its report.

It is

RECOMMENDED: **to approve the balanced Revised Twelfth Assembly Budget as per Council Exhibit 12.1.6 taking into consideration the assumptions and elements discussed,**
to authorize the Meeting of Officers to take any further action on the budget if needed.

6. INTERNAL COMMUNION OFFICE STRUCTURE AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The committee was informed that it is envisaged to hire in the second semester of 2014 an Assembly Coordinator who will be responsible for the overall coordination and logistics of the Assembly. He/she will work closely with the Local Logistic Coordinator. As the content of the Assembly will be linked to the Reformation anniversary the responsibility for producing the content material will be within the Department for Theology and Public Witness. The plan is to integrate this in the already existing bi-annual DTPW program plans.

7. DATES AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The Assembly Planning Committee will hold its next meeting from Sunday 22 – 24 February 2015 in Windhoek, Namibia. Two tele-conferences for updates and further decisions will take place on 19 September 2014 and 20 November 2014.

Submitted to the Council by

Assembly Planning Committee:

Rev. Dr Kjell Nordstokke, Church of Norway, chairperson

Ms Mami Brunah Aro Sandaniaina, Malagasy Lutheran Church

Superintendent Olivier Dantine, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Austria

Bishop Dr Tamás Fabiny, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary (transition)

Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta, Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia

Ms Mikka McCracken, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Ms Kinga Pap Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary, as observer

Rev. Dr Gloria Rojas Vargas, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile

Bishop Dr Nicolas Tai, The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong

Two consultants:

Rev. Dr Chandran Paul Martin, Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church (Assembly Planning Coordinator
Communion Office, Eleventh LWF Assembly in Stuttgart, 2010)

Rev. Klaus Rieth, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Württemberg (Assembly Planning Coordinator for the
host church, Eleventh LWF Assembly in Stuttgart, 2010)

Communion Office Staff:

Rev. Martin Junge, General Secretary

Mr Ralston H. Deffenbaugh, Assistant General Secretary on IAHR

Prof. Dr Carlos Bock, DMD Director

Ms Maryssa Camaddo, DPO Director

Rev. Dr Kaisamari Hintikka, DTPW Director

Rev. Eberhard Hitzler, DWS Director

Ms Heidi Martinussen, Head of Communications

Rev. Anne Burghardt, DPTW Secretary for Ecumenical Relations

Ms Margit Eggert (Recording)

Ms Karin Striebel (Recording)