

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC VOICE

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY THE COUNCIL

1. Climate Justice

It is

RECOMMENDED: that the Council adopt the following public statement:

The LWF Council, meeting in Medan, Indonesia, 12-17 June 2014, issued the following statement:

- (1) The Lutheran World Federation, a communion consisting of 72 million Lutherans worldwide, regards the challenge of present and future Climate Change with utmost seriousness. Both from the perspective of our belief in God as the Creator and from the perspective of justice and human rights, Climate Change is a matter that must be urgently addressed by human beings in our age.
- (2) "As Christians, we do not live in the despair and melancholy of the tomb, but in the light of the Risen Christ. Our resurrection hope is grounded in the promise of renewal and restoration for all of God's Creation, which gives us energy, strength and perseverance in the face of overwhelming challenge. For us, this promise is more than an abstraction. It is a challenge to commit ourselves to walk a different course and serve as the hands of God in working to heal the brokenness of our hurting world." (*Joint statement of the Episcopal Church, the Church of Sweden, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), May 2013*)
- (3) The LWF expresses its gratitude for its longstanding partnership with the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the ACT Alliance in caring for creation and working together for climate justice.
- (4) This statement aims to:
 - provide background information about the engagement of the LWF with climate justice,
 - present the position of the LWF regarding Climate Change, and
 - propose ideas for the work of LWF on this issue up to 2016.

Background

- (5) 2014 is crucial year in shaping the human response to Climate Change, during which the United Nations will determine the scale and ambition of a global warming treaty. In this context, religious leaders play an important role in advocating for an ambitious and binding global agreement on climate change. The upcoming December 2014 UN Climate Change Conference in Lima (Conference of Parties [COP] 20) will lay the foundations for binding agreements which must be reached in Paris in December 2015 (COP21). Throughout the year, there are significant moments in the climate advocacy calendar, and LWF will be represented at all of them:
 - The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) session in Bonn, Germany
 - The UN Climate Summit in New York, USA
 - COP20 in Lima, Peru

- (6) At this critical juncture we look back and recall:
- the Public Statement of the Tenth Assembly in 2003 on the United States and the Kyoto Protocol,
 - the Resolution adopted by the LWF Council in 2008 on Climate Change,
 - the Resolution adopted by the LWF Eleventh Assembly in 2010 on Climate Change,
 - the recommendation from the LWF Delegation to the COP18,
 - the capacity building work on advocating for climate justice by the Department for Mission and Development and the Department for Theology and Public Witness, and
 - the work of the LWF Department for World Service in responding to this issue through its projects of adaptation to climate change in the field.
- (7) The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) fifth Assessment Report (AR5) is in the final stages of completion. It concludes that the reality of Climate Change is “unequivocal” and that there is increasing certainty that anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions play a measurable and significant role.
- (8) Science detects human influence in the warming of the atmosphere and the ocean, in changes in the global water cycle, in reductions in snow and ice, in global mean sea level rise, and in changes in some climate extremes. This evidence for human influence has increased since AR4 in 2007. It is therefore extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of scientifically observed warming since the mid-20th century. (IPCC, 10.3-10.6, 10.9)
- (9) It seems that many aspects of climate change will persist for centuries even if we succeed in halting the increase in CO₂ emissions. This presents the need to create a long-term, multi-century Climate Change commitment as a result of past, present and future emissions of CO₂ gases. (IPCC, p. 27)

The Position of the LWF

- (10) As a result of these reports, the LWF understands that:
- Climate change is real and influenced by human actions;
 - Increasingly severe impacts are already being experienced on every continent, with growing economic and social costs;
 - If we act now it will still be possible to keep global warming below the internationally agreed danger-threshold of an increase of 2 degrees Celsius. To achieve this, carbon pollution must be reduced quickly; and
 - Climate change is a matter of social and economic justice, as it most affects the poorest people and displaces the most vulnerable.
- (11) 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). Our hope for justice and peace for all, and our trust in God, forms the impetus for this statement. We believe that taking global action now can make a difference.

