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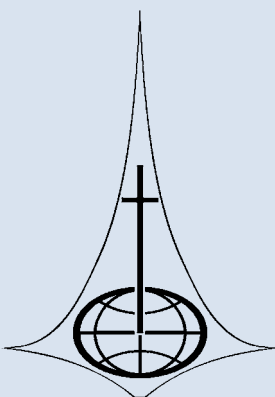
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Festive Opening of LWF Council in Arusha, Tanzania



A Massai choir sings during the LWF Council meeting opening worship on 25 June in Arusha, Tanzania. Four choirs from the Arusha diocese provided music related to the meeting's theme, "Melting Snow on Mount Kilimanjaro—A Witness of a Suffering Creation." © LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch

Tanzanian Bishop Laiser Affirms Humankind's Responsibility for Creation

ARUSHA, Tanzania/GENEVA (LWI) – A festive worship service marked the opening of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council meeting on 25 June in Arusha, Tanzania. In his sermon, Tanzanian Bishop Thomas O. Laiser called upon the Lutheran communion to be the salt and light of the earth. Laiser, from the Arusha diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), said it was the urgent obligation of all human beings to take responsibility for the environment.

During the opening worship service, a large painting of Mount Kilimanjaro on the altar crucifix of the Arusha Town Lutheran Church illustrated the meeting's theme, "Melting Snow on Mount Kilimanjaro – A Witness of a Suffering Creation." Bishop

Laiser remarked, "It has been noted and observed in recent years with concern that snow on this highest mountain in Africa is melting away at a speed never seen before, as a result of the destruction of the environment."

In his sermon on Mt 5: 13–15, Laiser highlighted the significance for the well-being and conduct of all human beings of the central themes of the Scripture text: "Commonly these little attributes [of] light and salt are items that we cannot do without." These words of Scripture also remind "each one of us of the importance and necessity of becoming salt and light to the whole world," for the protection of nature.

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Editorial Team During the 2008 Council Meeting

We would like to express our appreciation to those who supported the *LWI* English-language editorial team during the LWF Council meeting in Arusha: **Ms Elizabeth Lobulu**, Communication Coordinator of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and LWI Regional Production Coordinator; Nairobi (Kenya)-based LWI correspondent **Mr Fredrick Nzwili**;

and **Mr John R. Brooks**, Associate Executive Director and Director for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) News Services.

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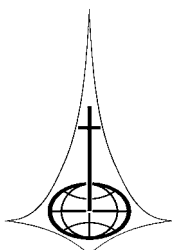
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Lutheran Leaders Say Environmental Destruction Is a Reality

Tanzanian Church Welcomes Council Meeting to Arusha

ARUSHA, Tanzania/GENEVA (LWI) – Climate change is a world wide problem and the melting snow on Mount Kilimanjaro is an indication that the environment is “under stress.” The General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko made these remarks on the eve



LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko outlines signs of environmental destruction. © ENI/P. Kenny

of the LWF Council meeting taking place 25–30 June in Tanzania’s northern town of Arusha.

Addressing media persons accredited to the Council meeting on 24 June, Noko said certain species including animals and vegetation, as well as rivers in some cases have disappeared, thus indicating something had gone wrong with “our environment.”

He was elaborating why the LWF in consultation with the Council host church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) had chosen the theme, “Melting Snow

on Mount Kilimanjaro – A Witness of a Suffering Creation,” as the focus of this year’s meeting of the LWF governing body.

ELCT Secretary General Mr Brighton Killewa said although experts may differ on whether significant amounts of snow had melted from Mount Kili-

manjaro, there was enough evidence of changes around Africa’s highest mountain, its forests and other habitation over the past few decades. The theme, explained the ELCT leader, is a “signal” of the need “to take care of our environment.”

There were around 170 participants in this year’s Council

meeting including church leaders, officials from LWF partner organizations, invited guests including, stewards, interpreters and translators, LWF staff and co-opted staff and accredited media.

The Council is the LWF’s governing body meeting every 12–18 months between Assemblies held every six years. The current 49-member Council was appointed at the July 2003 Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada. It comprises the President, Treasurer, as well as lay and ordained persons, representing the different LWF regions.

The Council host church ELCT, is Africa’s second largest LWF church and the world’s fourth largest Lutheran church, with a total of 4.6 million members throughout its 20 dioceses. It joined the LWF in 1964, and is headed by Presiding Bishop Alex G. Malasusa.

25 June 2008



ELCT Secretary General Brighton Killewa stresses the need to care for the planet. © ENI/P. Kenny

Festive Opening of LWF Council in Arusha, Tanzania

Continued from p. 1

Referring to the Council theme, the Arusha bishop noted all humanity shared a common responsibility to preserve creation. “That is why Jesus told his disciples to become the light and the salt to the world, to show the path when it is dark, and to make the world of their time safe from any type of destruction which may come their way.”

Laiser said he comes from the East African Maasai ethnic group which, since time immemorial, has lived in

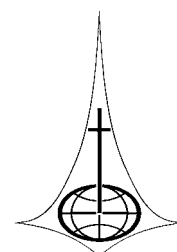
harmony with nature, and insisted that every Christian man and woman was a herald of the gospel, called to commit themselves to the preservation of creation: “It is an undeniable fact that if men and women young and old, join hands together to witness for Christ we will become a strong Gospel force for the whole of creation.”

Human Sexuality

In his sermon, Laiser recalled that in 2004 the ELCT took a position on

the question of human sexuality (**The Bukoba Statement at: www.elct.or.tz/home.html**). For the ELCT, homosexuality is an issue that is “not even discussable, and therefore it is not acceptable.” This does not mean that there are no homosexual men or women in Africa or in Tanzania, the bishop said. He stated the church’s opposition to attempts to officialize homosexuality in the church under the guise of human rights.

Addressing the current situation in African countries, the Arusha bishop



pointed to the plight of victims of the tragic incidents and human rights violations in Darfur, Somalia and Zimbabwe who “are eagerly waiting for the prophetic voice of the Lutheran world family.” In these places of suffering “the presence of our light and our salt must be felt,” he said.

In his greeting, LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson reminded those attending the opening service of the document “Proposed Guidelines and Processes for Respectful Dialogue on Marriage, Family and Human Sexuality” adopted by the LWF Council at its 2007 meeting in Lund, Sweden. Questions related to human sexuality should not be a source of

division within the global Lutheran family, Hanson emphasized. He cited the issue of polygamy with which the Lutheran church in Africa was confronted, and said his visits to Lutheran churches in Kenya and Tanzania prior to the Council had given him the opportunity to witness first-hand the challenges these churches were facing in this regard. “God gives gifts of unity



Bishop Thomas O. Laiser, ELCT Arusha Diocese © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

in Christ, but also gives diversity,” said the LWF president. “Let us be in unity through the gospel, the good news we have received. It is my prayer that the Lutherans will realize that their unity is based on the gospel.”

Hanson expressed his gratitude for the ELCT’s invitation to host the meeting in Arusha and for the warm hospitality shown to

participants. “The ‘karibu’ [‘welcome’ in Kiswahili] is felt deeply by us.” Thanks to the fellowship with the ELCT, the LWF has learned a lot, Hanson said, “for you and so many churches in the South are teaching us Lutherans what it means to be an evangelizing church proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. You are reminding us that being Lutheran is not only being evangelical but being visional. Its vision is holistic.”

Music for the opening service was provided by four choirs from the Arusha diocese, performing works related to the theme of this year’s Council meeting.

27 June 2008



Procession to Arusha Town Lutheran Church for the LWF Council opening worship service © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

You Are the People of Hope, Not of Despair, Says Namibian Bishop

LWF Vice-President Kameeta Preaches at Thanksgiving Service

ARUSHA, Tanzania/GENEVA (LWI) – “The Word of God is taking you and me into the kindness of God,” declared Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta, Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), at a colorful, music-filled thanksgiving service on 29 June in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha.

“Especially during the dark days of life, when we talk about the suffering of creation and about our own suffering, we should look back and remember the days when we experienced the kind-

ness of God,” Kameeta, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Vice-President for the African region reminded the more than 500 Sunday morning worshippers at the Arusha Town Lutheran Church of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT).

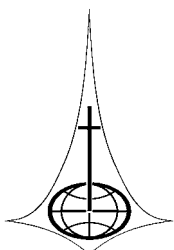
The thanksgiving service was also attended by LWF Council members,



Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta (left) preaches at the Arusha church, as ELCT Deputy Secretary General Rev. Ambele Mwaipapo provides translation into Kiswahili. © LWF/C. Schubert

who had been invited to join various congregations around the ELCT Arusha diocese.

“The Council has come together in Arusha to discuss about the suffering of creation, and about the suffering and death of humankind,” said Kameeta, referring



to the this year's theme "Melting Snow on Mount Kilimanjaro: A Witness of a Suffering Creation." It is important, he went on to say, that people do not forget what God does for God's people. Suffering separates people from God and God's promises, cautioned the Namibian bishop. He noted suffering caused people to rebel against God, making them to forget to pray. He urged those assembled not to forget prayer and to believe in the goodness of God.

He referred to the letters of Paul in the New Testament and the numerous reminders therein that God looks favorably upon all humankind. These letters were written at a time when Christians were being persecuted, noted the ELCRN bishop. Precisely for this reason they are for us today a witness of hope. "The word of God has the power to lift you up, to wipe away your tears and to take away your sadness and worries," he emphasized.

