

**AGENDA**

**EXHIBIT 5**

**Meeting of the LWF COUNCIL**

Medan, Indonesia, 12 – 17 June 2014

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**THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION**

## Meeting of Council

Geneva, Switzerland

13 - 18 June 2013

## **MINUTES**



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION



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**THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION**  
**Meeting of Council**  
*“Called to be disciples in today’s world”*  
13 - 18 June 2013

**MINUTES**

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**1. WORSHIP LIFE AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

- (1) The Council meeting took place in the Ecumenical Center in Geneva. The Pre-Council meeting Women and Youth had taken place there on 12 June. The Opening Service took place on Thursday 13 June at 8:30 a.m. in the chapel of the Ecumenical Center. Bishop Dr Tamás Fabiny from The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary delivered the sermon. Council participants were invited to worship on Sunday 16 June at 11:00 a.m. at the Temple de la Madeleine in Geneva to which all local Lutheran congregations had been convened. Pastor Marc Blessing of the German speaking Evangelical Lutheran Church in Geneva delivered the sermon. On plenary days, morning prayers and evening devotions were prepared by the LWF staff. Bible studies were presented by the following Council members: Bishop Dr Kameeta, Rev. Dr Steinke and Ms D. Dokman. During the committee meetings, devotions were conducted by these groups in their respective meeting rooms. The closing devotion was held in the plenary.
- (2) On Thursday 13 June the new LWF logo and the new LWF Website were officially launched during the Opening Session.

**2. FORMAL OPENING OF THE BUSINESS SESSION**

- (3) LWF President, Bishop Dr Munib Younan, from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, welcomed all participants and officially opened the meeting on 13 June 2013 at 9:45 a.m.
- (4) Bishop Dr Younan expressed his appreciation for the meaningful and strong opening worship that would help to start this year’s Council meeting. He also expressed his gratitude, on behalf of the communion, to the local church for their support with the worship and prayers throughout the meeting. Particular thanks went to Pastor Stephen Larson and Pastor Marc Blessing.

**3. ROLL CALL**

- (5) The roll was called by the General Secretary, Rev. Martin Junge. The following four participants had presented their excuses and their absences were noted: Ms Dipti Rani Bormon, Bangladesh Lutheran Church, Rev. Frauke Eiben, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany, Ms Jenny Skumsnes Moe, Church of Norway and Ms Christina Soren, Northern

Evangelical Lutheran Church, India. As the quorum was reached, the Council met constitutionally.

### 3.1 *Greetings*

- (6) Ecumenical greetings were presented throughout the meeting.
- (7) Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of World Council of Churches (WCC), welcomed the LWF Council at the Ecumenical Center for another significant meeting. He informed participants that WCC planned to develop the Ecumenical Center and plans of reconstruction of the building were under way. While the chapel and Viser t'Hooft hall (where the LWF governing body was meeting) are historical monuments, other parts of the center are subject to changes and upgrades. The approximate 350 WCC member churches accepted the renovation project in March this year. Rev. Dr Tveit gave thanks to the LWF, as tenant in the Ecumenical Center, for their important collaboration in the process. WCC General Secretary also informed that the number of its member churches had been reduced by one thanks to the unification of the churches in France. This was a real sign of hope. The WCC will be holding their General Assembly in Busan, South Korea, in November 2013. The theme, "God of Life, lead us to Justice and Peace", echoes the LWF Council's theme "Called to be Disciples Together." Referring to the preparations of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, Rev. Dr Tveit said he prayed for such a significant event for all the ecumenical family. LWF was giving the vision that we can celebrate the Gospel together for the Church and the World. WCC hopes to hold a Faith and Order Consultation in 2017.
- (8) Rev. Dr Guy Liagre, General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) said that as one of the regional ecumenical organizations, CEC was also happy with mergers and reduction in member churches. He mentioned that many LWF Council participants are involved in CEC's work, and he expressed thanks to the European Lutheran churches for their contributions. Rev. Dr Liagre informed participants of the upcoming CEC Assembly, to be held in Budapest on 3-8 July 2013. The Assembly will be an opportunity for European churches to reflect on Christian faith and ecumenical expression, under the theme: "And now what are you waiting for?" The goal is to be part in shaping Europe so it is a place where all can flourish. Regarding the preparations for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, Rev. Dr Liagre reminded the Council that Belgium had been the inspiration for Luther's first hymn. CEC's General Secretary expressed hope that the anniversary would offer an opportunity to build bridges in the context of rapid changes in Europe.
- (9) Rev. Dr Larry Miller representing the Global Christian Forum (GCF) praised the LWF for "playing an indispensable role in activating and shaping the forum". The GCF arose in response to a question in the late 1990s of a Lutheran theologian, Konrad Raiser, asking "who is missing?" Since then, the GCF's particular concern is to set a table where all Christians can gather. Rev. Dr Miller went on to explain that during the past 18 months, conversations with the LWF leadership had provided memorable words and usable thoughts for the forum's future. He said that likewise, Professor Dr Kathryn Johnson, the LWF representative in the GCF international committee, played a crucial role during the Forum's transition from one secretary to another, and she now plays a crucial role as secretary of the Forum's Theological Working Group. Finally, he also expressed appreciation for the way the LWF related Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg provides hospitable and collegial office space for the GCF. He concluded by informing the audience that the WCC and the GCF are in the process of finalizing their first memorandum of understanding and cooperation.