Call for Commitment by the World’s Leaders

- (12) 1. The LWF calls on world political and business leaders to:
- a. Design and agree on elements of a strong global response to climate change that reflects the strong and growing scientific and environmental evidence and draft an ambitious new climate agreement to tackle climate change in the coming decades;

- b. Urge Heads of State and key decision makers to make it a personal priority to address the human contribution to Climate Change, and make firm commitments for deeper cuts in carbon pollution;
- c. Make national contributions meaningful by ensuring that they feature convincing targets to reduce carbon pollution while providing money to help poorer countries take climate action as well; and
- d. Respect the principles of equity, ensuring that the response includes provisions to assist the most vulnerable communities to adapt to the impacts of Climate Change already being experienced, and to account for the loss and damage being caused.

Call for Commitment by Member Churches

(13) 2. The LWF calls on its member churches to:

- a. Take action now to initiate or strengthen policies and practices aimed at becoming sustainable and eco-friendly, with the goal of becoming carbon-neutral at organizational, congregational and personal levels by 2050;
- b. Help and galvanize each other in the communion by sharing their good practices through the LWF Facebook page *LWF for Climate Justice*;
- c. Engage in sustained climate justice advocacy with local and national governments as soon as possible, in the perspective of COP20 in Lima, Peru, and all along the process leading to COP21 in Paris, France. This advocacy would be based upon the advocacy call of the LWF and the policy papers on climate justice of the ACT Alliance;
- d. Promote and work with ecumenical and interfaith climate justice initiatives in the local, national and regional contexts; and
- e. Sign up to the #fastfortheclimate campaign on the 1st day of each month until December 1, 2015, at the beginning of COP21 in Paris:

(14) "We fast in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable who are unduly affected by extreme weather events. We fast to underline the urgency of the negotiations on climate change. We fast in many different places and faith communities worldwide, united in a common practice. We fast for climate justice." <http://www.lutheranworld.org/fastfortheclimate>.

A Joint Commitment to Global Action

(15) As leaders of the Lutheran World Federation – A Communion of Churches, we commit to join the global Christian community, and people of all faiths and persuasions, on the journey for climate justice. This task is one that we can only achieve when we unite in a common cause, living out our joint destiny on this fragile, beautiful world which we all share.

2. *Universal Code of Conduct on Holy Sites*

It is

RECOMMENDED: that the Council adopt the following resolution:

The LWF Council, meeting in Medan, Indonesia, 12-17 June 2014, adopted the following resolution:

Preamble

(16) The *Universal Code of Conduct on Holy Sites* was developed in consultation with religious leaders and experts from many of the world's major faiths by a writing group of

representatives from the following organizations: One World in Dialogue (EVID), Oslo Centre for Peace and Human Rights, Religions for Peace (RfP) and Search for Common Ground (SFCG). After consultation with experts from different faith traditions worldwide beginning in 2009 and throughout 2010, a universal code of conduct on holy sites was finalized in early 2011. During 2011, 2012 and 2013 a number of endorsements to the universal code of conduct have been obtained from interfaith networks and religious communities, among them: the World Council of Religions for Peace, the World Sikh Leadership, Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, President of the All India Imam Organization, World Council of Churches, and the Russian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate.

(17) The LWF Council:

- endorses the *Universal Code of Conduct on Holy Sites*;
- encourages member churches to support initiatives in their contexts; and
- calls upon the United Nations to adopt a UN resolution in the spirit of the Code.

3. Indonesia

It is

RECOMMENDED: that the Council adopt the following public statement:

(18) The LWF Council, meeting in Medan, Indonesia 12-17 June 2014, is thankful to the thirteen Indonesian Lutheran member churches for their warm welcome and hospitality. Indonesia has the fourth largest number of Lutherans in the world—5.8 million—and two-thirds of all Lutherans in Asia are Indonesians. We give thanks to God for the Indonesian sisters' and brothers' vibrant and faithful witness to the Gospel and for the way in which they live out their faith in love and service for the neighbor. They live in communion amidst diversity. It has been a great blessing to have our meeting here.

(19) We have marveled at the immense size and diversity of Indonesia, the fourth-largest nation of the world, with more than 17,000 islands and more than 500 languages and dialects, tied together by the unifying language of Bahasa Indonesia. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world—86% of its 240 million people. The Indonesian state is based on the philosophy of Pancasila—Five Principles: belief in God, just and civilized humanity, the unity of Indonesia, representative democracy, and social justice.