"Suffering makes people less human. Suffering makes us think we are nothing," he affirmed, and cautioned against lingering in the darkness of suffering,



Worshippers bring their fruits of the harvest for blessing during the thanksgiving service. Produce and livestock were auctioned off directly following the service, with proceeds going to the church's diaconal projects.
© LWF/C. Schubert

but instead urged people to reach out for God's word like a tiny child thirsting for milk. "You are the chosen people of God. You are not the people of despair, but you are the people of hope—also in difficult times. You are called to hope. God will never give up on you. The Word of Jesus Christ lasts forever," stressed Kameeta.

The thanksgiving service included a festive procession in which blessings were pronounced for harvest offerings brought to the foot of the altar. After the service, the chickens, corn, bananas, fruits and even a calf donated to the congregation were auctioned off on the church square to those present. The proceeds will benefit the church's diaconal projects.

Norwegian pastor Rev. Sven Oppegaard, representing the LWF National Committee in Norway, in his greeting to the host congregation said, "We are united as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, everyday and especially, when we are celebrating worship." On behalf of the LWF Council, Oppegaard, former LWF Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs, thanked congregation members for their hospitality and generosity.

Three choirs from the Arusha diocese provided music for the thanksgiving service.

29 June 2008



In the spirit of Deuteronomy 12:6, a "firstling of [the] herd" is brought to the Arusha Town Lutheran Church auction. © LWF/C. Schubert

Worship in the Land of the Maasai

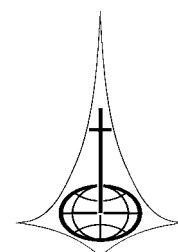
Visit to Local Lutheran Congregations

ARUSHA, Tanzania/GENEVA (LWI) – Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) invited participants of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council meeting in Arusha to their Sunday worship

services on 29 June 2008. This included the congregation in Mtowamu, northern Tanzania, near the Ngorongoro Crater, a two-hour drive from the council venue.

Rev. Eberhard Hitzler, director of the LWF Department for World

Service (DWS), who served for eight years as a missionary in the area for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria's Division for World Mission, delivered the sermon in both English and Kiswahili, while Bishop



Julius D. Paul, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia, pronounced the greeting on behalf of the LWF and blessed those attending the service.

The congregation's name means "mosquito river," referring to the large number of mosquitoes in the area, resulting in a correspondingly high malaria prevalence. The situation has improved considerably, thanks to improved access to health care and more efficient hospitals. The infant mortality rate has also declined.

The congregation's pastor Christiane Eckert, a German missionary from the Leipzig Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society, welcomed the 12-person LWF Council delegation. She gave the visitors a tour and description of her mission station, inhabited by the Maasai people, which she has served for over three years.

Referring to Paul's letter to the church in Corinth, Hitzler's sermon before the 250 worshippers focused on love and the need to distinguish between a person and his or her respective works. "With confidence we can declare together with the South African theologian Desmond Tutu that God loves wrongdoers, but God cannot abide or condone their works," remarked the DWS director.



LWF World Service Director Rev. Eberhard Hitzler (right) presents an altar cross fashioned out of a spent grenade from the Liberian civil war to an elder of a congregation near Esilatei. © LWF/B. Waddell

Bishop Paul thanked the congregation for its hospitality. Following the service an auction was held on the church steps of the offertory gifts that church members had donated. These included a billy goat, enormous bananas and fruits.

The delegation members were also received by the Christian community in Kekiyambuzi Mungere, a small congregation started by Hitzler in 1985, which has also built a small church. Visitors from LWF member

churches and their hosts enjoyed a meal of roasted mutton, after which the guests visited a Maasai village.

They visited another congregation located near Esilatei, which meets for worship in the open air under a tree, and presented the elder of the congregation with a special altar crucifix. The approximately 0.5-meter-long cross was fashioned out of a spent grenade from the Liberian civil war.

1 July 2008

Nigerian Communicator Akpan Joins LWF Executive Committee

At its recent meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) appointed **Ms Brenda Akpan**, Lutheran Church of Nigeria (LCN), as a member of the LWF Council and Executive Committee.

Akpan, 53, succeeds Sierra Leonean Rev. Marie J. Barnett, who recently became Sierra Leone's ambassador to Liberia. Barnett was appointed to the LWF Council and Executive Committee at the 2003 Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada. She was chairperson of the Program Committee for World Service and, more recently, a member of the LWF Renewal Committee.

Akpan, who has led several women and communication initiatives in the LCN, served as an LWF Council adviser from 1997 to 2003 on the Program Committee for Communication Services. From 2005 to 2007, she was one of the regional mentors of the LWF's training program for young communicators, jointly coordinated by the Department for Mission and Development and the Office for Communication Services. She currently serves as editor



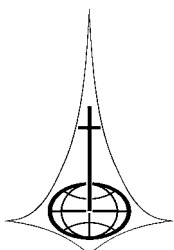
Ms Brenda Akpan (Nigeria), newly appointed LWF Council and Executive Committee member © LWF/D. Zimmermann

of www.Africa-Lutheran.org, the Web site of the regional communication body Africa Lutheran Communication and Information Network (ALCINET).

Since 1995, Akpan has been a lecturer in journalism at the University of Calabar, Nigeria, prior to which she served for five years as general manager of Bivaan Nigeria, a local media consultancy and research firm. She was the principal news editor and head of corporate affairs research at the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), 1987-1992, and NTA news editor, 1978-1986. She began her media career as a reporter, then served as sub-editor at the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, 1974-1978.

Akpan holds a master's degree in journalism studies from the University of Wales, Cardiff, United Kingdom, and is currently pursuing PhD studies in media and gender at the University of Basel, Switzerland.

Brenda is married to Victor Akpan, and they have three adult children.



Humanity at a Crossroads

LWF President Says Global Climate Change Consequences Are Inescapable

ARUSHA, Tanzania/GENEVA (LWI) – The exploitation and neglect of creation and consequences of the resulting climate change have brought humanity to a crossroads, said the President of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Bishop Mark S. Hanson, at the LWF Council meeting in the northern town of Arusha, Tanzania.

In his address to the LWF governing body on 25 June, the president said humanity was not only faced with the question of where it would go in the future, but where it truly was at present and “who is with us at this crossroads.” Hanson

is presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Referring to the meeting’s theme, “Melting Snow on Mount Kilimanjaro—A Witness of a Suffering Creation,” Hanson cautioned it was not only the mountain’s snows that were melting—its waters were diminishing as the glacier receded, the air was changing and God-created creatures were disappearing, and human families were dying of starvation. “Global climate change is an undeniable reality. The documentation is voluminous and the consequences are inescapable,” he remarked.

He pointed out that throughout human history, especially in recent centuries “the human race has acted as if its calling were to be more like God than like the rest of Creation.” In Christian tradition, those who have done so, Hanson stated, have appropriated language in Scripture such as the invitation to have “dominion” over the earth and to “subdue” it. (Gen 1:28)

The LWF president stressed the need to recognize humanity’s unique responsibility for the rest of creation,

saying, “To disown our creaturely status and claim a relationship of mastery with our fellow creatures is a betrayal.”

Rebellion against God



LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson urges Council members to be faithful stewards of the earth. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

The calling to “have dominion” or to “rule” and “subdue” was never an invitation to human beings to be their own gods, said Hanson. The claim to prerogatives of “co-creators” was an expression of humanity’s rebellion against God, against “our status as creatures and against our true calling in relation to creation,” he noted.

The problem was not just environmental, according to the LWF president. Humankind had treated the earth as if the human race were the guarantors of the creation’s continuation, and acted as if creation’s life was intended “to serve and glorify the human race.” The earth’s value and worth, he regretted, were measured by its “utility to human aspirations.”

Ultimately the problem was not simply about water and air pollution with the resulting global warming, but rather, about “the spiritual blasphemy of treating God’s good creation as something else, as an adversarial wilderness, a god-forsaken wasteland, a natural resources dump to be used for our own self-interest rather than cared for in obedience to God and for its own sake.”

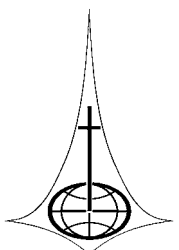
Systematic Attack on Living Creatures

The LWF president noted that despite this abuse, the land, seas and skies would endure but the living creatures that inhabited the earth were more vulnerable. Environmental offenses such as the reckless pollution of air and water, voracious consumption of forests and farmland, diversion of food and fiber for wasteful consumerism and the consequent changes in the climate, constitute a “systematic assault on our fellow living creatures,” he said.

Speaking about “true witness of our stewardship of the creation,” Hanson warned the ecology of our own bodies was at stake: “In familiar ways we fail to care for our own created bodies, minds



Council plenary session, Arusha International Conference Centre © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch



emotions and spirits." By the manner in which humans live, they are saying, "We will be our own gods." Faithful stewards of the earth, however, "can exercise self-control, which liberates them for the fulfillment of their creaturely calling."

He added that focusing narrowly on the reality of climate change itself, while ignoring the spiritual crisis of blaspheming God and God's creation, was as misguided as denying the changing climate and its consequences. Similarly, moving too readily to the role of the questioner evades responsibility "for ourselves and our accountability" to God and God's creation.

Addressing the Crisis

The LWF president said a communion with a rich theological tradition had the resources to address this crisis. The Lutheran communion of churches recog-

nizes that "a living and active faith that serves the neighbor comes from hearing the Word and responding to Christ's call," he stressed. It was "committed to the conversations and consultations, the proclamation and practical policies that call out a living faith, shaped in the mind of Christ," he noted.

He mentioned the current study program of the LWF Department for Theology and Studies (DTS) "Theological Responses to Climate Change" as only one example of the theological dialogue taking place throughout the LWF communion, and challenged Lutheran churches to advocate for changes in both policy and practice in their own countries.