- (10) Rev. Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan, representing the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Canon Kenneth Kearon, who was unable to attend the LWF Council, pointed to similarities between Lutherans and Anglicans. She mentioned how both communities are shaped by similar history; affirm the same creeds and seek to express them in sound contemporary theology; affirm the centrality of the Word of God Incarnate; can celebrate together the sacraments of God's grace; and face the same challenges of living as disciples in today's world. Rev. Canon Barnett-Cowan also referred to the Anglican-Lutheran dialogue's 2012 agreed statement 'To Love and Serve the Lord', which says clearly that diakonia and koinonia are inextricably linked as essential marks of the Church. Referring to the new publication of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue, 'From Conflict to Communion', Rev. Canon Barnett-Cowan said the title reflects the perpetual movement of the churches; always being called to greater communion with the triune God, out of the conflict of our individual and our corporate sin. She concluded by saying that Anglicans are looking forward to walking with Lutherans toward the remembrance of 1517, a date significant for all the churches of Christ, particularly in reminding them of the constant need for renewal, and of the need for reconciliation when their zeal for the Gospel may take them too far from one another.
- (11) Thanking the LWF Council for the invitation, Dr Jean-Daniel Plüss representing Pentecostal Churches said that by inviting ecumenical guests, the Lutheran communion makes an important and visible statement of fellowship in the Body of Christ. He found that this year's theme include two phrases that express this fundamental truth of our Christian calling: The first phrase, "*Called to be disciples in today's world*" expresses the Lutheran conviction that discipleship is at the core of the church. Being Christian is about transformation, or change, by the grace of God. The first Pentecost of the Church marks a point of change. Prior to that event, the disciples were the limited number of people that had known and followed Jesus. After Pentecost discipleship became open to all those who are willing to be attentive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The second phrase, "*Welcoming the stranger*", reflects the powerful command that guides us through the Scriptures: to welcome and love the stranger because God loves the stranger and we have been strangers ourselves. If not as migrants or refugees, we have been strangers to God's grace and are strangers to one another. Jesus reminds us to "love our neighbor".
- (12) Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi, General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), greeted the LWF Council on behalf of the sisters and brothers in the World Communion of Reformed Churches, particularly on behalf of their Executive Committee which met in May in Dodowa, Ghana. WCRC General Secretary said they were looking forward to the time when their common reflections through the Lutheran Reformed Joint Working Group will be adopted and received by the member churches to continue to strengthen the relationship between the two communions. Rev. Dr Nyomi placed emphasis on building on common dreams of having their Executive Committee and the LWF Council meeting share a common space and a common theme in the near future. WCRC's Executive Committee would like to see the dream beyond this to even the possibility of one day holding the two Assemblies together. Referring to the theme of 500 years of the Reformation, Rev. Dr Nyomi said the Reformed communion looks forward to opportunities that will show that Lutherans and Reformed are indeed commemorating the anniversary together between now and 2017 and beyond. He highlighted the need to be intentional about this.
- (13) Bringing greetings on behalf of Cardinal Kurt Koch, who would be at the Council on 17 June for the launch of "From Conflict to Communion", Mgr. Dr Matthias Türk, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU), spoke to the Council's theme. He noted that discipleship is one of the most important dimensions of being Christian. It leads us to the question of who God

is. If we as Christians try to give an answer and say “come and see”, as a clear witness of our faith in God, then we could be visible and credible. The representative of the Vatican’s PCPCU went on to say that discipleship is a central message of Pope Francis, who stresses that as followers of Jesus Christ we are called to give a witness. As a Jesuit, Pope Francis links his spirit to Saint Ignatius of Loyola, for whom discipleship and a clear option for the poor go together. Simplicity and poverty are important features to be recognized as disciples of Jesus Christ. Referring to the Report of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, “From Conflict to Communion”, to be launched during the Council meeting, Mgr. Dr Türk emphasized how important it was for Catholics and Lutherans to be able for the first time to jointly tell the history of the Reformation. He explained that liturgical material is being prepared jointly and will be available also for ecumenical partners worldwide. Mgr. Türk noted that the ecumenical dialogue continues with the central theme of baptism and growing church community. He emphasized that there are more things that unite Lutherans and Catholics than divide them. And they now want to show this in concrete ways.

- (14) Rev. Dr Charles Evanson read a letter of greetings of Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt, Chairman of the International Lutheran Council (ILC) thanking the LWF for the friendly invitation. Likewise, he remembered as a sign of solidarity the participation of Rev. Dr Musa Panti Filibus, representing the LWF at the 2012 Council meeting of the ILC. The ILC representative then made reference to the Council’s theme and the timely issue of being sent into the world. Rev. Dr Evanson prayed that we all could be sanctified in truth and be united so the world may believe. He reminded the LWF governing body that the Sacrament of Baptism was the basis for church unity, adding that more attention should be given to this principle. As Disciples of Christ, Rev. Dr Evanson said, we stand in the world with all its challenges, such as secularization and the ethical problems posed by our times. The member churches of the LWF and of the ILF have given different answers to these challenges, and have created tensions. However, baptism has made us all part of the body of Christ. Rev. Dr Evanson noted that the common commemoration of the Reformation in 2017 would give the opportunity to build common steps for the LWF and the ILC as they rediscover the basic insights of Lutheran theology. He concluded by expressing thanks for the memorandum of understanding between the two organizations and noted that work is needed to have regular contacts.

