

Lutheran World Information

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Bishop emeritus Dr Zephania Kameeta. Photo: LWF/H. Martinussen

Respected Lutheran Leader Takes Seat in Namibian Cabinet

WINDHOEK, Namibia/GENEVA (LWI) – The 25th anniversary of Namibian independence on March 21 saw the appointment of a prominent Lutheran figure to the state cabinet.

Bishop emeritus Dr Zephania Kameeta, a long-time advocate of the rights of disadvantaged and poor Namibians, was appointed by president Hage Geingob as Minister of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare.

Namibia has strong ties to Lutheranism and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has three member churches in the country. In May 2017, LWF member churches in Namibia will host the largest gathering of Lutherans, the

general assembly of the Lutheran World Federation.

Acclaimed for his efforts to eradicate the widespread poverty in the country, Kameeta is a strong proponent of cash distribution schemes, notably Namibia's Basic Income Grant, which is designed to reduce poverty and inequality.

The LWF stood in solidarity with Namibia during its independence struggle. In addition to being the first major denominational body to renounce apartheid as a matter of faith, the LWF supported refugees fleeing the country, provided hundreds of scholarships for Namibians who

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LWF Endorses Statement on Humanitarian Principles

Together with 47 other humanitarian NGO, The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has endorsed a joint statement on humanitarian principles. The statement is a common contribution to the World Humanitarian Summit consultations on 27 February 2015. It was initiated by the French organizations Handicap International and Action Contre la Faim.

The statement reaffirms the humanitarian principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence in a time when “the humanitarian sector faces an unprecedented number of protracted and acute humanitarian crises,” as the statement reads.

Challenges to humanitarian organizations include “operating in exceptionally volatile and insecure environments where political agendas are interfering with the delivery of humanitarian aid”, such as “threats to aid workers and assets on humanitarian organizations.” The examples mentioned include counter-terrorism laws and measures which are restrictive for forming partnerships and implementing projects in complex environments. The involvement of donor states in stabilizing operations is putting aid workers at risk by “increasingly blurring the lines between political, military and humanitarian objectives,” the statement further remarks.

The statement signed among others by ACT Alliance and LWF partners such as Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe, DanChurch Aid, FinnChurchAid, Norwegian Church Aid and Islamic Relief Worldwide calls especially for funding that is independent of governmental and institutional agendas and based on the needs as assessed by humanitarian actors.

“Relief operations should not be considered as a challenge to State sovereignty nor the humanitarian imperative be under-



Workshop in disaster risk reduction and emergency response for a community in Myanmar. The statement reaffirms the humanitarian principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence especially in insecure and volatile contexts. Photo: LWF Myanmar

mined by making national sovereignty an excuse,” the statement concludes.

The LWF currently provides assistance in 24 countries with emergency response and development programs. Among them are the crises in the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Iraq and Syria which have been classified as most severe, large-scale humanitarian crises (Level 3-emergencies) by the UN.

Read the statement here:

www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/

[Joint_Statement_on_humanitarian_principles_WHS_20150213.pdf](#)

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otherwise did not have access to higher education, acted as a source of informa-

tion about the situation in Namibia, and helped refugees repatriate after 1990.

Kameeta, 69, is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the

Republic of Namibia and serves on the LWF Council. He talks to LWI about his views on the future of his country.

Given the Courage to Be

Easter reflections by Rev. Silvio Schneider

On a Sunday afternoon some weeks ago, the members of the LWF Twelfth Assembly planning committee visited three cemeteries in Windhoek. We wanted to learn about the history of Namibia's liberation. The first cemetery was well cared for. It was for the use of the white population, who under apartheid lived in an exclusive area that is still known ironically as "Beverly Hills".

The local people had been forced by violent means to settle in a separate area on the margins of the city. There they needed their own cemetery. It does not look quite as good, but is at least maintained by the local authority. The people who lived near this cemetery were the sons and daughters of mixed marriages or of relationships between representatives of the colonial powers and indigenous women.

"Where no one wants to live"

Going further out of town, you finally reach the cemetery for poor Africans. This is in the district of Katutura, meaning "the place where no one wants to live". At the entrance to the cemetery is the mass grave of 12 Namibians, shot dead on 10 December 1959 for refusing to move even further out of town. They were victims of the violent apartheid regime. Today their grave is a memorial, and they are honoured as heroes. They gave their lives to bear witness to human dignity, making their own contribution towards Namibia's independence 25 years ago.