As illustrations he pointed to churches' initiatives in Denmark, Papua New Guinea and Sweden, in the Nordic and Baltic churches, in Tanzania and in the United States, as

well as the LWF-initiated dialogue with indigenous people in Asia.

He noted that measures for the preservation of creation, such as LWF-sponsored conversations and dialogues, range from local initiatives to global partnerships, and cited examples of a number of member churches involved in reforestation projects as part of larger strategies to change environmental practices.

Hanson said the creation's suffering was a sobering truth that humanity was forced to accept. "The burden of guilt, the shame of responsibility for such suffering and the fear of consequences easily could turn us against each other in recrimination and judgment," he warned. But this was not compatible with the "communion that we are in Jesus Christ, for such a community could not be humbled because it had no hope," he added.

26 June 2008

LWF President's Report Elicits Calls for Concerted Action on Climate Change

Participants in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council expressed appreciation for environmental concern issues presented in the LWF President's address. The plenary discussion on his report focused mainly on how the LWF member churches might turn the highlighted concerns into action.

In his address on 25 June, LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson called on member churches to advocate for changes in policy and practice, saying that "hope compels us to be disciplined, courageous, faithful stewards of the whole creation." Hanson is the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

It is important for the church "to bring out the issues of hope" when dealing with topics such as the environment, said Council member Archbishop Anders Wejryd, Church of Sweden. "There is an enormous help in what is given to us as Christians from the gospel," he noted, saying Christians should pay attention to scientific discussions on the environment.

Hanson's response affirmed the role of faith in freeing Christians to

pursue understanding and conversation between religion and science.

Advocacy

Words must be converted into political action, said Rev. Atle Sommerfeldt, a consultant representing Norwegian Church Aid. Political agendas will frame environmental matters for the future, he said, and noted the next five years would be decisive.

Council member Rev. Iteffa Goben, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, said it was important to include everyone in the response to environmental concerns. He asked how understandable language could be used so that all people work together on climate change.

The LWF president's address did not dwell on the issue of companies whose policies and actions negatively impact the environment, a concern that was raised by Council member Doris Stephen Kitutu, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

"How do we organize ourselves and others to confront systems of power?" Hanson said in response.

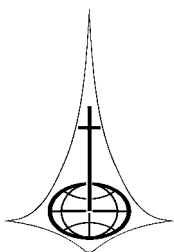
"Whether they are political systems of power, corporate systems of power, I think that's a key strategic question that we must face."

The president's address should have cited more examples of environmental response in Eastern Europe, said Bishop Dr Christoph Klein, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania. The LWF Vice-President for Central Eastern Europe pointed out that this was a major topic for delegates to the 2007 Third European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu, Romania.

Press Conference

At a press conference following his address and its plenary discussion, Hanson said the LWF could help create a global movement to limit or halt environmental degradation, but it was necessary that such response include many partners and large numbers of people to be effective.

He said he was hopeful that during the Council meeting, members would adopt a resolution calling for specific action by LWF's members. But he was cautious about how the



communion could influence environmental concerns.

“I am absolutely convinced that even with 68 million members, the LWF alone cannot turn around global warming and stop the melting snows on Kilimanjaro,” said Hanson. “I do believe that we can be a force, joining with others, to create a movement in the world that has the capacity to bring to an end the environmental crisis that is causing the snows to melt (and) the rivers to dry up,” he explained.

Food Crisis

He pointed out that the current food crisis was “interrelated” with higher fuel prices and climate change, and said he had not anticipated how quickly a food crisis would develop with these factors. “I think in some sense it caught us off guard, that we thought we were making progress in reducing hunger in the world—and in fact, we were. But suddenly, there is a radical upsurge in the reality of hunger which is absolutely tied to the crisis around fuel, which is tied to the crisis around the climate and environment,” he said.

Environmental concerns must include more than climate change, Hanson said, citing logging of forest land, deforestation, and overuse of fertilizers and pesticides. He reiterated his appeal to LWF member churches “to act responsibly, courageously and creatively.”

Responding to a question on concrete actions that could be taken, the LWF president said action was possible from an individual level as a Christian,



LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson (left) calls for action on climate change during a press conference moderated by Ms Karin Achtelstetter (right), Office for Communication Services Director. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

as local congregations, and as church bodies at national level. “We are not powerless,” he emphasized, and pointed out that LWF members could engage in advocacy for the environment by asking elected officials to mandate emissions controls and global treaties. He criticized the United States’ government for its “arrogance” in refusing to sign global environmental treaties.

Human Sexuality

On another subject, Hanson was asked about homosexuality and whether the LWF was addressing the topic in a way that did not stifle discussion. He referred to the March 2007 LWF Council meeting in Lund, Sweden, and explained that the LWF governing body had received the report of the LWF Task Force on Marriage, Family and Human Sexuality. He

said the Council asked LWF member churches to discuss the topics with awareness that such conversations could have an impact on relationships with people in other contexts.

“I do not think right now it is helpful for the LWF as a communion to take a stance on issues that are being discussed in the member churches discussed in the context of Scripture, discussed in the context of our Lutheran confessions and theology, [and] discussed in the contexts of our varied contexts around marriage, family and human sexuality,” he said.

Hanson added that LWF member churches were going to remain in conversation about human sexuality “for the sake of our witness in the world and our witness to that which is core to our faith, and that is the Good News of Jesus Christ.”

28 June 2008

Lutheran Communion Urged to Remain Focused on Root Causes of Food Insecurity

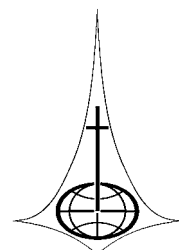
General Secretary’s Report Seeks Greater Church Involvement in Climate Change Issues

ARUSHA, Tanzania/GENEVA (LWI) – In a wide-ranging report to the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko emphasized the critical role of the LWF in remaining focused on the

underlying causes of food insecurity and their impact especially on the poor.

“Food security or ‘food sovereignty’ may be emerging as one of the major challenges of the 21st century,” said Noko in his report to the Council on 26 June. Referring to the theme of the July 2010

LWF 11th Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany, under the theme “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread,” he noted that while international media attention may have shifted from the current global food crisis by then, the underlying causes and their tragic effects will remain.



The question of food security, Noko stressed, was not an isolated issue, but was a result of a complex combination of several factors including climate change; increasing water scarcity; population growth and increasing wealth especially in the fast-developing economies; lack of investment in domestic agricultural production; and unfair trade policies, among others.

“It will be of critical importance to the future relevance of the LWF as a diaconal and humanitarian instrument of the Lutheran family that we remain focused on those causes and ways in which the LWF can make a meaningful contribution to addressing and resolving them,” he noted.

He noted the LWF has just produced a cookbook titled *Food for Life: Recipes and Stories on the Right to Food*. It is a compilation of recipes, table blessings and feature stories from the LWF Department for World Service (DWS) field offices, portraying the daily struggles for food and life among some of the most vulnerable communities with which the LWF works.

Mutual Responsibility

Noko described the theme for this year’s meeting, “Melting Snow on Mount Kilimanjaro—A Witness of a Suffering Creation,” as an invitation to the participants and the LWF churches to listen to the lamentation of God’s creation painfully communicated to God’s people by Africa’s highest mountain.

“It is weeping for a healthy Africa, and for a healthy environment” in a continent, like many other parts of the world, experiencing increasing desertification, more frequent extreme weather conditions, drying up of rivers and the disappearance of animal species, he said.

“Care for God’s creation is part of the stewardship of the human family and is therefore central to the mission

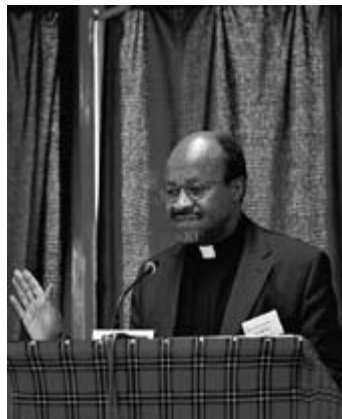
of the church,” he noted. He cited the efforts of the LWF and its member churches to address the effects of climate change through DWS’ humanitarian relief and development activities in the most affected parts of the world including Mauritania, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

The context in which the Council meets is also important, noted the general secretary of the gathering hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). Africa’s Great Lakes region, to which Tanzania belongs, amply demonstrates the continent’s conflicting realities of wealth and poverty. Despite the many well-intentioned international and local initiatives, as well as ecumenical interventions to reduce poverty in Africa, the continent’s people remain generally poor, said Noko. He proposed working toward a solution that would require mutual action from the international community and Africans and their governments on the question: “What should we *not* do that prohibits Africans from taking ownership of their

resources and apply them for the benefit of their people?”

An honest answer, said Noko, would “reveal that corruption by both Africans and non-Africans is a major contributor to the problems that this continent faces.” For the LWF, this was not an academic question, rather a communion question, because it impacts on the diaconal capac-

ity of the church to be church, he stressed. “If we agree that these are issues that concern our communion, then let us talk about them as openly as we can.” He mentioned in this context the LWF Task Force on Poverty in Africa initiated by member churches in the region alongside the LWF program on Illegitimate Debt by the churches in Latin America.



LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko presents his multifaceted report to the Council.
© LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch

Human Trafficking

Other topics highlighted in the report include human trafficking and its “push factors” of poverty and insecurity, and the “pull factors” of demand, profit and false promise or unrealistic expectations. The churches’ acknowledgment that this complex, social problem exists in their countries should be the first step toward a solution that would include mechanisms of collaboration. Noko requested the Council to reflect on the issue “so that we can commit ourselves to do something about it upon return to our respective home churches.”