#### 4. ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND TIME SCHEDULE

- (15) It was announced that the Meeting of Officers had met the day before, on 17 June, and had decided to call for a confidential session in the afternoon of the first day of the Council. In order to accommodate for this, it was agreed to have a one-hour lunch break, followed by the General Secretary’s Report from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. and then have the confidential session. Participants allowed at the confidential session were the Council members and Advisers, the Archbishop of Sweden, the guest from Ethiopia, Mr Almaw Gari, and COLT members.

With the above amendments, the Council

- (16) **VOTED:**                    **to adopt the Agenda and Time Schedule with the understanding that in the course of the meeting further changes might be made as required.**

##### 4.1 *Adoption of Proposed Rules of Procedure for LWF Council Meetings*

The Council

- (17) **VOTED:** to approve the proposed Rules of Procedure for LWF Council Meetings as presented.

4.2 ***Code of Conduct Concerning Sexual Harassment and Exploitation for Participants in Events Organized by the LWF***

The Council

- (18) **VOTED:** to adopt the Code of Conduct Concerning Sexual Harassment and Exploitation for Participants in Events Organized by the Lutheran World Federation for this meeting and appoint the following persons as the response team:

**Ms Colleen CUNNINGHAM**

**Oberkirchenrat Rainer KIEFER**

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE 2012 COUNCIL MEETING**

- (19) There was no discussion on the minutes from the Council meeting in Bogota, Colombia, 15-20 June 2012 (Exhibit 5).

The Council

- (20) **VOTED:** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the LWF Council in Bogota, Colombia, 15 - 20 June 2012, as circulated.

**6. UPDATE ON THE MEETING OF OFFICERS AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

- (21) President Bishop Dr Younan informed that in line with the bylaws the Meeting of Officers and Board of Trustees hold one of the two annual meetings on the day preceding the Council meeting. Traditionally the major part of the meeting was focusing on the Council's agenda. In this context an important item was the confidential session scheduled to take place later in the afternoon. The Officers also met in executive session with a separate agenda on personnel matters. The Board of Trustees discussed mainly issues relating to the Mount of Olives Property and matters concerning the Auguste Victoria Hospital. As it was agreed last year the minutes of the Meeting of Officers will be shared with the full Council once approved by the Meeting of Officers.

**7. APPOINTMENT OF AD-HOC NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

- (22) The Council appointed the following members of the Ad-hoc Nominations Committee for the duration of the meeting with the task to discuss matters referred to it from the plenary.

The Council

- (23) **VOTED:** to appoint an Ad-hoc Nominations Committee for the duration of the meeting with the following members:

**Dr Mangisi SIMORANGKIR (chair)**

**Prof. Dr Carlos BOCK**

**Ms Dagmar MAGOLD**

**Ms Maria IMMONEN**

**Ms Mikka McCracken**

**Bishop Dr Ndanganane P. PHASWANA**

**Archbishop Janis VANAGS**

- (24) The Nominations Committee met, in the course of the meeting. As the chairperson Dr Mangisi Simorangkir had to leave earlier, Bishop Dr Ndanganane P. Phaswana presented the Report of the Ad-hoc Nominations Committee at the time the relevant Council committees presented their report.
- (25) Before the Council voted on the recommendations 7.1 – 7.7 it was clarified that if a present Council member was appointed for a position which will not allow him or her to continue as Council member, the church to which the Council member belongs would appoint a replacement for the rest of the term.

**7.1 *Transfer of Committee of Ms Anastasiya Poddybskaya***

The Council

- (26) **VOTED:** to ratify the decision taken by the Meeting of Officers to transfer Ms Anastasiya Poddybskaya from the Finance Committee to the Committee for Mission and Development and to its Sub-Committee.

**7.2 *Replacement of Ms Anastasiya Poddybskaya in the Finance Committee***

- (27) The Council was informed that the Nominations Committee did not as yet have a recommendation for a new member of the Finance Committee.

**7.3 *Election of Council member in replacement of Ms Dipti Rani Bormon***

- (28) **VOTED:** to elect Ms Evabithi Kisku (female, youth, lay) from the Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church as Council member in replacement of Ms Dipti Rani Bormon.

**7.3.1 *Appointment of Ms Evabithi Kisku to the Committee for Mission and Development***

- (29) **VOTED:** to appoint Ms Evabithi Kisku to the Committee for Mission and Development.

**7.4 *Election of Council member in replacement Rev. Frauke Eiben***

- (30) **VOTED:** to elect Pröpstin Astrid Kleist (female, ordained) from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Northern Germany as Council member in replacement of Rev. Frauke Eiben.

**7.4.1 *Appointment of Pröpstin Astrid Kleist to the Committee for Mission and Development***

- (31) **VOTED:** to appoint Pröpstin Astrid Kleist to the Committee for Mission and Development and to its Sub-Committee.