The attempt to place people in categories and separate them even after death – in those days on the grounds of skin colour and culture, today according to their social status



Herero memorial for the 12 Namibians at the local cemetery in Windhoek. Photo: LWF/ H. Martinussen

– expresses the belief that death and everything associated with death has the last and lasting word. The separation stands for the conviction that a country and its people can be ruled by means of violence and terror.

But as visitors we also heard about how individual Christians as well as worldwide ecumenical partners and supporters contributed to the liberation and re-building of the country. Faith in Jesus Christ has awakened hope and strength. Faith in the risen Christ has conquered death and affirmed God's will that all people may live in peace and justice. The Easter message is announced in that very first Christian confession: Jesus Christ lives. He died and was buried, but God brought him back to life. He is risen (1 Cor 15:3-5). The Lord is risen.

A different reality

The Easter message has brought a different reality into the world. God's

reality gives us a wonderful confidence in life and a hope that is powerful and effective. It gives the believer the courage never to give up but to trust in life. On the margins of life and in situations when suffering and mortal danger point to death as the final border, the avowal that life triumphs over death resounds: He is risen! Christ is alive!

Jesus' resurrection enables us to deal more calmly and trustfully with our own limitations, knowing that we are not on this earth for ever. And when we depart, we can be carried as Lazarus was (Luke 16:22), "so that you will not dash your foot against a stone" (Psalm 91:12) and no one will lose their way.

As the risen Christ tells us, the journey takes us to the Father, in whose presence all paths meet. The creator awaits the return of his own. He who brought us into this world will take us home again. Heaven is not a place but a person. We gather at the source of life, and that source is God.

The beginning of eternity

“He is risen!” The victory of life over death is really good news! News that can support us, encourage us and give us hope. With it comes the dawning of the Kingdom in this world, the beginning of eternity in this age. Ever since the time when Jesus preached and taught, performed miracles and showed people the love of God in the way he lived, the movement that

furtheres life and opposes death has been among us.

Jesus lives! He is risen! Yet there are still deadly dangers around us. Our hearts are heavy at the suffering of people near to us and people far away. And yet that almost inexplicable hope and confidence in life asserts itself time and again, telling us that all will be well with us and with our world, and that God means well with us. We

can have the courage to be, however desperate our situation may seem. That is the truth that has endured, ever since that Easter morning. This we can believe. Full of fear and trembling, like the women at Jesus’ tomb, and yet with great joy.

Rev. Silvio Schneider is the Interim Director of the LWF Department for Mission and Development (DMD).

Human Rights in Myanmar and Nepal

LWF Submits Parallel Reports to Human Rights Council

GENEVA (LWI) – Safeguarding human rights of disadvantaged groups in Myanmar and Nepal is a prime concern of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Therefore, the LWF has submitted two reports on the Human Rights Situation in Nepal and Myanmar to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) for the so-called Universal Periodical Review (UPR) of those two countries. The reports are based on consultations LWF staff did with rights-holders and civil society organizations they work with in those countries.

“In general, the rights-holders in communities within which we work are not able to access their fundamental rights that are needed for their survival, such as right to land and right to water,” the Myanmar report states. For Nepal, the report recommends more actions to safeguard the participation of women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities. “In Nepal, Dalit, persons with disabilities, former bonded laborers, indigenous peoples and Muslims continue to lie on the margins of society,” the summary reads.

The reports contribute to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, a unique mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) aimed at improving the human rights situation on the ground of each of the 193 United Nations Member States. Under this mechanism, the human



A cooperative of Dalit women in Nepal. LWF is working with marginalized communities to help them claim their rights. Photo: LWF/C. Kästner

rights situation of all UN Member States is reviewed every 4.5 years. As part of the process, non-governmental organizations are invited to submit firsthand reports, so-called parallel reports. The member states can take these findings into consideration when they present their list of recommendations to the country under review.

Consultations with Local Communities

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has been invited to submit these parallel reports for the UPR of Nepal and Myanmar. The reports were assembled by LWF country programs during a 3-month consultation process

with communities and civil society actors in the respective countries. “The country programs have both spoken to a range of community members, local community-based organizations and authorities to put together these reports,” LWF Advocacy Officer Ojot Ojulu says.