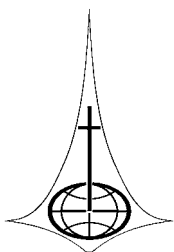
His report pointed also to the LWF’s response to the AIDS pandemic, and concern about the number of countries that apply visa restrictions on the basis of HIV status. He also drew the Council’s attention to the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe; the complex humanitarian issue in Myanmar; and the situation in the Middle East.

He emphasized the need to strengthen churches’ capacity as the LWF continually seeks to live out its diaconal calling, and mentioned the Global Consultation on Diakonia to be held in Ethiopia in October 2008. Also highlighted is a study program of the Department for Theology and Studies, “Theology in the Life of the Church” (TLC) focusing on questions about the relevance of traditional Lutheran theological categories. The latest publication in the TLC series is titled *Identity, Survival Witness: Reconfiguring Theological Agendas*.

Unity

The general secretary also addressed the issue of unity within the Lutheran family, pointing out that divisions between major branches of the Lutheran family could lead to even greater fragmentation rather than greater unity especially if played out in the life of individual churches. He however emphasized the commitment by the LWF and International Lutheran Communion (ILC) to seeking to improve communication and understanding.

On ecumenical dialogues and contacts, Noko highlighted among



others, the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) with the suggested theme “Happiness”—signifying how the message of justification is received by human beings and the rest of creation.

Staff and Financial Matters

On financial and staff issues, the general secretary underlined growing

concern for the LWF’s tax exemption status in a number of countries where DWS works. “A tax-free status is not any more guaranteed automatically by governments and negotiations are taking much efforts and time,” he said.

Although the number of executive staff had remained relatively stable in Geneva, there had been a substantial reduction in the number of administrative staff, with implications for workload management.

While there was improvement in the balance between staff from the global North and South, and in gender, the increasing average age of staff in Geneva and the field remained crucial. “We will have to reflect on the ways in which the presence of youth in the LWF secretariat can be restored and sustained, as an important means of formation for leadership in the Lutheran communion and in the wider ecumenical movement,” stressed the general secretary.

Noko, a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, also informed the Council of his intention to conclude his service as LWF General Secretary on 31 October 2010. He affirmed his commitment to continue “to work as faithfully and diligently” as he could to ensure a smooth transition.

During its current session, the Council approved the search process and timetable for the next general secretary. Noko was elected LWF General Secretary in 1994, and re-elected for a second seven-year term in 2004.

26 June 2008



LWF Council members follow a plenary discussion at the Arusha International Conference Centre.
© LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

Human Trafficking, Corruption and InterReligious Dialogue Elaborated

The crisis in Zimbabwe, corruption, human trafficking and interreligious dialogue were some of the key issues delegates at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council meeting in Arusha, Tanzania singled out as key concerns from the general secretary’s report.

In his report to the Council, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko had pointed out that the meeting’s theme provoked the Lutheran church to re-examine its roles and activities in the face of a crisis. While referring to the LWF president’s address, he noted the crisis was no longer looming, but was already with the people.

Council adviser Margareta Grape, Church of Sweden, urged the LWF governing body to take strong steps to help end the crisis in Zimbabwe. The Lutheran church could use any known and existing instruments

within the church and political constituency that allow the responsibility to protect others, she said.

“I hope we deal with Zimbabwe in a way that helps,” said Grape. (See *Public Statement on Zimbabwe at: www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/2230.EN.html*)

In his report, Noko had said it was clear the government in Zimbabwe, having lost the elections, wanted to make the country ungovernable. He had noted the LWF governing body meeting in Africa had an opportunity and responsibility to speak about Zimbabwe where citizens had lost confidence in the leadership.

“We have a responsibility to talk about Zimbabwe beyond today and what happens after the crisis. But we need to be in dialogue. We cannot do things alone,” he said in response to Grape’s comments.

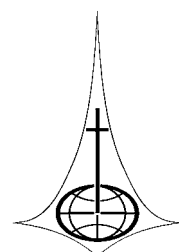
New Slavery

LWF Executive Committee member Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan said human trafficking was becoming a new form of slavery and re-colonization.

“The most basic notion of human dignity in all religious traditions maintains those human beings are not movable possession to be bought and sold. And yet an increasing number of human beings are being trafficked each year across international borders, and probably even more within national borders,” Noko had noted in his report.

Interreligious Dialogue

Yunan also commented on the situation in the Holy Land, saying Christians needed to be stronger in Jerusalem since they were losing the city to extremists. He suggested the



use of interfaith dialogue to fight extremists, especially in the Middle East, where it was the norm.

“Europe is suffering because they do not know how to talk with Muslims. Africa is also having problems on how to talk to Muslims. Ecology is the way to speak to the Muslims because we share the environment,” he said.

“I am very sensitive that we Christians in Africa have tried to bring peace as Christian only. We have forgotten other groups. We see things as Christians. There are others who we share the environment with,” responded Noko.

“We Lutherans have something to do with the Muslims. Trafficking for example cannot be done by Christians alone. Climate change does not affect Christians alone,” he said, emphasizing the need for interreligious cooperation such as the Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA) initiatives.

Corruption

Council youth member Michel Ngoy Mulunda, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo, had inquired about the LWF’s position on corruption in governments, a situation which some delegates said had made African people lose faith in their leaders.

“Corruption is responsible for Africa’s state of affairs,” said Noko. He noted that the continent’s poor development record, despite good intentions from



Plenary session. Nearly 80 Council members, advisers and representatives from LWF member churches and partner organizations took part in the 2008 meeting. © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch

supporters, was a result of an extremely complicated access to resources.

Council member Bishop Maria Jepsen, North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Germany, questioned LWF invisibility saying it was only seen in Geneva and the Council was not directly involved. She called for more transparency in the organizations activities.

At a press conference on his report, Noko explained why the LWF had not stated its position on the subject of human sexuality. “The LWF last year received a report from a committee appointed to work on a report on marriage, family and sexuality. The report contains very substantive information and perspectives. The Council received the report in the presence

of some of the leading bishops from around the world. It was decided we forward that report to the churches for study and report back in five years,” he said, referring to the LWF Task Force on Marriage, Family and Human Sexuality and the proposed guidelines to facilitate discussion on this subject among the member churches.

“DMD [Department for Mission and Development] does not work independently of the churches,” said Noko, in his reply to a journalist’s concern that there appeared to be a conflict of interest between DMD’s work and that of the LWF member churches. “It coordinates the funds for churches’ work, so there is no conflict,” he added.

30 June 2008

2006 and 2007 LWF Budgets Register Surplus

Financial, Operational Consequences of Global Trends

ARUSHA, Tanzania/GENEVA (LWI) – Because of exchange rate gains, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) ended the 2006 and 2007 financial years with a surplus for its Geneva Coordination budget. Presenting his report to the LWF Council on 25 June, Treasurer Peter Stoll said the LWF had a surplus of USD 1.2 million for 2006 and USD 2.2 million for 2007.

After 2006, “in 2007 we had another positive year,” Stoll reported. All departments had a surplus—the General Secretariat, USD 432,193;

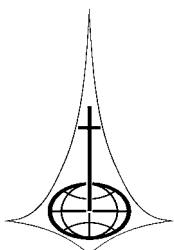
the Departments for Theology and Studies (DTS), USD 294,504; Mission and Development (DMD), USD 614,607; and World Service (DWS), USD 840,387, the treasurer told participants in this year’s Council meeting. Since the accounts for 2006 presented at the March 2007 Council in Lund, Sweden, had not been audited yet, Stoll proposed that the governing body review and approve both the 2006 and 2007 financial statements.

In addition to the Geneva Coordination budget, so-called A bud-

get, the LWF program and project budgets for the past two years were mostly balanced. However, some write-offs amounting to USD 282,943 in 2006 and USD 319,887 in 2007 were necessary.

Consequences for LWF Communion

Stoll pointed out that the LWF as a global communion was affected by global trends, which clearly have an impact not only on the organization’s



Currency Management

Stoll told the Council that it was “crucial to manage the different currency flows and treasury funds in such a way that currency losses are minimized while at the same time trying to maximize the interest gains.” This is because the LWF receives income mainly in euros; US dollars; Danish, Norwegian and Swedish crowns, and Swiss francs, while expenditure is mainly in USD, EUR and CHF.

In this regard, the treasurer highlighted the cumulative surplus of currency gains/losses of USD 5 million for the period 2001-2007. This surplus has actually been essential “in stabilizing the budget and in covering the regrettable program/project write-offs. We have even succeeded in increasing the reserves.” However, when the USD begins to appreciate, the LWF will inevitably suffer some currency losses. Measures will then need to be taken in order to minimize the negative impact of a stronger dollar.

Improved A-Budget

The Geneva Coordination budget is currently better than projected three years ago. This is because support from German churches had not decreased as much as previously anticipated. The financial situation of German churches had improved with the economic upturn in the country over the last two years.

The 2009 projections of the A-budget currently show a balanced result. However, much depends on the development of the Swiss franc, euro and the US dollar.

Eleventh Assembly in 2010

With regard to the Eleventh Assembly to be held in Stuttgart, Germany in July 2010, Stoll reported that as of 31

financial situation, but also on its operational risks. These impacts have never been as strong as at present. The largest influence has been that of exchange rate movements, which have had a huge impact on the LWF’s financial results and budget planning.

The global economic development also has a strong impact on the ability of some member churches to pay their contributions and contribute to the communion’s global activities and the Endowment Fund, noted Stoll.