(20) There are so many impressive achievements of the Indonesian people to celebrate and for which to give thanks. Among them are:

- A constitutional framework that provides for freedom of religion and the equal rights and dignity of each citizen;
- The lively revival of democracy since 1998;
- The huge treasure of how Indonesians deal with diversity, allowing so many people to live together peacefully, in most places at most times;
- The valuable “local wisdom” which helps to promote the cultural and religious respect for each other;
- The vibrant civil society; and
- The way the country has been helped by women and men working together toward addressing the important concern of gender justice.

(21) We have also learned that there are pressing challenges with which the people of Indonesia are grappling. Among them are:

- Inconsistent enforcement of the rule of law as the country has been decentralized, with certain laws and practices enforced in different ways in different regions and local areas;
- The need for the national government and local authorities to protect the rights of all religious communities, especially the Shia, Ahmadiyya, Christians, Buddhists, Confucians, and those who practice local religious traditions;
- An increasing separation of people in their daily lives along religious lines;
- Economic justice issues such as increasing gaps between the rich and the poor, and the use of land; and
- Environmental degradation, deforestation, and increasing CO₂ emissions.

(22) The LWF Council joins and supports the Indonesian churches in their efforts to uphold freedom of religion, their interreligious solidarity in working against injustice and in responding to human need, and in their continuing engagement in dialogue with different religious groups to promote understanding, just and peaceful communities and environmental protection.

(23) We give thanks to God for the people and churches of Indonesia.

4. Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa

It is

RECOMMENDED: that the Council adopt the following public statement:

(24) We, the members of the Council of the Lutheran World Federation, meeting in Medan, Indonesia June 11-17, 2014, representing 72 million Lutherans in 144 member churches in 79 countries;

(25) Bearing in mind the recent statements made by the Lutheran Council in Africa and the General Church Council of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria;

(26) Having shared the pain caused by, inter alia, the abduction of more than 270 school girls and, in separate incidents, the abduction of women by Boko Haram in Nigeria; bombings in Kenya and Tanzania; and violence in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and South Sudan which spills over to Chad, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Cameroon and other countries in the region;

(27) We strongly and unreservedly condemn violence irrespective of who the perpetrators are.

(28) We therefore resolve to call upon:

- Boko Haram to release the school girls and others abducted in Nigeria unconditionally and immediately;
- The Nigerian and all African governments and all other U.N. member states to act jointly in order to prevent such barbaric actions to be taken in future and to take action together now to secure release of all those abducted;
- Al-Shabaab and its allies to desist from using violence as a vehicle to air and articulate their grievances;

- Seleka and Anti-Balaka in the Central African Republic to desist from killing their fellow citizens. Especially egregious are acts of violence perpetrated in the name of religion;
- The combatants in South Sudan, who have already caused much bloodshed, interrupted the planting season and are directly responsible for an impending famine which will likely affect 7 million people, to cease hostilities;
- The faith communities in the region to engage in inter-faith dialogue so as to foster the spirit and culture of peaceful co-existence in this part of God's world, which God has given to all its people;
- The churches of the Lutheran World Federation and their ecumenical partners to engage in critical reflection on the pain and suffering people are experiencing from the violence in sub-Saharan Africa and to continue to pray for peace and work for justice in Africa and the whole world.

5. *Ukraine*

It is

RECOMMENDED: that the Council adopt the following public statement:

- (29) The Council of the Lutheran World Federation, meeting in Medan, Indonesia June 11-17, 2014, is deeply concerned about the conflict in Ukraine which has intensified since December 2013 and has already resulted in nearly 400 deaths. This conflict, while centered in Ukraine, has the potential of destabilizing all of Europe.
- (30) We have learned from the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine, our member church there, that many of the Ukrainian people feel helpless and cut off from the international community and that many are receiving misinformation about the reality in Ukraine. Our brothers and sisters have expressed fear that no one is willing to respond adequately to their situation, placing economic interests over the protection and preservation of human rights.
- (31) Our member church asks for our prayers and expressions of love and solidarity.
- (32) Therefore, the LWF Council, together with the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of European Russia, affirms the unity and indivisibility of the Church of Jesus Christ everywhere regardless of political divisions and calls on all member churches to:
1. Pray that God may grant wisdom to all decision-makers to establish peace, stability and common understanding between the Ukrainian and Russian nations for the sake of the people of Ukraine and in order that the current conflict does not escalate or spread to other places in the region;
 2. Pray for all churches in Ukraine and pledge our spiritual support for the well-being of all people; and
 3. Pray for the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of European Russia that they may continue to witness to unity in Christ despite political boundaries and divisions.