The reports submitted by the LWF focus on land rights, non-discrimination, and the right to education, health, housing, water and food. The report on Myanmar also mentioned the lack of identity papers and registration of births as a major human rights concern. Without legal identity, people are not able to exercise their most basic civil rights and are denied services such as education and health care.

“We encourage civil society actors to use these reports and discuss the recommendations with their respective governments and authorities in the light of the upcoming UPR reviews for both these countries,” Ojulu says.

Long-Standing Commitment

LWF Myanmar is a country program of the LWF Department for World Service. Since 2009 it has been working with marginalized and disadvantaged com-

munities in the areas of emergency preparedness and response, creating sustainable livelihoods, food security, water, sanitation and hygiene, disaster risk reduction and human rights.

In Nepal, the LWF country program has been working for over 30 years in the areas of refugee assistance, disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness and response, sustainable livelihoods and community-led actions for governance and justice. LWF in Nepal has been advocating for the rights of Tibetan and Bhutanese

refugees, (former) bonded laborers and members of the lowest Hindu caste, the Dalit.

The UPR for Myanmar and Nepal will take place during the 23rd session of the UPR Working Group in November 2015.

Read the Reports: www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/LWF-Joint_UPR_Submission_Myanmar_November-2015.pdf and www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/LWF-Joint_UPR_Submission_Nepal_November-2015.pdf

Namibia Welcomes Global Lutheran Communion

Hundreds Attended Public Symposium on LWF Assembly

WINDHOEK, Namibia (LWI) – “Grace always needs a context in which it can affect change,” said Namibian Bishop Burgert Brand at a public symposium hosted jointly by the country’s Lutheran churches and The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Windhoek.

Over 300 people including ambassadors, clergy and guests from the Lutheran and other churches in Windhoek attended the 16 March event under the theme “Liberated by God’s Grace.” The United Church Council – Namibia Evangelical Lutheran Churches (UCC-NELC) and the LWF organized the symposium in the context of the invitation by Lutheran

churches in Namibia to host the global Assembly of the LWF in May 2017 in Windhoek.

The Twelfth Assembly will also celebrate 500 years of the Reformation and will welcome 700 people from across the globe from the LWF’s 144 member churches representing over 72 million Lutherans. The symposium participants included members of the Assembly Planning Committee, holding their second meeting, 14 – 18 March, to prepare for the assembly.

On behalf of the UCC-NELC, Brand, head of the German-speaking Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia offered his gratitude to the LWF and its

member churches for supporting the Lutheran churches in Namibia as they reached out to marginalized communities during the recent drought.

The LWF was founded in the aftermath of World War II, whereby one in six Lutherans in Europe was a refugee. “The LWF arose from the hot ashes of destruction,” said Bishop emeritus Dr Zephania Kameeta, Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), speaking at the symposium. “By God’s grace this fellowship walks in the footsteps of where it was born: to take care of those in need,” said Kameeta, who is a member of the LWF Council.

Kameeta praised the solidarity of the Lutheran communion worldwide, saying, “the prayer of men and women and Sunday school children from all over the world—that solidarity saved our lives.” He said, “We thank God that this Assembly is coming to Namibia.”

The former ELCRN bishop reminded the symposium of the travel restrictions before independence in 1990. “It was total isolation,” he said. “But now the whole world is coming to Namibia. Is that not a reason to be joyful?” Kameeta asked. “[And] to say ‘you are welcome,’” he added.

LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge, addressing guests at the symposium said, “We came to the people of



Bishop emeritus Dr Zephania Kameeta, ELCRN, at the symposium. Photo: LWF/H. Martinussen

Namibia with our commitment to stand in solidarity with people longing for justice and dignity. That is why we stood with you as you were struggling for independence. And that is why we supported you in the process of nation building once independence was achieved.”

He noted that by coming to Namibia, the LWF was passing on the

solidarity it had received in the past. “In 1947 when we started our work, one of the first care boxes for refugees came from Namibia,” Junge said. “Being in communion means sometimes taking and sometimes giving,” he emphasized. “This care box has been multiplied in millions and is being sent around the world today,” he added.

Junge reminded the audience that solidarity is not something to be paid back, rather it is something to be passed on.

The Assembly, LWF’s highest decision making body, will take place 10-16 May 2017, and include a day of worship and commemoration for the global Reformation anniversary.