7.5 ***Appointment of a member of the Lutheran – Roman Catholic Commission on Unity***

- (32) **VOTED:** to appoint Rev. Dr Dirk Lange of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as member of the Lutheran – Roman Catholic Commission on Unity.

7.6 ***Replacement of Ms Lita B. Johnson as CWS member***

- (33) The Council was informed that in view of Ms Johnson's retirement the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America had appointed Dr Carl Stecker as her replacement in the Committee for World Service.

7.7 ***Appointment of chair for the Subcommittee for Mission and Development***

- (34) **VOTED:** to appoint Ms Daniëlle Dokman of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname as chair of the Subcommittee for Mission and Development

7.8 ***Appointment of Members of the Assembly Planning Committee***

- (35) Before the vote on 7.8 Appointment of Members of the Assembly Planning Committee the Council was asked to take action on Council agenda item 13.2 Terms of Reference for the Assembly Planning Committee (See item 13.2)

The Council then

- (36) **VOTED:** to appoint the following eight members of the Assembly Planning Committee, plus two consultants:

**Africa**

**Bishop Dr Zephania KAMEETA, Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (male, ordained)**

**Ms Mami Brunah ARO SANDANIAINA, Malagasy Lutheran Church (female, lay, youth)**

**Asia**

**Bishop Dr Nicolas TAI, The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong (male, ordained)**

**Latin America & the Caribbean**

**Rev. Dr Gloria ROJAS VARGAS, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (female, ordained)**

**North America**

**Ms Mikka McCracken, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (female, lay, youth)**

**Central Eastern Europe**

**Rev. Agnes PÁNGYÁNSZKY, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary (female, ordained)**

**Nordic Countries**

**Rev. Dr Kjell NORDSTOKKE, Church of Norway (male, ordained),  
proposed chairperson**

**Central Western Europe**

**Superintendent Olivier DANTINE, Evangelical Church of the  
Augsburg Confession in Austria (male, ordained)**

**Consultants:**

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

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

The Council

- (37) **VOTED:** to receive the Report of the Ad-hoc Nominations Committee with appreciation.

## **8. ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT**

- (38) The session was chaired by LWF Vice-President for Africa, Presiding Bishop Dr Alex Malasusa. LWF President Bishop Dr Munib Younan delivered his address entitled "Called to be Disciples on Today's World" (Exhibit 8).
- (39) The Council was invited to comment and raise questions after the President's address. A number of speakers expressed thanks for a moving and thoughtful address on discipleship. The interpretation of discipleship as presented by the President highlighting discipleship in various contexts and describing the meaning of being a disciple in today's world was particularly appreciated.
- (40) A comment focused on the challenge of living as Christian minority in a religious environment where Christians are considered as agents of imperialism. How to remain a disciple of God? What is the message that could be given to displaced people when they are hated by their hosts? In his response the President underlined the value of the gospel. There should not be a notion of minority, but being a Christian living with another religious believer.
- (41) Regarding the situation in Syria concern was expressed on the suffering of refugees and victims. The responsibility of Lutheran Christians implies assisting all people in need independent of their confession or religion. It has to be understood that jurisdiction in Syria is different from the western pattern and reflects relationship between State and Religion. Syria has become a battle field of foreign powers attempting to exercise division. Syrian Christians do not want sectarian division.
- (42) The interpretation of 'discipleship of equals' was particularly appreciated in different contexts. From an Indian perspective there was still a long way to go to reach a discipleship of equals. However out of 11 Lutheran churches in India, 9 are practicing female ordination, and one church is working in the right direction. Another speaker from India while referring to the discipleship of equals questioned where the poor and oppressed fit into the image.

- (43) For a speaker representing the Nordic countries it was important to underline that equal rights for women was a fundamental right in her communion. However she observed that while societies are so different the most important was to understand each other's context.
- (44) A participant from the Central Eastern European region mentioned that discipleship is of growing importance for Lutherans but questioning the concept of equal discipleship. Was there a position that a church could take, which is not compatible with discipleship of Christ? The President in his response underlined that while we are equal there was diversity, concretely God created us different but equal. There are many issues of disagreement, but we need to look into those issues that unite and not concentrate on those issues that separate.
- (45) Regarding an observation on secularism there was concurrence that it was crucial maintaining and strengthening the dialogue with the secularized society.

The Council then

- (46) **VOTED:                    to receive the Address of the President with appreciation.**

## **9.        REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY**

- (47) LWF President Bishop Dr Munib Younan invited the General Secretary to present his report (Exhibit 9).
- (48) In his introduction the General Secretary stressed that as in the past he would not read out the full report, as it was made available to all participants beforehand. However, this year's report has a different character as it did not contain any program details from the departments. Based on the fact that the Council received a detailed report on program implementation reflecting the entire program set-up of the LWF through the Report of the Communion Office Operational Plan (COOP) 2012 (Exhibit 9.1) was not necessary anymore that the General Secretary's report would refer to program items. The proposed procedure was for the Council committees to look into those sections over which they hold governance authority and then bring to the Finance Committee their recommendations for approval.
- (49) Rev. Martin Junge continued saying that the new way of reporting consisted basically of two new approaches, attempting to give a broader picture of the Communion Office's activities and tasks. The interaction with member churches on various issues and levels is one important part of the reporting, while identifying key issues that require the Council's attention is another part.
- (50) A PowerPoint presentation and a videotape facilitated the various stages and sections of the General Secretary's report.
- (51) Participants were then invited to comment on the General Secretary's report or raise relevant questions.
- (52) Speakers expressed thanks and appreciation for the report particularly for the creative and thoughtful demonstration.
- (53) Responding to a question asking for more concrete ideas on the issue of sustainability of churches referring specifically to the regional aspect, the General Secretary felt that there was a need for an in-depth and open discussion on the issue as there were regions with only two member churches while other LWF regions consisted of more than 50 member churches. Moreover, in the European context changes have taken place in recent years not only on the political scene but also relating to church structures, which may need a review of the regional structure within the LWF.