6. *Welcoming the Stranger*

It is

RECOMMENDED: that the Council adopt the following public statement:

- (33) The LWF Council, meeting in Medan, Indonesia 12-17 June 2014, appreciates the affirmations thus far expressed by faith leaders in the *Welcoming the Stranger* statement, launched in June 2013 and endorsed by the LWF Council at that time. Many faith leaders and secular organizations have signed this document which was produced under the strong leadership of the LWF together with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other partners.
- (34) We see today that Welcoming the Stranger is as necessary as ever before in our world. It is part of our duty to act with love toward those in need, regardless of their religion, gender or nationality. Bearing in mind that migration can sometimes lead to great challenges, we want to focus on the positive outcomes, on the benefits of welcoming strangers:
- In many countries refugees and migrants have enriched the fabric of society;
 - In many countries it has been refugees and migrants who have formed the churches there;
 - Many churches have received many benefits from the migrants which, in turn, have enriched the whole communion; and
 - New ways of living the faith have been brought by migrants and refugees to existing congregations, thereby enriching them.
- (35) We note that there are an increasing number of refugees in the world. Whether migrants, refugees, or those marginalized, all need our solidarity and support.
- (36) Many of them need housing, jobs, and education. We have to continue to address these needs. We recognize that there is a connection between the economic situation in a country and the preparedness to welcome strangers. We recognize that we have to work to avoid the development of tensions between the citizens of a country and the incoming migrants. All persons in a country of refuge, "including the stranger, are subject to its laws and none should be subject to hostility or discrimination." (*Welcoming the Stranger*, 2013).
- (37) How can we as Lutherans, as Christians, react to this challenge?
- We can tell the story of the Holy Family who were a refugee family shortly after the birth of Jesus;
 - We can tell of the strong call in the Bible for all people of faith to welcome the stranger;
 - We can tell the stories of our fathers and grandfathers, our mothers and grandmothers who have often been migrants themselves or received migrants into their communities;
 - We can tell the story of the LWF which has supported refugees from its beginning and ever since with tangible assistance, such as food, shelter, education, etc., and other forms of care;
 - We can tell the various stories of former "strangers" who became a blessing for their societies;
 - We can confess that we have not done enough. We should have greater confidence in the support God will provide: God will give us all that we and they need;
 - We can recognize that it is often the poorest countries in the world that have been the first to take up and welcome refugees from other poor nations; and
 - We can stand in solidarity with the communities where the newcomers are and help them address the burdens and fears of welcoming the stranger.

- (38) Therefore it is urgent that we encourage our congregations and all people of faith to build their relationships with the “strangers” among them, and to be more open, to have more faith, and to trust God’s own support.

II. ISSUES DISCUSSED BY THE COMMITTEE - for information to the Council

- (39) The Committee noted with concern the situation in Tanah Papua (Land of Papua) and but felt that they had insufficient time to examine it. They suggested that the LWF become more involved in the International Coalition for Papua. They requested staff to study the situation and report to the Committee at its 2015 meeting. The Committee encouraged prayer for the people of Papua and building awareness of the issues there.
- (40) The committee also discussed issues of economic justice, especially land grabbing, and requested that staff prepare background material for a possible statement next year.

III. ISSUES REFERRED TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

1. LWF Budget 2015 and Program Plan 2015

- (41) The Committee for Advocacy and Public Voice reviewed the 2015 budget and 2015 program plans of the LWF Office for International Affairs and Human Rights (OIAHR) in the amount of EUR 437,602 as reflected in Exhibit 13.1 and Exhibit 13.1.1. The Committee requests that the Finance Committee recommend that the Council endorse the Program Plan 2015 and authorize the Communion Office to fundraise for OIAHR programs. It also requests that the Finance Committee recommend that the Council endorse the Budget 2015.

2. LWF 2013 COOP Report

- (42) The Committee for Advocacy and Public Voice received the LWF Office for International Affairs and Human Rights COOP 2013 Report as reflected in Exhibit 13 and requests that the Finance Committee recommend that the Council receive the report on the COOP 2013 with appreciation.

3. COOP 2015-2016

- (43) The Committee discussed the COOP 2015-2016 (Council Exhibit 13) with reference to Advocacy and Public Witness and requests that the Finance Committee recommend that the Council endorse the COOP 2015-2016.