LWF Solidarity Visit to Nigeria

“You are not forgotten, there are many praying for you” Says General Secretary

NUMAN, Nigeria/ GENEVA (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge has paid a solidarity visit to the LWF member churches in Nigeria. “Solidarity with the people and the churches in Nigeria, our love and concern for them, could no longer only be expressed through phone calls and emails,” General Secretary Junge said returning from the visit from 9-13 March 2015. “The LWF needed to be there, right on the spot, with the church leaders to substantiate that indeed we are in communion with them. When we say it, we mean it”.

Joining the LWF delegation was Pamela Oyieyo, LWF Council member, Carsten Bruhn-Lauritsen, the Partner Coordinator of Mission Afrika (DK), Rev. Themba Mkhabela (Regional Representative of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America), Ms Sylvia Raulo

(Program Coordinator LWF Department for Mission and Development) and Ms Janet Faden. They were joined by Titi Malik (LWF Council Member) and Hamidja Jean-Claude (from the Lutheran Communion in West Africa, LUCWA).

Following the visit, the LWF plans to assess how it can assist the Nigerian member churches in upholding their vocation in their context. “The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria faces a huge pastoral, diaconal and theological challenge,” Junge said. “Pastoral, because of the wide-spread trauma resulting from violence and the challenge to build trust; diaconal, because of the call to serve the suffering neighbor; theological, because of the importance to define how the church and its members want to understand its ongoing relations with people of other faiths”.

“Intentional Religious Homogenization”

During recent months, the LWF has grown increasingly concerned about the situation in North Eastern Nigeria, where Boko Haram violence has caused death and displacement especially among the Christian population. The LWF has two member churches in Nigeria. The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) is one of them. It is based in the region with headquarters in Numan, Adamawa state. Many LCCN members are hosting large numbers of internally displaced persons in their homes.

The visit of the LWF delegation took place during a period of intense political debate relating to the forthcoming presidential and state elections on 28 March. Nigeria is also currently experiencing intensified military actions by the armies of Nigeria, Chad, Cameroun and Niger to combat Boko Haram.

The situation has worsened since August, when Boko Haram launched a new wave of attacks unprecedented in their magnitude. “I stood in front of an internally displaced person, a woman, who only hours before had lost her 14 months old child because of hygienic conditions in the improvised refugee camp,” Junge said. “I talked to a woman who lost her father during the three days she and her family of eight children were fleeing from Boko Haram to the South. She couldn’t even bury him”.

Apart from the trauma suffered by those who have been victims and witnessed atrocities and killing, the on-going



LWF delegation talks to IDPs in North Eastern Nigeria. Photo: Jfaden Multimedia

violence has “severe economic and social consequences,” Junge said. Systematic destruction of Christian churches, and forced conversions are evidence of a dimension of intentional religious homogenisation by Boko Haram, he said.

“The deepest impact is the destruction of the social fabric and trust between different religious communities. In a region with a long tradition of co-existence, even within families, there is now fear and uncertainty about the future of the co-existence”.

Encouraging Signs of Solidarity

The LCCN has been engaged on the diocesan and congregational level,

supporting several camps in an informal way. Many LCCN members including pastors, women fellowship groups and individuals have served as host families for refugees. Congregations are holding special collections to support families who are hosting refugees.

“I was encouraged to see how church members have opened their houses to people fleeing from the North. In most cases, they hosted both Christians and Muslims, thus reflecting the reality in many Northern Nigerian families: they include people from both faiths,” General Secretary Junge said. “We saw a church that is committed to serve and to accompany; therefore we believe that there is hope.”

The LWF delegation expressed the communion’s solidarity with the Nigerian

member churches and the displaced people they are hosting. Within the LCCN, the situation is also affecting the church and its activities as several churches have been burnt and two dioceses were forced to relocate their headquarters. “I could experience during my visit that the very fact of acknowledging this reality and standing with the LCCN in prayerful solidarity already makes a huge difference. It gives confidence, it gives power, it gives hope. All of that is so much needed now,” said Junge.

The General Secretary also met with internally displaced people. “I want to let you know that you are not forgotten, that you are not forsaken,” he told them. “There are many people praying for you”.