He went on to say that it was with pain that the LWF learned that since the 2003 Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada, barriers between the global South, and Europe and North America have been reinforced by such means as complicating visa procedures. This was having a growing impact on the LWF’s ability to interview candidates for positions in Geneva.

Income Above USD 100 Million

According to the treasurer’s report, the total income of the LWF for 2007 was USD 102.2 million, compared with USD 91.4 million in 2006.

The 2007 total expenditure was USD 96.8 million, compared with 88.1 million in 2006. As previously, around 80 percent of the funds were earmarked for DWS.

The reserves, i.e. the net assets freely available to the LWF, amounted

to USD 20.8 million at the end of 2007, according to Stoll. Although the reserves’ target level is USD 15 million, “the situation is not quite as good as it looks.” The renovation deficit of the LWF-run Augusta Victoria Hospital on the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem still amounts to USD 5.6 million. There are also some pending tax cases in DWS field programs.

Membership Contributions

Stoll reminded participants of the strong commitment made by church leaders at the last Council meeting in Lund to pay fair membership fees. The contributions have increased steadily over the last decade, and amounted to USD 3.2 million in 2007. Part of the increase is due to a stronger euro.

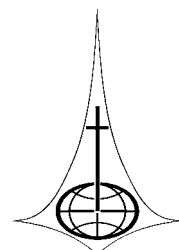
Around 70 percent of the member churches pay the membership fees, said Stoll. However, he noted that there were still too many member churches that do not pay even a partial membership fee. Other member churches, meanwhile, have increased their contribution to the fair level. But much remained to be done before the 90 percent target level by 2010 could be achieved.



Treasurer Peter Stoll underlines the impact of global economic trends on LWF finances. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch



Finance and Administration Director Pauli Rantanen (left), Treasurer Peter Stoll (middle) and Office for Communication Services Director Karin Achtelstetter (right) field questions about the LWF financial report. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch



December 2007, the Eleventh Assembly contributions amounted to USD 1.2 million. The current projection was a total Assembly income budget of USD 2.15 million. In 2004, the Council approved an amount of USD 2.3 million for the Eleventh Assembly budget. The expenditure budget would be adjusted according to this income projection, Stoll indicated, but this would be the task of the 2010 Assembly host church, the Evangelical Church in Württemberg. He warned, however, of the

substantial risks related to exchange rate fluctuations.

International Standards

For the first time, LWF accounts have been prepared according to International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), Stoll announced. After three years of account adjustments systems, the LWF could now show stakeholders an internationally recognized standard presentation of its accounts,

an improvement that should enhance the Secretariat's credibility.

Invoking the Council theme, Stoll called for a discussion of "our own impact on climate change," and advocated investing initiatives which offset and reduce (carbon dioxide) CO2 emissions with respect to air travel by LWF staff. This could take the form, for example of a solar energy plant installation on the roof of the Ecumenical Center in Geneva or via DWS field programs.

26 June 2008

LWF Renewal Committee Report Outlines Theological and Governance Implications

Bishop Raymond Schultz Presents Committee Report

ARUSHA, Tanzania/GENEVA (LWI) – The Renewal Committee of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) presented its second draft report to the LWF Council meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, which summarizes proposals for LWF's renewal.

Presenting the draft report to the Council on 26 June, committee chairperson Bishop Raymond Schultz, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, explained the renewal process aims to develop ways to organize the common life and work of the Lutheran communion so that all churches and related organizations of mission and diakonia take responsibility for these functions.

The draft report is subdivided into three sections elaborating the theological foundation; governance principles; and Secretariat management. It includes a summary of responses to a series of questions inviting reflection and response from the LWF member churches and related organizations.



LWF Renewal Committee chairperson Raymond Schultz (Canada) invites reflection regarding the organization of the communion's life and work. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

each other including respect for differences and the sharing of needs and joys; how to overcome conflicts, avoid discrimination, and resist isolation and splintering; and whether its members could depend on the stability and permanence of the Lutheran fellowship.

Appointed by the Council, the committee held its first meeting in January 2007 with a first report to the Council in March 2007. The second meeting in August 2007 focused on preparation of a draft report with preliminary proposals for LWF's renewal, which was sent to member churches and related organizations in January 2008, with early April as the deadline for response.

The third meeting in April 2008 reviewed the responses received—from 13 member churches, two agencies and one national committee (LWF National Committee in Germany comprising 13 member churches); and the Nordic region, also representing a large constituency. Schultz noted in his report that

"the committee was somewhat disappointed over the comparatively small number of responses received."

The committee chairperson said the responses were assessed in three categories: general consensus; general disagreement; and questions to be addressed. Areas of general disagreement included change of name for the communion and its secretariat; change of personnel titles; and the secretariat's relocation. Where there was general consensus, the committee felt confident to make recommendations as posed in the draft report, while it took no action where there was general disagreement or a wide divergence of opinion.

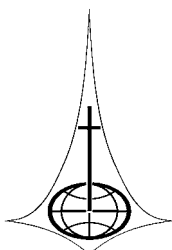
Structures

The draft report outlines fundamental assumptions and issues related to the nature of the LWF as a communion including the LWF Constitution and its actualization, and the ecclesial aspects of the Assembly and Council. It outlines a vision for the LWF Assembly and the Council; the role and composition of the Executive Committee; its officers—President, Treasurer and Vice-President—and of the General Secretary. The report concludes with indications of the way forward.

Bishop Schultz defined the church as "an event that occurs in the presence of the spoken and visible words of gospel proclamation and sacramental celebration." He said the committee proposes structural relationships that would arise out of

Relationships

The questions seek to define the basis of the fellowship that holds the Lutheran communion together; relations to





Council plenary session. LWF Council members and advisers were joined by 95 other participants including interpreters, guests, LWF staff, media representatives and stewards. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

communion rather than some “free-standing organizational model, be it secular or ecclesiastical; given that structures were not prescribed in Lutheran self-understanding.”

The report recommends a smaller number of Council members but notes further consultation would be required before an equitable distribution can be established. In order to cut costs the report proposes the introduction of a meeting of officers as a subcommittee of Council; creation of a single committee on projects and programs; the merging of theology and ecumenical affairs; and less administrative work for the President.

Secretariat

It proposes that the Secretariat be the public face of the communion, and also proposes changes to the current secretariat structure. These include major changes in the administration of the Departments for World Service (DWS) and Mission and Development (DMD) with the goal to provide effective partnership in mission and development work; bringing together theology, ecumenical affairs and ecumenical research work; and combining global public themes and issues.

While the committee had not addressed the financial implications for a future LWF, it intends to rec-

ommend a sustainable and financially affordable organization, Schultz reported. The committee expects to hold its next meetings in January and August 2009, and present a final report to be submitted to the Council at its October 2009 meeting.

The Council asked the Renewal Committee to receive recommendations on the renewal process submitted by the seven program committees. It requested the committee “to take seriously into account all comments and recommendations” as its members continue the work on the renewal process.

The program committees’ comments included, among others, concern for the active and meaningful participation of LWF member churches in the renewal process; and the need for theological and ecumenical work to operate in cooperative and complementary ways.

Concern was also raised about the necessity to keep a strong global humanitarian and development arm of the communion and for close and complementary cooperation in diakonia between DWS, DMD and the member churches. Integration was proposed of program and project-related communication activities with communication services in view of a more holistic approach to communication.

30 June 2008

LWF Endowment Fund Assets Exceed CHF 10 Million

At the end of last year, LWF Endowment Fund (LWF-EF) assets amounted to approximately CHF 10.1 million, with an additional USD 1.28 million held by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Foundation in the USA.

Additions to the LWF-EF in 2007 totaled CHF 262,000 in Geneva and USD 263,000 in the USA. The Fund’s capital is kept in perpetuity with annual earnings going to designated LWF activities. Fund allocations last year in the amount of CHF 581,000 made possible, among other things, greater participation of representatives of LWF member churches from all regions of the world in the LWF 60th anniversary celebrations and Church Leadership Consultation in Lund, Sweden, in March 2007.

In her report to the Council, the chairperson of the Board of the LWF Foundation – Endowment Fund Inger J. Wremer from Norway announced that the Board had decided in April of this year to donate CHF 286,000 toward the work

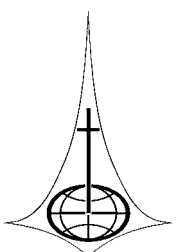
of the LWF. Wremer underlined that the LWF-EF assets are invested according to socially responsible principles.

Long-Term Goal of CHF 50 Million

The Fund has been registered under Swiss law in the Canton of Geneva since April 1999. Its current target is CHF 20 million by 2017, but the long-term goal is to reach CHF 50 million.

In December 2007, the German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation (GNC/LWF) moved to ask German LWF member churches to donate a total of EUR 830,000 to the Endowment Fund during the second phase of the fund-raising campaign (2007–2017).

A board appointed by the LWF Board of Trustees governs the LWF Foundation – Endowment Fund and reports to the LWF Council. The LWF-EF receives gifts and legacies from individuals, as well as contributions from member churches and related agencies.



LWF Council Actions – Highlights

In the following sections you will find a summary of the LWF Council actions. All Council-related LWI stories can be accessed online at: www.lutheranworld.org/Council/2008/20080630-Council.html

LWF Council Calls for Urgent Peace Building Process in Zimbabwe

On the eve of the scheduled presidential run-off election in Zimbabwe on 27 June, the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) called for the urgent establishment of a peace building process in the country, incorporating all national actors, regional organizations and the international community.