- (54) A speaker asked for more details regarding LWF key issues such as accompaniment and capacity development. Accompaniment was a core concept with concrete procedures. Regions have their specific processes, but certain issues are seen across the regions. Giving an example of one region where aligning accompaniment with capacity development to fight poverty demonstrated in a practical way the churches' participation in diaconal work.
- (55) Theological education and Lutheran identity, and the way towards 2017 were identified as issues that needed particular attention, one speaker said. In coming years growing churches may face problems finding pastors. Are we able to prepare generations of future leaders in times of controversy and conflict? Who stewards the true Lutheran identity? A question that may evolve into defining a good Lutheran witness to the Gospel! As a communion, how could we connect Lutheran identity with theological education in the next few years while heading towards the reformation anniversary?
- (56) The General Secretary referred to the last part of his report where he describes the pedagogy of communion. What are the pedagogical models for a communion of churches that understands itself as a polycentric communion? What means polycentricism in the context of developing theological language and discourse? If we want to be a communion of churches we have to be coherent with our Lutheran ecclesiological self-understanding that the communion is a place of discernment and accompaniment. What does it mean for a global communion of churches as we discern and witness the scripture in our context? The Council already began a discernment process on possible methodologies at its meeting in Bogota and it would be good if this process would be continued in the same direction.
- (57) A participant from Africa raised the issue of economy of the communion, deploring the economic gap existing within the communion. Financial assistance to churches in the south is mostly assigned to projects no longer for overhead costs. How can member churches address the concern of economic gap? It was felt that the issue was of theological nature and would need to be addressed within the communion. How to understand the communion of churches in economic terms? But it is also connected to the concern of sustainability, how do we understand ministry in a context where financial support is lacking.
- (58) A speaker from the Nordic region asked if there was resource material on the issue of pedagogy of the communion and if the Emmaus process in Bogota would function as a model for further development. In response the General Secretary said that there was no existing material as the reflection process on the issue is in its initial phase.
- (59) A representative from India voiced concern over the increasing number of Related Agencies that are taking implementing roles in disaster hit areas and thereby reducing the involvement of member churches. He continued asking how the communion could help finding a compromise or initiate negotiation ensuring that local churches are properly respected. The General Secretary felt that the situation becomes difficult if the presence of Related Agencies has the side effect of marginalizing the role of the churches, therefore the issue needs to be raised within the communion. DWS and DMD had initiated a capacity development program for member churches in emergency situations. The Communion Office was in perfect position to take appropriate action in case of emergencies based on the specialized ministry of World Service and the strong relationship with member churches. Another important aspect was that member churches in disaster hit areas could provide assistance right from the beginning and stay when others begin to leave.
- (60) A Youth member expressed appreciation that the issue of youth unemployment was raised by the General Secretary noting that youth and lay Council members share the same dilemma regarding participation in LWF governance meetings. What was the role of lay Council

members in the LWF governance body and how was their contribution valued. In response it was said that the issue would need deeper reflection including all involved in order to find a satisfactory solution for lay people to participate in the governance bodies.

- (61) In response to a concern regarding LWF involvement in China the Council was informed that an LWF delegation headed by the General Secretary will visit the area in the month of July. At the same occasion appreciation was expressed for the assistance provided by the churches in the region in the preparation of this travel.
- (62) On the issue of restructuring the Communion Office a request was made that member churches were informed early enough of changes which might impact timely project applications and availabilities of resources.

The Council then

- (63) **VOTED:**                    **to receive the Report of the General Secretary with appreciation and refer relevant matters arising from it to the Committees for discussion and appropriate action.**

#### 9.0.1 ***Claiming the Gift of Communion in a fragmented World***

- (64) As informed by the President when presenting the Council Agenda and Time Schedule, the Council met in a confidential session to discuss the document entitled “Claiming the gift of Communion in a fragmented world” (Exhibit 9.0.1). At the conclusion of the confidential session Council members adopted a document called “Message of the Council”. It was agreed that the “Message of the Council” would be shared with all LWF member churches and published on the LWF website.

#### 9.1 ***Report of the LWF Communion Office Operational Plan (COOP) 2012***

- (65) The Council received the LWF Communion Office Operational Plan 2012 (Exhibit 9.1). The report was discussed by the respective committees and recommendations were forwarded to the Finance Committee. The Council took action based on the Report of the Finance Committee (see item 18 paragraph 171).