Opening her Doors to those Displaced by Violence in Northern Nigeria

“They Needed Assistance”

Adamawa State, Nigeria/GENEVA (LWI) – Lutheran activist Titi Malik, who sheltered dozens of internally displaced persons fleeing violent Boko Haram Islamists in northern Nigeria, says the men, women and children faced a horrifying experience.

Speaking to *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*, Malik, who is a member of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council, sheltered 20 refugees in her own home and 50 more on a plot near her house for four months beginning in October 2014. The women and children lived in her home and the men and young boys stayed on the nearby property. They created a common kitchen. They told Malik their frightening stories of fleeing Boko Haram.

Among those who fled the violence were her aunts and uncles, she said in an interview. “They found themselves in a situation that was very difficult and I had to open my doors to them so they could have a break. They had walked a long distance. I felt, this is a time they need assistance.”



Titi Malik (second from left) with members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria and LWF delegation during a solidarity visit in March. Photo: Jfaden Multimedia

When the shooting started and the bombs hit their hometown the people were unsure which way to flee. Many lost their lives, including the elderly and infants, and those who survived couldn’t even stop to bury the dead. They covered them with branches and fled.

“They walked long distances, pulling their carts but they had to abandon

them. Most elderly people couldn’t make it. They died on the way. The children were terrified. When they heard aircraft they would run into the road because they thought something terrible was going to happen,” said Malik.

The Lutheran leader talked about one woman in particular who had with her an infant and several other

children, who said after the horrific experience of fleeing the Boko Haram violence that she would never have another child because she knew something would happen to them.

Malik said some of the Boko Haram insurgents, who have terrorized northern Nigeria for six years, were neighbors of those fleeing. It is estimated that 10,000 people lost their lives to Boko Haram violence last year, and the

Islamist group has vowed to disrupt the 28 March Nigerian elections.

The United Nations estimate that more than 1.5 million Nigerians have been forcibly displaced within the country. In addition, some 74,000 Nigerians have fled to Cameroon, while another 100,000 have taken shelter in Chad and Niger, according to the United Nations. The UN has said that international assistance is needed for

the hundreds of thousands of refugees who have fled their homes.

Malik said the local church has been praying for the refugees and asking them not to lose hope despite the horrific situation.

She said the LWF has offered solidarity to Nigerians and the local church from the beginning of the insurgency. "That has helped a lot."

Christian Love and Dialogue Can Influence Middle East Crisis

LWF President Younan's Public Lecture in Beirut

BEIRUT, Lebanon/GENEVA (LWI) – Rampant religious fanaticism in the Middle East calls Lutherans and other Christians to secure a shared future for all through love and dialogue, said Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan, President of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

Younan made these remarks on 19 March, when he delivered a public lecture on "Reformation and Politics" at the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut, Lebanon. The bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) emphasized that Lutherans don't seek to "Christianize" politics but to improve society through engagement.

"Although Christians are numerical minorities in the Middle East, we can have tremendous influence to utilize for the benefit of all persons and communities in our region," Younan said in his paper focusing on "Lutheran Contributions to the Political Life of the Middle East."

He was responding to a presentation by Rev. Dr Margot Kässmann, the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) special envoy for the 2017 Reformation Jubilee.

"Constitutional development is a central concern for the rebuilding of the Middle East. In that process, Arab Christians emphasize commitment to equal citizenship with equal rights and equal responsibilities," Younan said.



Students from the kindergarten of the Evangelical Lutheran School in Beit Sahour take a break from learning their Arabic alphabet to pose for a photo. Photo: ELCJHL

The LWF president said Lutherans should know that Martin Luther, who triggered the Protestant Reformation 500 years ago, would find the suffering being endured by the people of Iraq and Syria reason to involve himself in such a crisis.

Luther would question the false distinction between religion and politics, promote interfaith engagement, address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a factor contributing to the current religiously-sanctioned fanaticism and promote moderation, the bishop noted.

"As a leader from a minority movement himself, Luther would no doubt understand us when we say that our danger is not in living with the 'Other'

but when fanatics seek to persecute us," Younan said in his address.

He pointed to the historic document *From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017* to illustrate Lutheran ecumenical accountability, which emphasizes unity, transformation, the power of Jesus Christ and joint witness.

"Together, we show that the church of Jesus Christ is indeed always engaged in reform and renewal," he said.

The waves of violence that have overtaken the Middle East have disproportionately affected the small Christian communities there, Younan said, add-

ing that all communities are potential victims of the ongoing violence.