In a 26 June Public Statement, the Council urged the international community to exercise its legitimate role in addressing the crisis in the country.

“The world must not stand idly by, as it did during the genocide in Rwanda, and watch the unfolding of a human catastrophe,” stated the Council during its meeting in Arusha, Tanzania.

The Council pointed out that the result of any presidential run-off election conducted under the current circumstances should not be recognized by the international community.

It especially denounced the systematic, organized, politically-motivated intimidation and violence whereby the current government has sought to retain power.

The LWF Council members said attacks on Zimbabweans for exercising their right of democratic choice were directly contrary to the purpose



Council members deliberate an LWF public statement concerning Zimbabwe. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

of the country’s struggle for liberation from colonial rule.

They noted that the conditions under which the 29 March first round of elections were conducted were far from ideal and had already demonstrated that the current government had lost the trust and support of Zimbabweans.

The Council members especially welcomed the growing expression of concern from African political, religious and community leaders. They however called on the Southern African Development Community, African Union,

and all African leaders to take a more active role in promoting human security in Zimbabwe and encouraging a political transition back to democracy.

The LWF governing body called upon all LWF member churches to pray on Sunday, 6 July for peace with justice for all Zimbabweans.

The full text of the Council’s Public Statement on Zimbabwe is available on the LWF Web site at:

www.lutheranworld.org

26 June 2008

LWF Eleventh Assembly Logo Unveiled

The logo for the Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) was released at the recently concluded LWF Council meeting in Arusha, northern Tanzania.

“Give Us Today Our Daily Bread” is the theme of the Assembly to be held 20–27 July 2010 in Stuttgart, Germany, hosted by the Evangelical Church in Württemberg. The Assembly host church together with the Leonhardt & Kern Agency in Ludwigsburg, Germany, developed the logo. An initial round of design

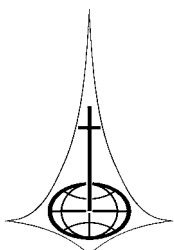
proposals had included other agencies.

The Assembly Planning Committee (APC) in collaboration with the LWF secretariat in Geneva chose the logo proposed by the Leonhardt & Kern Agency, and presented it to the Council members meeting in Arusha.

Youth Council member Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), speaking for the 14-member APC, described how the logo had been

developed and presented the artist’s impressions.

The logo’s modest, simple design attempts to combine several elements in one graphic image. The cross in the center is curved, emphasizing that it is not an inert but rather a living entity. It is surrounded by a stylized bud, drawn by a single vivid green pen stroke, representing the life and growth which God gives to all creation. The artist explains the unfolding bud as representing “Our daily bread,” pointing out: “Every



plant begins with a tiny seed, and only if this seed falls into the earth and dies can it become a great plant which will bear much fruit.”

The small number of brush strokes contained in the logo clearly show humankind’s dependency on bread and how the petition for “daily bread” is at once simple and vital. “The kind, reassuring character of this logo attempts to reflect the kindness of God who is present among us in the form of bread and wine—the fruits of the earth in which we see the crucified and risen One.”

The Council members endorsed the logo and agreed its dissemination globally. Presenting the APC report, Zang Hoffmann said the committee had noted how the Assembly theme could help the LWF regions “highlight poverty as the crucial diaconal challenge of our time.” Also, issues could be identified from the regions which may be considered as sub-themes. “The theme reflects the prophetic voice of the Church



LWF Eleventh Assembly 2010 logo © LWF



Youth Council member Abigail Zang Hoffman (USA) encourages the LWF regions to use the Assembly 2010 theme to address the problem of poverty. © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch

and proclaims that it is part of our basic commitment to fair and dignified life,” noted the APC in its report to the Council.

Council members were also informed that all materials for the forthcoming Assembly would be made available to member churches and congregations on time.

The APC proposed, for financial

reasons, that publication of the complete LWF Six-Year Report be in English only, with summaries in French, German and Spanish printed in the same volume. In addition, assembly study materials would be published in several parts, in the four languages. The publication *Assembly Update* would be a supplement to the LWF newsletter *Lutheran World Information*. According to Zang Hoffmann, a fundamental prerequisite would be the availability of all Assembly publications in electronic format on the Assembly Web site, which is currently being developed.

During discussion on the APC report, Rev. Riikka Myllys, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, urged the Assembly also to address the issue of declining membership in European and North American churches. Palestinian Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, moved that the Assembly take up the problem of immigration in Europe and focus particularly on relations between Lutheran churches and Muslims.

The logo of the LWF Eleventh Assembly 2010 is available on the LWF Web site at: www.lutheranworld.org

9 July 2008

Global Lutheran Communion Expands to 141 Members

At its meeting in Arusha, the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) admitted a new member church, bringing the total number of LWF member churches to 141 spread across 79 countries, comprising around 68.3 million persons.

Upon the recommendation of the Standing Committee for Membership, Council members moved to extend full membership to the 3,115-member Evangelical Lutheran Church of Congo (ELCC), raising the total membership in LWF member churches to 68,325,414.

Prior to this new addition, the LWF had 140 member churches in 78 countries, representing 68,322,299 followers.

Started by local preachers, the ELCC was established in the Republic

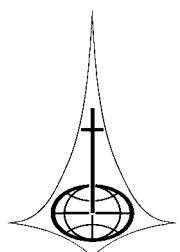
of the Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) in 1985, and formally registered with the government in 1991. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon (Eglise évangélique luthérienne du Cameroun – EELC) initially accompanied the Congolese church by training its pastors at the EELC seminary in Meiganga, Cameroon. It joined the Lutheran Communion in Central and Western Africa (LUC-CWA) in 1990 as an associate member and was admitted to full membership in 2002.

Its initial application for LWF membership in 2002 was postponed, and the church was encouraged to strengthen its leadership and various aspects of ministry.

Since then, LUCCWA has accompanied the Congolese church, with the EELC and Church of the Lutheran Brethren in Cameroon providing more direct assistance. The December 2007 LUCCWA General Assembly held in Accra, Ghana, endorsed ELCC’s application for LWF membership.



Rev. Claudia Schreiber (Germany), Membership Committee chairperson, recommends approval of new LWF member. © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch



The main activities and programs of the new LWF member church currently include evangelization and outreach to urban and rural areas, Bible study, Christian education, training seminars for lay persons and Sunday school for children, as well as agricultural income-generating activities. The ELCC joined the Na-

tional Council of Christian Churches in Congo in 1995.

The chairperson of the Standing Committee for Membership Rev. Claudia Schreiber, Church of Lippe (Lutheran Section), Germany, reported to the Council that the Committee had also been informed that the USA-based Lithuanian

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Diaspora made a historic decision on 19 May 2007 in Chicago to merge with its home church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania. The synod of the Lithuanian church will endorse the decision in July 2008 in Taurage, Lithuania.

30 June 2008

International Affairs and Human Rights

Climate Change

At its meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) recommended that member churches deepen their theological and ethical reflection on human contribution to climate, as co-creatures with a moral agency rather claiming the prerogatives of co-creators.

Receiving recommendations from its Program Committee for International Affairs and Human Rights, the LWF governing body recommended that the churches move beyond lamentation to urgent and effective action, and promote more sustainable lifestyles and behaviors among their members that would reduce the carbon dioxide emissions generated by their institutional activities and operations.

The governing body asked LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko and the member churches to undertake targeted advocacy actions in appropriate forums, such as the forthcoming UN Climate Change Conference, to promote strong political commitments.

It recommended that the general secretary and LWF churches encourage rapid transition from fossil fuels for power generation to non-nuclear renewable energy sources. He was asked to consider actions necessary to reduce carbon footprint of the LWF Secretariat.

On the global food crisis, the Council declared that the essential tasks of

providing basic nutrition to people, and ensuring food security could not be left to the mercy of markets. It insisted that promoting and protecting the right to food was a fundamental responsibility of government.

HIV-Related Travel Restrictions

The Council called on the LWF member churches to advocate for the removal of discriminatory travel and entry restrictions, and similar examples of stigmatizations of people living with HIV.

The council requested the general secretary to write to the government of the United States of America and other leading supporters of HIV-related travel and entry restrictions, seeking the elimination of such restrictions.



Rev. Dr David Pfrimmer (Canada), Program Committee for International Affairs and Human Rights, calls the churches to more sustainable lifestyles. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

Human Trafficking

In the view of the submissions and discussions in plenary, the Council requested the general secretary to organize a joint hearing

on human trafficking for all committees at the next Council meeting, and produce and disseminate to the member churches a briefing paper on human trafficking and possible church responses.

Genocide Victims

The venue of the LWF Council meeting was the Arusha International

Conference Center, where the International Criminal Tribunal (ICTR) for Rwanda is also located. In its actions, the Council called for reflection on a proper relationship between formal international criminal justice and traditional community-based methods of delivering justice and promoting reconciliation. It requested the general secretary to gather up such reflections and consider appropriate policy for responses and intervention by LWF.

The LWF governing body expressed support for the ICTR's request for extension of its mandate in order to complete its valuable work.

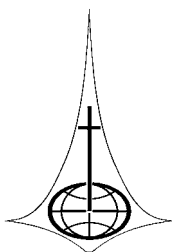
Human Rights

The Council also reaffirmed LWF's support for the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as the seminal articulation of modern international human rights law, and as a key instrument for the promotion and protection of human dignity.

It encouraged all LWF member churches to observe the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the UDHR in prayer, liturgy, preaching, teaching and advocacy actions leading up to and culminating on 10 December 2008.

Zimbabwe

The Council recommended that LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson writes a pastoral letter to the heads of churches in Zimbabwe expressing the governing body's hope that God will save the suffering people of Zimbabwe.





