

MESSAGE FROM THE MEETING OF THE 2018 LUTHERAN COUNCIL IN AFRICA

14 – 18 May 2018, Accra, Ghana

Preamble

We, the participants of the LWF Lutheran Council in Africa (LUCA), met in Accra, Ghana, from 14 – 18 May 2018, under the theme **“Though Many, yet One Body”** (1 Cor. 12:12)

We acknowledge with appreciation the presence of the LWF president, Archbishop Dr. Panti Filibus Musa. We express sincere thanks to the leaders and members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana who hosted us.

We are encouraged by the increasing number of peaceful elections and transfer of power in our continent and would like to commend the people of these countries for setting a good example. We acknowledge with sadness that some of our sisters and brothers are still living in challenging socio-political environments, especially in Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Sudan.

Agenda

The participants engaged with one another on the following issues:

- a) Emerging issues from the Twelfth LWF Assembly, held in Windhoek, Namibia, in May 2017, especially those pertinent to the region and agreed on priorities for the region.
- b) Received and affirmed the report on the program on Confronting Poverty and Economic Injustice in Africa.
- c) Reflected on the role and responsibilities of the LWF Council members from Africa, in the region and within the LWF Council.
- d) Agreed on future directions for the Sub-regional expressions in Africa.
- e) Agreed on preliminary plans for the 2019 Africa Lutheran leadership consultation.

Discussion points and recommendations

The participants resolved:

A. Unity

We were encouraged to be united, support one another and use our gifts to build each other. We are called to commit ourselves to what holds us together: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5).

B. Growth

We acknowledged the growth in membership of the Lutheran churches in Africa. Such growth requires good governance, accountability, transparency and inclusive leadership.

C. Church and its role in mission

In response to the great commission (Matthew 28), LUCA reminds the member churches to be more proactive in holistic mission, which include proclamation and evangelism, diakonia, and advocacy for justice, peace and reconciliation.

D. Theological education and ministerial formation

The training and development of leaders well-grounded in their theology and identity should be given top priority in the member churches. We acknowledge that ministerial formation is facing many challenges. Therefore, the region must approach this vital aspect of ministry with creativity.

The LUCA recommends that churches’ theological institutions share resources and consolidate their relationships and network.

E. Gender justice and youth participation

These were identified as critical areas that are to be prioritized in the region to allow full participation of youth and women in leadership development and theological formation.

LUCA recommends that churches should intentionally mainstream gender and youth participation in their work and practice.

F. Confronting poverty and economic injustice in Africa

We received the report of the steering committee on confronting poverty and economic injustice in Africa and welcomed the committee’s work with gratitude. We have requested the committee to scale up their work, and recognize that there is a challenge in mobilizing funds for this task.

LUCA mandates the steering committee to put in place mechanisms for resource mobilization.

LUCA recommends that churches make good use of the presence of accompanying church bodies within the communion for relevant socio-economic and political interventions.

G. Sub-regional expressions

The presidents of the three sub-regions outlined a lack of transparency and poor accountability as critical challenges and factors contributing to financial difficulties in the region.

LUCA calls upon churches to be more transparent and accountable to their members.

H. Leadership successions

The increase in internal strife during elections that has sometimes led to court cases and splits in the churches can be minimized by putting in place robust succession plans and through strict adherence to constitutional provisions.

LUCA recommends that churches adhere to their policies to minimize tensions during transition periods.

LUCA recommends church leaders of the sub-regions come together in their respective sub-regions and find amicable solutions to problems posed by the internal strife.

I. Objective use of social media

Churches recognize the growing importance of social media in Africa. We also noted that these new technologies offer new possibilities and also raise new issues.

LUCA calls upon members to use social media platforms in ways that enhance our common humanity and respect for others.

By this statement, we participants of the LUCA affirm our commitment to pursue and engage in building a Lutheran Communion in Africa as we address the above in our contexts and globally.