#### 9.2 ***Transfer of Fundraising Portfolio***

- (66) The Meeting of Officers in November 2012 recommended the transfer of the fundraising portfolio from the Standing Committee for Communication and Fundraising to the Finance Committee. Following the discussion in the Finance Committee (see item 18.1.2 paragraph 173).

The Council

- (67) **VOTED:**                    **to transfer the fundraising portfolio from the Standing Committee for Communication and Fundraising to the Finance Committee;**  
**to name the committee “Standing Committee for Communications”.**

#### 9.7 ***From Conflict to Communion***

- (68) The session was chaired by National Bishop Susan Johnson. She welcomed Bishop Dr emeritus Eero Huovinen, former vice-president of the Lutheran World Federation and Lutheran co-chair of the Lutheran—Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Bishop Dr Munib Younan, President of the Lutheran World Federation, who addressed the plenary on the occasion of the

launching of the document “From Conflict to Communion. Lutheran—Catholic Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017.

- (69) Addressing the Council, Bishop Dr Huovinen conveyed the greetings of all the members, consultants and secretaries of the Commission, and pointed out that as Lutherans and Catholics plan together to commemorate the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation, they plan to do so in an ecumenical spirit, leaving the conflicts of the past behind and seeking the unity of the church in a spirit of shared faith and mutual love. Bishop Dr Huovinen remarked that there remained a challenging learning process before us as together we face the obstacles on the way to the full visible unity of the church.
- (70) Bishop Dr Huovinen drew the Council’s attention to the theological issues, central both to the Lutheran and the Roman Catholic faith such as justification, Eucharist, ministry, Scripture and tradition and ecclesiology, which in the past have separated us but where we have come to understand that we actually have much in common. He stressed the need to acquaint ourselves with the tradition of the other and for continued profound and sound theological work.
- (71) He underlined the considerable progress that had been made in the ecumenical dialogue between the Lutheran churches and the Roman Catholic Church since its beginning in 1967. Pope John XXIII’s frequently quoted words, “The things that unite us are greater than those that divide us” could also be seen as the motto of the document, “From Conflict to Communion.”
- (72) Cardinal Koch expressed his appreciation for the invitation to address the Council. He regarded this as an opportunity to look into the future as we seek further possibilities for our continuing ecumenical journey.
- (73) Quoting the words of Pope Benedict XVI, “to celebrate throughout the world a common ecumenical commemoration, to grapple at the world level with fundamental issues” and to do this not “in the form of a triumphant celebration, but as a common profession of faith in the One Triune God, in common obedience to Our Lord and to his Word,” Cardinal Koch pointed out that the Catholic Church was happy to accept the invitation together with Lutherans to commemorate the Reformation.
- (74) Cardinal Koch expressed his joy over the growing convergence and the hope that the common commemoration of the Reformation would provide a bold impulse to the process of convergence and the opportunity to take further steps toward full visible unity. He emphasized that only if we have the courage to face up to the historical conflicts and their consequences will we be able to reconstruct the historical path to closer communion between Lutherans and Catholics.
- (75) Cardinal Koch pointed out that the document by the Lutheran--Roman Catholic Commission on Unity reflected the huge advances that had been made and that its considerable merits consisted in the way that it gave expression to central aspects of Martin Luther’s theology and the theologically controversial and contentious questions pertaining to the doctrine of justification, the Eucharist, the ministry of the church, and the relationship between Scripture and tradition. He commended the document which includes everything that in past Catholic-Lutheran ecumenical dialogues has been emphasized as common to both communities’ understanding of the faith.
- (76) Since the document presents the findings of the ecumenical dialogue between Lutherans and Catholics, it can serve as an “in-via-declaration,” which records what has already been achieved in terms of developing community and should no longer be gone back on.

- (77) Cardinal Koch underlined that “From Conflict to Communion” offered a good foundation and helpful direction indicator and expressed the hope that it would be received by both sides and serve the growing communion between Lutherans and Catholics.
- (78) Bishop Dr Munib Younan commended “From Conflict to Communion” and stressed that the document provided an opportunity to correct our behavior and to engage one another constructively for the sake of God’s mission in this fragmented world.
- (79) The President stressed the importance that this document, which constitutes a crucial tool for improving relationships and, more importantly, common witness in all contexts, be received in local communities.
- (80) Bishop Dr Younan suggested that the new phase in the Lutheran-Roman Catholic relationship signified by “From Conflict to Communion” could lead to further growth in the relationship between the two communities, and welcomed the focus on baptism in the ongoing dialogue.
- (81) In reference to the five ecumenical imperatives as outlined in the document, Bishop Dr Younan concluded that these provided insights that will be of assistance in all ecumenical dialogues and underlined that many communities will regard this document as finally catching up with the mutual welcome many communities have extended to one another for quite some time. Referring to the challenges and expectations at the level of families and local communities where eucharistic hospitality between Lutherans and Catholics exists in practice, he posed the question as to whether it might be feasible to explore the possibility of establishing forms of eucharistic hospitality between the two Christian traditions within the framework of 2017.
- (82) Appreciation of the document was expressed and the commission commended for its work. The significance of paragraph 224 “... when Lutheran Christians celebrate the anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation, they are not thereby celebrating the division of the Western church. No one who is theologically responsible can celebrate the division of Christians from one another” was underscored.
- (83) To the question regarding the reception process in both faith communities, Cardinal Koch assured the plenary that the Roman Catholic Church would do its utmost to encourage and facilitate the Catholic reception and indeed adoption of the document through, for instance, the Roman Catholic bishops’ conferences.
- (84) Referring to Cardinal Koch’s critical question regarding the authoritative confessional writings of the Lutheran churches, the question was raised as to whether it was not the case that also in the Roman Catholic Church the confessional position did not necessarily reflect that actual reality, or whether he was suggesting that the Reformation churches needed a similar teaching authority as the Catholic Church. In his answer, Cardinal Koch stressed that he was well aware of the discrepancies that exist between the official teaching of the church and the actual practice. Nonetheless, he had wanted to point out that future dialogues should not only explore the theological positions of individual theologians, but of the authoritative theological basis of the confessional writings of the Lutheran church.
- (85) Furthermore, it was stressed that the document is to be regarded as an “in via” declaration that points to the future.
- (86) It was noted that much was happening in terms of eucharistic hospitality at the grassroots but not the official level. In order to be relevant, whatever takes place at the ecumenical level needs to be experienced at the grassroots level (sharing of communion hospitality and recognition of each other’s baptism). Therefore, attention needed to be paid to the relationship between achievements in ecumenical dialogue and grassroots ecumenism.