“Lutheran reflections on the proper authority of church and government can help shape how all communities in

the Middle East move forward toward a shared future,” he concluded.

The ELCJHL bishop is on the board of NEST, an inter-confessional Protestant institution that trains pastors and

other church workers in the Middle East for ministry in the churches and their related organizations.

A Growing Spirit of Ecumenism in Japan

Interview with Lutheran Theologian Prof. Augustine Suzuki

TOKYO, Japan/GENEVA (LWI) – Lutheran theologian Prof. H. Augustine Suzuki looks at how more than three decades of dialogue with Catholics has contributed to a growing spirit of ecumenism in Japan. “There is no doubt,” the two dialogue partners “will definitely” jointly commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, and the “involvement of other churches is hoped for,” says Suzuki in this interview with *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*.

How would you describe the relationships between Lutherans and Catholics in Japan, including some of the activities that you carry out together?

There has been a dialogue committee between the two churches: The Ecumenism Committee between Catholics and Lutherans. This committee convenes twice a year. Early this year we had the 71st session, which means the two churches have had

continued dialogue for the past 35 years. The main agenda at this session was how we would commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. There has been a general agreement that the two churches should have a joint commemoration event on or around 31 October 2017.

On 30 November 2014, the two churches, together with the Anglican Episcopal Church of Japan jointly held a Sunday worship service to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Decree on Ecumenism issued by the Second Vatican Council. It was the very first worship service by the three churches in history. The liturgy booklet used for the worship at this event was prepared by a team of theologians and liturgists from the three churches.

About ten years ago, on 31 October 2004, Catholics and Lutherans held a joint worship service in the Marian Chapel of the Church of St Ignatius in Yotsuya, Tokyo, to celebrate the

completion of the Japanese version of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. It was the very first joint worship service in history, between the two churches. The translation, which was done by a team of translators from the two churches, took almost five years to complete, mainly due to language difficulties, as the two churches use different words for major technical terms. Even the name of ‘our savior’ was different: *les* Kirist for Lutherans and other Protestants, *lezus* Kirist for Catholics. There are a lot of other differences including proper nouns, names of places, and especially theological terms. The adjustments and readjustments went on and on until an agreement was reached.

Recently you produced a Japanese version of the publication *From Conflict to Communion Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017*, how was its translation process?

I was asked, as a member of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, to provide a first draft translation, which I started working on in the summer of 2013. I then submitted this draft to the Ecumenism Committee, which formed a team of translators from among its members, two from the Lutheran side and two from the Catholic counterpart. The team’s task was to polish my draft and present a final draft for approval. They started their work in mid-summer of 2014, completed a final draft by the end of that year, and the Japanese version of *From Conflict to Communion* was published in mid-February 2015. The



Prof. H. Augustine Suzuki (second left) lights a candle at St Mary’s Cathedral in Tokyo, where Anglicans, Catholics and Lutherans held the first joint worship service. Photo: JELC

team members are Prof. Dr Naozumi Eto, and Prof. Dr Motoo Ishii from the Lutheran side, and Prof. Dr Ichiro Mitsunobu, and Dr Junichi Iwamoto, from the Catholic side.

Does the Japanese version include any complementary texts?

Yes, at the beginning of the book, there are two 'Recommendations'; one from the Tokyo Diocese Archbishop Peter Takeo Okada, who is also chairperson of the Bishops' Conference of the Roman Catholic Church in Japan, and Rev. Tadahiro Tateyama, President of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC). The inclusion of these persons enhances the publication's authority by showing that the content has been authorized by the authoritative bodies of the two churches.

There are two "prefaces" to the Japanese version, one by LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge and the other by Kurt Cardinal Koch, President of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

How will you distribute the publication From Conflict to Communion?

The publishing company first printed 1,000 copies, of which the Catholic Church purchased 300 copies, and our church 200, which we will distribute in our local churches.

The remaining 500 copies will be distributed to Christian bookshops throughout Japan.

The 1,000 copies may sound too small a number, but this is not so. The Christian population in Japan is far less than one percent of the total population [nearly 127 million people], of which 50 percent is Catholic. The membership of our church would be somewhere between 3,000 and 4,000 nationwide, with 125 local congregations. The average attendance for Sunday worship is about 30. As the 500th anniversary draws near, demands for this book will increase and a second printing will be inevitable.