Council vote in Arusha © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

It also urged General Secretary Ishmael Noko to write letters to the African Union (AU) chairperson, African government heads, and the ecumenical community in Africa, encouraging regional action to pro-

tect Zimbabwe's suffering people, and promote return to genuine democracy.

The Council's public statement on Zimbabwe, issued on 26 June in which it called for the urgent estab-

lishment of a peace building process in Zimbabwe, incorporating all national actors, regional organizations and the international community is available on the LWF Web site at: www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/2230.EN.html

Israel and Palestine

The Council applauded the current ongoing negotiations between the Government of Israeli and Palestinian Authority, and encouraged the two leaderships to aim at reaching a final status agreement to a two-state solution and shared Jerusalem.

The Council rejected any armed struggle aimed at solving divisions and encouraged the Palestinian people to overcome their divisions and pursue a unified strategy for justice, peace, reconciliation and a pluralistic state.

World Service

ACT International—Development

Having received the reports from Action by Churches Together (ACT) International and ACT Development through the Program Committee for World Service, the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) requested the LWF Secretariat and the member churches to continue to be actively involved in the creation of a unified ACT.

The Council expressed appreciation for the attempt to unify ACT International and ACT Development into one ACT alliance. It underscored the need to ensure that the unified ACT would be fully owned by the churches and their specialized ministries with the World Council

of Churches (WCC) and the LWF represented in the governing structures.

Established in 1995 by the LWF and WCC, the Geneva-based ACT International is a global alliance of churches and their agencies responding to emergencies worldwide. Inaugurated in February 2007, ACT Development brings together churches and related organizations in a new global alliance focusing on long-term develop-



Rev. Dr Emmanuel Grantson (USA) reports on behalf of the Program Committee for World Service. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

ment, building on the emergency response work already undertaken by ACT International.

The Council asked the LWF Secretariat to inform both ACT International and ACT Development that the legal consequences of the merger of both organizations require a decision by the LWF Council as a founding member of ACT International, probably at the 2009 Council meeting.

Mission and Development

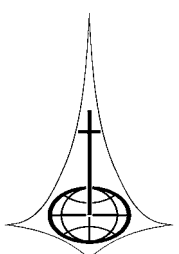
Corruption

The Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) responded to the report of the Program Committee for Mission and Development with the recommendation that the LWF join an

ecumenical process aiming to establish a code of conduct to combat corruption, an issue highlighted in the General Secretary's report to the Council.

With regard to the question of how LWF's self-understanding

as a communion is reflected in its methods and communication, the Council asked the LWF Secretariat to emphasize the themes of worship and spirituality in the LWF's programmatic activities.



Conflict

The Program Committee detailed mediation efforts in conflicts in three LWF member churches: the Evangelical Church of the Republic of Croatia, the Lutheran Church in the Philippines and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo. The Program Committee expressed appreciation for the Department for Mission and Development's (DMD) role as mediator in the conflicts and affirmed the importance of conflict resolution as a DMD task.

The Council also received a report on "Practices of Mission Organizations" from DMD Director Rev. Dr Kjell Nordstokke. In the report, DMD proposed proce-



Dr Carlos Gilberto Bock (Brazil) details Department for Mission and Development activities. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

dures enabling the sharing of important information in order to avoid "unhealthy practices of mission organizations" that might lead to conflict within the Lutheran communion.

The DMD director had informed the Council of concern expressed by the LWF Executive Committee in December 2007 about the Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland (LEAF) – a recognized mission organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland – acting "in a church-divisive manner" in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia. He reported that an evaluation of events leading to the Executive Committee statement indicated that Lutheran Commu-

nion in Southern Africa leadership had valid concerns about LEAF's involvement in Zambia. However, Nordstokke added that LEAF recently communicated their readiness to visit the LWF Secretariat in order to clarify the situation.

The DMD report underlined the fact that, normally, mission partners from the North "are responsible for cooperating bilaterally with LWF member churches in the global South." In instances in which mission organizations take theological positions that may lead to tension or even conflict – such as in the case of women's ordination –, it is the sending church's responsibility to inform itself about partners' attitudes towards such practices.

The report also underlined DMD's gratitude for "the faithful support of many mission organizations" and its hope of strengthening relations with such organizations for the sake of "facilitating communication and prevent[ing] situations of conflict."

Ordained Women

The Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) reinforced the witness of ordained women by endorsing the communiqué "The Ongoing Reformation of the Church: the Witness of Ordained Women Today," and recommended that member churches become familiar with the LWF statement and take specific action.

The Council also moved that member churches submit their reports concerning this document to the 2009 Council meeting. The document was adopted during the consultation on "Women in Ordained Ministry as Ecumenical Witness" held 27–29 March in Geneva, Switzerland.

With a view to the Eleventh LWF Assembly in 2010, the March consultation asked member churches to prepare and submit a report "of what they intend to do with regard to this matter if they do not ordain women already, or, if they do so now, how they are addressing remaining practical obstacles and seeking to

further the partnership of women and men in the ministry of the church." Lastly, the consultation called for Reformation commemorations in 2017 in which the witness of women pastors and those in oversight positions is especially raised up.

In preparation for the Eleventh LWF Assembly in 2010, the Council, at the initiative of the Program Committee for Theology and Studies, urged the LWF General Secretary when coordinating Assembly content to draw on the current experience, programs and expertise of the Department for Theology and Studies (DTS) as well as of other LWF departments and local churches.

The Program Committee for Theology and Studies in its report to the

Council congratulated DTS for its work with regard to the theological, ethical and spiritual dimensions of climate change.

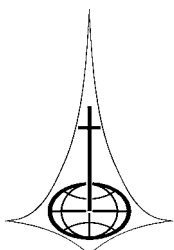
The program committee also welcomed the new DTS project "Deepening Key Doctrinal Understandings in the Global South." The project pursues the goal of publishing studies by theologians from the global South on important, topical dogmatic issues.



Rev. Dr Barbara Rossing (USA) presents Theology and Studies recommendations. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

The document on "Women in Ordained Ministry as Ecumenical Witness" is available on the LWF Web site at:

www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/DTS/DTS-Documents/DTS-Ongoing_Reformation-2008.pdf



Ecumenical Affairs

Anabaptists' Statement

At this year's meeting in Arusha, the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) voted to provide for preparation of a statement that will, on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), ask for forgiveness for Lutheran persecution of "Anabaptists," in which many died as this violence was justified by appeal to the Lutheran Reformers' theological statements.

Receiving recommendations from its Program Committee for Ecumenical Affairs, the Council also acknowledged with appreciation the communiqués from the Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission in 2007 and 2008, and com-

mended the study commission for its thorough and important work. It encouraged the Commission to publish the final report of its work in 2009.



Rev. Dr. Joachim Trank (Germany) reports on dialogue work by the Office for Ecumenical Affairs. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

Lutheran – Roman Catholic Commission on Unity

Based on recommendations from the ecumenical affairs program committee on a fifth phase of the discussions on the Lutheran – Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, the LWF Council received with appreciation the report from the 2007 preparatory meeting, and noted it was looking forward "with hope" to the beginning of a fifth round of the Lutheran – Roman Catholic Commission on Unity.

The LWF governing body also approved the preparation of a "Text on the Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017", and approved the theme of the Commission's work, "Baptism and Growth in Communion."

Lutheran – Anglican

Receiving the communiqué from the 2007 All Africa Anglican-Lutheran Commission (AAALC), the LWF governing body affirmed it would support efforts toward the goal of a full communion relationship among LWF members and those belonging to the Anglican Communion in Africa.

Ecumenical Assemblies

The possibility for the Lutheran communion to find room to gather in the context of the "expanded space" foreseen for future assemblies of the World Council of Churches (WCC) was discussed by the program committee. The Council asked the general secretary to establish an ad hoc group of about four people to assist in developing and articulating the LWF's position in preparation for meetings of the WCC Discernment Committee and other discussions on the relation of LWF Assemblies to other ecumenical gatherings.

Communication Services

The Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) adopted a recommendation seeking the provision of sufficient funds in 2009 for the on-line presence of the LWF.

The Program Committee for Communication Services brought the recommendation before the Council, after discussion of the report of the May 2008 "Communal Portal" roundtable which brought together more than 45 representatives of member churches and partner organizations. The participants had recognized the urgency of a new institutional Web site in view of preparations for the LWF Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany.

The Council approved that work continues on a proposal for a communion on-line space in light of the LWF Renewal Committee's work.

The Council also recommended that the Office for Communication Services (OCS) and Department for World Service seek closer cooperation with Ecumenical News International (ENI) stringers in the regions. The LWF is one of the founding members



Ms. Sindisawe Ndalu (South Africa) introduces recommendations from the Program Committee for Communication Services. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

of the Geneva-based global ecumenical news service, started in 1994.

The program committee commended the realization of a *Lutheran World Information* pilot project for the African region in collaboration with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. The committee members encouraged

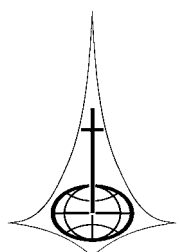
other regions and members churches to consider similar partnerships.

CHF 13 Million for LWF Geneva Coordination Budget

At its meeting in June 2008, the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) approved an amount

of CHF 13,047,887 for the LWF Geneva Coordination Budget for the year 2009.

The LWF Geneva Coordination Budget (the so-called A-Budget), of which 80 percent consists of staff-re-



lated costs, is expected to show a surplus of CHF 48,844.