- (87) One of the central messages of the document is that the pain or sin of division was not so much about doctrine but the way in which this was carried out and it was noted that a major challenge to the visible unity of the church was the actual structure of the church.
- (88) In his response to these remarks, Cardinal Koch stressed the need to look at both traditions' fundamental documents in order to clarify the crucial question as to what it means to be church. Only thus can a common basis for further discussions be established.
- (89) Referring to the dialectics between the ecumenical dialogues and grassroots ecumenism, Cardinal Koch pointed out that this was not a one way street but rather that also the grass roots need to be theologically accountable for what was being practiced at the local level.
- (90) While Cardinal Koch agreed that the goal of the dialogue was common eucharistic hospitality, he reminded the Council that we must not have exaggerated expectations and preserve each tradition's integrity. He said that according to the Roman Catholic understanding, the precondition for sharing the eucharistic table is not only consensus on how the Eucharist is understood, but also a broader consensus in ecclesiological questions as well as questions regarding the ministry.
- (91) National Bishop Johnson adjourned the session and thanked the three speakers for their thought-provoking contributions.

## **10. REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON FOR THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

- (92) The President invited the chairperson of the Finance Committee, Ms Christina Jackson-Skelton, to present her report (Exhibit 10).
- (93) A Powerpoint presentation was used to highlight the key points of the presentation.
- (94) Ms Jackson-Skelton presented the 2012 financial results which were positive when compared with the approved budget and the prior year results. Total operating income exceeded expenses, the actuarial pension provision was reduced resulting in an increase in non-operating results, and total operating reserves were increased. The total income over expenses was EUR 3,011,000.
- (95) The Geneva coordination expenditure was 3.5% below budget in Swiss Franc terms.
- (96) LWF reserves increased from EUR 19.0 million to EUR 21.7 million, which is above the minimum target level.
- (97) The level of membership fee contributions continues to lag the total of fair membership fees. Growth in this area would help to provide support for areas that have been identified as high priority in the strategic planning process, such as theological and ecumenical work.
- (98) The LWF Staff Welfare Plan (SWP) merged with Abendrot Foundation, Basel on 1 January 2012. All assets and liabilities have been transferred to Abendrot based on the preliminary agreement signed. The 2012 SWP Audit shall be submitted to the authorities and Abendrot to start the full liquidation. The SWP board shall be convened to approve the audited accounts and the liquidation is expected to be completed soon.
- (99) The LWF Endowment Fund is a separate legal entity and its results are not consolidated within the LWF financial statements. However, Ms Jackson-Skelton referred to the Endowment Fund Board report (Exhibit 18.2.) Contributions to the Endowment Fund in 2012 of CHF 134,007 continued to be lower than anticipated, although they exceeded 2001, which was the lowest since 1999. On the other hand, the investment performance of the portfolio in 2012 was extremely positive with a net return of CHF 951,410. The Operating Reserve at the end of 2012

is still negative but at a much reduced level of CHF 51,958. No distribution can be made to the LWF while the reserve is negative due to net negative investment performance. There will be a joint meeting of the Finance Committee and the Endowment Fund Board during this meeting of the LWF Council to discuss the investment principles and distribution policies of the Fund. In order to be successful in achieving the goal of CHF 20 million in assets by the year 2017, additional strategies should be discussed and implemented.

- (100) Ms Jackson-Skelton concluded by saying that the staff and management should be commended for their careful monitoring of budgeted expenses and good budget planning resulting in positive net results. Going forward, it will be important for the Council and LWF management to consider ways to sustain or grow the work in the midst of rising costs. Additions to the Endowment Fund and increasing membership contributions and other unrestricted revenue sources are two important considerations.
- (101) One Council member enquired why the Endowment Fund had experienced a decline in donations.
- (102) Ms Jackson-Skelton suggested two reasons: Firstly that member churches have been experiencing financial difficulties; secondly, that the declining global markets have been discouraging people from giving to a fund that is based on market growth. It would be helpful to provide fresh resources to enable our member churches to talk about the Endowment Fund again.
- (103) It was suggested that the 2017 “Observance” might provide an opportunity to make a fresh appeal.
- (104) Another inquiry referred to the nature of the LWF reserves and what were the pros and cons of this growing reserve.
- (105) Ms Jackson-Skelton suggested that it would be helpful in future reports to give a breakdown of reserves by department. The reserves help to manage the financial risk of some of our project activity.