Will you commemorate the 500th Reformation anniversary together with the Catholics?

Yes, we definitely will. There is no doubt about it. One of the problems arising from the experiences of the three-church worship last year is the question: 'Should the commemoration be limited to the Lutherans and Catholics? Should we invite other denominations to get somehow involved in this event?' According to the spirit of ecumenism here, there is no doubt that the involvement of other churches is hoped for. The Ecumenism Committee will discuss these issues in the coming sessions.

As I pointed out, Christianity in this country is a minority of minorities. However, almost all Japanese know the name of Martin Luther and the short history of the Reformation from school textbooks that are regulated by the Ministry of Education in the Central Government. But the story of Christianity at the time of the Reformation usually ends here, and therefore the majority of Japanese still think the Catholics and Protestants, Lutherans in particular, are [still] enemies.

In such a context, a joint worship service would give a big impact to the non-Christian audience in Japan. Nation-wide newspapers, which usually pay no attention to Christianity in Japan, will probably cover the event. We, on the Lutheran side, hope that the joint commemoration would be a rather 'big' event, in view of the social impact it can give.

JELC member Prof. H. Augustine Suzuki, teaches at the Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tokyo. He is a member of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity which leads the bilateral dialogue between the LWF and Vatican globally. The Commission published From Conflict to Communion in June 2013, marking the first time the history of the Reformation has been written by both dialogue partners.

Advocating for Children's Rights

Although most African countries have laws in place to protect children, in reality they are hard to enforce. In situations of conflict and displacement, children are especially vulnerable of being exploited as work force, recruited into child militia or married at an early age.

A regional workshop in Kampala, Uganda, focused on how to implement child protection measures and ensure the children's well-being in cooperation with the communities and traditional leaders. Part of the intervention means to sensitize parents and children for the importance of education and the dangers of treating children as adults.

See the photo essay at www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-advocating-childrens-rights



Child Rights Club (CRC) presentation in a refugee camp primary school in South Sudan. Letting girls and boys finish school is one of the CRC's main demands. Photo: LWF/C. Kästner

New Camp for Refugees in Gambella

Relocation Site for Flooded Leitchuor Camps Established

GAMBELLA, Ethiopia/GENEVA (LWI) – Hope for the refugees in the flooded Ethiopian camps of Gambella: A new camp site has been approved for relocation. On Sunday 15 March, the Gambella regional authorities endorsed Jewii as the new camp for urgent development ahead of the next rainy season which is expected to start in May or June. The Jewii camp will have a capacity to host 50,000 people, accommodating the refugees, mostly women and children, from the flood-affected Leitchuor.

LWF Ethiopia has been operational in Leitchuor camp since the beginning in February 2014, responding to the immediate life-saving needs in terms of water supply, hygiene and sanitation. Leitchuor and Nip Nip camp however are situated in an area prone to flooding. During the wet season, the near-by Baro river does burst its banks, and the whole area turns into a shallow lake, dotted with small islands of higher ground here and there.

Between August and October 2014, most of the Nuer zones in the Gambella region experienced what became known as the “emergency within an emergency”. The flooding was so extreme that people left their tents and camped on the elevated roads. Throughout the year 2014 the Ethiopian government officials together with humanitarian agencies have been searching for suitable sites in the Gambella region. “More than 51,300 refugees residing in the inun-



Refugee children fetching water from a water point constructed by the LWF. Photo: LWF/DWS Ethiopia

dated land in deplorable conditions have been waiting for over half a year to be relocated to an area that would be safe and conducive to dignified living while in exile,” Sophie Gebreyes, LWF Country Representative in Ethiopia, says. “Our commitment has been to the refugees; to stay with them during the hardships of the floods and uncertainties, and to accompany them to their new resettlement”.

With the influx of 196,000 South Sudanese arrivals since December 2013, Ethiopia became the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa with 670 000 refugees. South Sudanese refugees who are scattered in various locations across Western Ethiopia account for the majority (38%) of the 670,000 refugees in total. More than 100,000 additional

asylum seekers are projected to arrive during the year 2015.

As the relocation of the 48,428 refugees from Leitchuor to the undeveloped Jewii is about to begin, LWF Ethiopia has been urged to mobilize further resources and to focus on supporting the establishment of the Jewii camp, for which an additional US\$16.5 million are needed in total.