Overall, expenditures for the coordination activities of the General Secretariat are projected at CHF 3.78 million. This includes the Offices for Finance and Administration (OFA), International Affairs and Human Rights (OIAHR), Communication Services (OCS), Ecumenical Affairs (OEA), Personnel (OP) and Planning, as well as the LWF's governing bodies (Council, Executive Committee and the Office of the President).

The expenditure projections in 2009 include CHF 4.28 million for the



LWF Treasurer Peter Stoll reports on behalf of the Program Committee for Finance and Administration. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

basis of fair membership fees and take into account church membership size and the respective country's gross national income. Total anticipated income from membership fees is USD 3.56 million. All LWF

Department for Mission and Development (DMD); CHF 1.06 million for the Department for Theology and Studies (DTS); and CHF 3.93 million for the Department for World Service (DWS).

The Council also approved members' contributions for 2009 and 2010.

These contributions are calculated on the basis of fair membership fees and take into account church membership size and the respective country's gross national income. Total anticipated income from membership fees is USD 3.56 million. All LWF

member churches are encouraged to pay at least their full fair membership fee.

USD 86 Million Planned for Programs and Projects

Following the recommendation of the LWF Program Committee for Finance and Administration, the Council approved a budget of over USD 85.98 million for the programs and projects of the various LWF departments and offices for the year 2009.

The list of LWF programs and projects proposed for 2009–2011 (Summary of Needs) is sent to the member churches, National Committees, related agencies and mission agencies with requests for funding in the form of designated and undesignated contributions.

LWF Council Appoints New Advisers and Committee Members

At its meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, in late June, the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) appointed new advisers to the Council and elected new members to various LWF committees. Program Committees and Standing Committees, together with their chairpersons, are appointed by the Council from among its members. The Council may also elect up to 30 external advisers who bring their professional competence and expertise to their respective committees. Advisers are full voting members of their respective committees. They have an advisory function but no vote in Council sessions.

Program and Standing Committees review and evaluate the work of the headquarters' departments and units, and report to the Council.

Malagasy Church Leader Rakoto Appointed Adviser

The LWF Council appointed **Rev. Dr Endor Modeste Rakoto**, president of the Malagasy Lutheran Church, as one of its advisers. Rakoto will serve on the Program Committee for Theology and Studies. He succeeds Bishop Walter E. Obare Omwanza of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya.

Bishop Tan from Singapore Joins Ecumenical Affairs

Bishop John Tan from the Lutheran Church in Singapore was elected as an adviser to the Program Committee for Ecumenical Affairs. He succeeds Bishop Dr Wesley Kigasung of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea, who died in mid-May at the age of 57.

Malawian Bishop Bvumbwe Named to LWF Renewal Committee

Bishop Dr Joseph P. Bvumbwe of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi has been elected as a member of the LWF Renewal Committee. He succeeds Rev. Marie J. Barnett from Sierra Leone, who has been appointed as her country's ambassador to Liberia. Bvumbwe is an adviser to the LWF Council and a member of the Program Committee for World Service.

Marcelo Schneider Appointed to 2010 Assembly Planning Committee

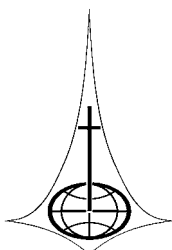
Dr Marcelo Schneider of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil was appointed by Council members to the Planning Committee for the 2010 Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany. He succeeds Rev. Silvio Schneider from Brazil in this capacity.

Pauliina Arola Becomes Member of World Service Standing Committee

Ms Pauliina Arola, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, was appointed as member of the Standing Committee for World Service. She replaces Mr Leo Siliamaa from Finland.

Marilu Nörnberg Menezes Joins Standing Committee for World Service

Ms Marilu Nörnberg Menezes of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil was also appointed to the Standing Committee for World Service. She replaces Rev. Silvio Schneider from Brazil.



General Secretary Noko Says Council Meeting Was Successful

LWF Treasurer Stoll Underlines Poverty Is a Global Issue

ARUSHA, Tanzania/GENEVA (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko expressed satisfaction about the outcome of the 25-30 June LWF Council meeting in Arusha, Tanzania.

“I am satisfied that we could do so much within such a short time,” Noko told journalists at a closing press conference.

The Council adopted recommendations which are seen as key to the future work of the Lutheran communion. These included the global discussion on climate change, food crisis, Zimbabwe, and Israel and Palestine. It also accepted, among others, recommendations on human trafficking, genocide and travel restrictions for persons living with HIV.

“We have taken decision as the Lutheran World Federation to act toward emissions, also towards our travels, and in our own offices,” Noko said, responding to a journalist’s question.

“We have realized that there are different schools of thought on changing weather patterns. Beyond human behavior, there are other patterns. We have also identified that human behavior does contribute to the difficulties that we find ourselves in concerning climate change,” explained Noko.

Uniqueness

Asked what he considered as unique about the Council meeting in Arusha, he said, “The uniqueness is that we met on the slopes Mt Kilimanjaro. This is the place (Marangu) where all the African Lutherans met together for the first time in 1955,” explained Noko. “That time there were no African Lutheran churches, only mission



At the Council’s closing press conference, LWF Treasurer Peter Stoll, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko and Office for Communication Services Director Karin Achtelstetter underline positive commitments made by the Council for the future work of the Lutheran communion. © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch

organizations. This meeting connects us with that one,” he added.

LWF Treasurer Mr Peter Stoll concurred with the general secretary about the Council’s achievements. “We as a Council have never done so many things and recommendations in such a short time. So that speaks for the hospitality of the host church,” he said.

Poverty Is a Global Phenomenon

At the closing press conference, Stoll said there were practical things the LWF projects were undertaking that dealt with poverty and its impacts. “What you have heard here from the Council is about fighting the structures [that create] poverty, [why there is] poverty, and how we try to face this question also at a political level,” he said.

Turning to the theme “Give Us Today Our Daily Bread,” for the July 2010 LWF 11th Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany, the LWF Treasurer

pointed out that poverty was a global phenomenon.

Dramatic Changes

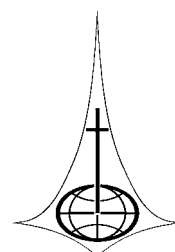
“You may think Germany is a rich country, compared to Tanzania; and you are totally right, it is rich. But in the last years, the social situation in Germany has changed dramatically,” said Stoll.

“Through the influence of global trends, we now have a new kind poverty,” he said. He noted that during the Assembly Planning Committee meeting in Stuttgart, the committee members visited a church which provides a free meal to poor people who cannot afford during winter.

The LWF Treasurer said poverty was “not only found in the global South, but also in the global North, and almost because of equal reasons. That is why we are going to deal with the issue in our own churches, and also at the global level together with more strength, as a communion.”

1 July 2008

More LWI News at
www.lutheranworld.org/News/Welcome.EN.html



Food for Life—New LWF Cookbook

Food for Life: Recipes and Stories on the Right to Food is the title of a new cookbook produced by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

Launched in July 2008, it is a compilation of recipes, table blessings and feature stories from LWF Department for World Service (DWS) field offices in 22 countries, portraying the daily struggles for food and life among some of the most vulnerable communities with which the LWF works.

With over 100 recipes from individuals and communities served by LWF/DWS, *Food for Life* gives insight into different cultural and religious backgrounds, and sheds light on methods of food production and the ways in which people cope with scarcity and adapt to climate change.

“In most cultures, the purpose and meaning of food goes beyond the mere exercise of satisfying one’s hunger pangs, restoring strength or nourishing the body,” notes LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko in the publication’s introduction.

The dishes are grouped into four chapters focusing on the agricultural cycle, religious celebrations, major life events, and daily life. The original recipes have been edited for use in other countries, and extra information is provided on ingredients which may be unfamiliar.



Sindisiwe Ndalu (left) from the Program Committee for Communication Services unveils the new LWF cookbook, Food for Life, the first publication to use the LWF Eleventh Assembly logo. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch



The LWF cookbook is available in hardback format for CHF 25 or EUR 15 plus postage from:

The Lutheran World Federation
Ms Colette Muanda
Fax: +41/22-791 66 30
E-mail: cmu@lutheranworld.org

Pre-orders for the October 2008 North American paperback release of *Food for Life* can be placed with Augsburg Fortress, www.augsburgfortress.org/store

Canadian National Bishop Johnson Elected to Council

At its meeting in late June 2008 in Arusha, Tanzania, the Council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) elected **Rev. Susan Johnson**, National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), as Council member. Johnson succeeds Bishop Raymond L. Schultz, who retired from office as ELCIC National Bishop in early September 2007 and at the same time relinquished his seat on the Council.

Schultz retains his position as chairperson of the LWF Renewal Committee.

In June 2007 Johnson became the first woman to be elected National Bishop of the ELCIC. From 1994 to 2007 she served

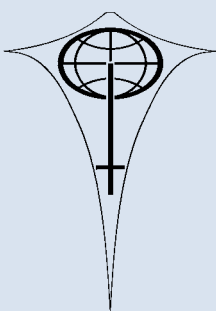


New Council member Bishop Susan Johnson © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

as assistant to the bishop of the ELCIC Eastern Synod. Between 2001 and 2005 she was also ELCIC vice president.

The Canadian theologian has been an LWF Council adviser since 1998. Until 2003 she was a member of the Program Committee for Ecumenical Affairs and since 2003 she has served on the Program Committee for Theology and Studies. As a new Council member, Bishop Johnson will sit on the Program Committee for Ecumenical Affairs.

The ELCIC is Canada’s largest Lutheran denomination with 174,500 baptized members in 620 congregations. It joined the LWF in 1986.



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