“Due to financial, logistical, and protection-related challenges, it is unlikely that all refugees will be relocated before the rainy season starts again. LWF staff will remain in the Leitchuor camp to support the refugees and host community with life-saving activities such as sanitation and hygiene promotion, waste management and distribution of core relief items,” Country Representative Gebreyes says.

Uganda: Water For Adjumani

LWF Installs Solar Pumps to Improve Water Supply

ADJUMANI, Uganda/ GENEVA (LWI) – Without water, the classrooms in Ayilo refugee camp remain empty. The simple equation is explained by the headmaster of Ayilo2A primary school in Adjumani district, Uganda.

“The lack of a water facility at the school is a very big problem leading to poor attendance,” he says. “Instead

of going to school, the students spend their day looking for water. The hygiene in the school latrines also has been compromised by lack of water, the latrines are always dirty, and of course we don't have hand washing facilities,” he names but some of the challenges his school is facing. The 1,400 students in Ayilo2A Primary School will be among

the many beneficiaries from the borehole motorization process in the three settlements. Initiated by The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in December 2014, the project is now in its final stages.

Adjumani district in Northern Uganda hosts close to 104,000 refugees, most of them people who fled from South Sudan since fighting broke out in

December 2013. They now live in one of the nine settlements which together make up the cluster of the Adjumani refugee camps. LWF assistance includes multi-sectorial projects serving refugees and host communities, namely Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Livelihoods and Environment, Community services, Protection and Psychosocial Support, and Peace Building.

In August 2014, LWF signed an agreement with UNICEF to establish three motorized water systems to increase access to safe and clean water in Ayilo 2, Nyumanzi and Elema refugee settlements in Adjumani District. The agreement was signed in response to water shortage for domestic consumption. Until recently, safe water supply came mainly through deep wells and hand pumps, which had to be supplemented by water trucking.

The large population of refugees in the three settlements, and the poor underground water potential in Ayilo 2 and Elema camps especially resulted in long queues at water points. During the current dry spell boreholes dried up and others' yields were reduced. "Women spend a significant amount of time searching for water, sometimes leaving their homes at dawn, which is often cause for domestic tension," LWF Country Representative for Uganda, Jesse Kamstra, says. "As a result, children are often forced to support their parents in search of water, which directly impacts their schooling. The daily personal and domestic hygiene practices of the refugees are affected too".

20 liters of water is the daily minimum the UNHCR recommends for a refugee to have available for drinking, cooking and hygiene. "In Adjumani, ensuring this



One of the new boreholes in Adjumani. Photo: LWF Uganda

amount has always been a challenge," James Drichi, LWF Adjumani Water Engineer, says. According to UNHCR figures in October 2014, refugees in Adjumani had 16 liters of drinking water at their disposal. Therefore LWF decided to upgrade some of the boreholes and improve their yield by installing motorized pumps in Ayilo2 and Njumanzi camps. The pumps are powered by solar power with a standby generator for backup.

In both camps, a high-yield borehole was identified and upgraded with a motorized pump. The pumps run on solar power, with a generator for back-up to ensure water supply eight hours a day. The pump in Njumanzi draws 7.6 cubic meters of water per hour, thereby serving the daily minimum of 20 liters per day to 3,040 people. The water is elevated to a new set of tanks which holds 70 cubic meters, and then fed into 2.1 kilometers of newly installed distribution line. Eight new tap stands with six taps each provide water supply for two blocks in the

settlement. Nyumanzi 1 Primary School, a Child Friendly Space and the Nyumanzi Settlement Community Centre each received a tap stand of their own.

In Elema settlement, LWF has agreed with other agencies to tap water from the OXFAM motorized water system distribution line in Elema. The water will be stored in a 5 cubic metre capacity plastic reservoir tank erected at Elema Health Centre and distributed to Elema Health Centre II, Elema Primary School and the neighboring host community. Each of the three locations is supported with a tap stand of 6 distribution taps.

2,000 people in Ayilo2 camp will benefit from the new pump which sources 5 cubic meters per hour, distributed over 2.1 kilometers of pipes and seven new tap stands. The distribution line covers three blocks including three Child Friendly Spaces, the settlements' Health Clinic and also Ayilo 2A Primary School, whose headmaster is already looking forward to having water easily available.