The Council

- (106) **VOTED:**                    **to receive the Report of the Chairperson for the Finance Committee with appreciation and refer it to the Finance Committee and other Council Committees for discussion and appropriate action.**

## **11. REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE “LUTHER 2017: 500 YEARS OF REFORMATION”**

- (107) The session was chaired by the Presiding Bishop of the Church of Norway, Helga Haugland Byfuglien. She welcomed the chair of the Special Committee (SC), Rev. Dr Walter Altmann to present the Special Committee Report.
- (108) Addressing the Council, Rev. Dr Altmann conveyed the greetings on behalf of the Special Committee and spoke out his thanks to the General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge for having attended the Special Committee meeting in Geneva on the 28 February – 1 March 2013. Words of gratitude were also offered to the LWF staff members for their assistance during the working process of the Special Committee. He briefly introduced the tasks the Special Committee had been entrusted with. The main task in regard to the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation was to offer a thematic guideline for member churches for commemorating the anniversary and to outline some possible activities. The chairperson also pointed out that while

approaching the commemoration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, one should also keep in mind the next important anniversary that is going to take place in year 2030 – 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Confessio Augustana*. Regarding the terminology referring to the anniversary, he explained that the Special Committee preferred to use the term “commemorate” instead of “celebrate” in order to avoid triumphalist attitude and not to evoke the impression as if the division of the Christian world would be celebrated. The importance of the last aspect had become clear especially in the context of ecumenical relations.

- (109) Rev. Dr Altmann introduced the highlights of the report, starting with mentioning the initiatives created by the already existing networks and research groups (Global Young Reformers' Network, WICAS (Women in Church and Society), LWF Centre in Wittenberg, Luther Garden project, LWF hermeneutics program, Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg and others). He also drew attention to the ecumenical dimension of commemoration. In 2012, the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity for instance finalized the document “From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017”; the Anglican Communion had expressed an interest in joining the anniversary commemorations; the LWF Mennonite Task Force, meeting for the second time in July 2013, will discuss the Reformation anniversary and the place the reconciliation process with the Mennonites will have in it. The LWF has also entered into discussion with the World Council of Reformed Churches regarding possible joint processes related to the Reformation anniversary. With the Orthodox, the understanding of “renewal” in the church will be explored in the context of the anniversary of the Reformation. The committee also suggested that the possibilities of cooperation with the Pentecostals regarding the anniversary be further explored.
- (110) The presentation continued with presenting the goals of the commemoration of the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation, which are: 1) strengthening the communion among the member churches as it lives and works together for a just, peaceful and reconciled world; 2) exploring the meaning of Lutheran identity; 3) strengthening the ecumenical commitment. These goals are supported by the values defined by the Special Committee regarding the commemoration of the anniversary: 1) unity in diversity and 2) catholicity and contextuality. Rev. Dr Altmann explained that these values are based on the LWF's self-understanding and values identified in the LWF Strategy for 2012-2017 (Dignity and justice; Compassion and commitment; respect for diversity; Inclusion and participation; Transparency and accountability).
- (111) Having pointed out the goals and the values of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, the chairperson introduced the principles suggested for the commemoration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. Regarding the content principles, the committee had agreed on the following: 1) Reformation is a global citizen: the celebrations of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation must include a global perspective, and it is crucial that the perspective of minority situations is not overlooked. It is vital not merely to look back at our theological heritage, but also at the way in which the evangelical insights of the Reformation gradually unfolded in different settings; 2) Ecumenical accountability: the approach to the anniversary needs to be ecumenically sensitive and accountable. The anniversary constitutes an opportunity to make visible the fruits of the ecumenical processes and achievements; 3) Churches of Reformation are churches in ongoing reformation: church must be open to constant renewal, always seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in face of contemporary challenges. As for the formal principles, following principles were lined out by the Special Committee: sustainability, strategic fit, benefits for member churches and process orientation.
- (112) He explained that the Special Committee devoted considerable time to identifying themes and subthemes for the anniversary of the Reformation. The committee agreed that the theme

should refer to the very core of the gospel and the Lutheran identity, as well as speak to a wider audience “in the world”. Accordingly, as the main theme for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, *Liberated by God’s grace* was proposed by the Special Committee (related readings Isa 55:1; Rev 21:6; Rom 3:24; Eph 2:8-10; Gal 5:1; Lk 4:16-21). Regarding the subthemes, the SC intended to formulate them in a way that they would address the contextual challenges the Christian community faces in today’s world. Accordingly, the subthemes the committee proposed are following: 1) salvation-not for sale: conveying the central message of the doctrine of justification, expressing also a clear critique of contemporary practices and concepts that treat salvation as a commodity on the “religious market”, i.e., prosperity theology which is in clear opposition to Luther’s theology of the cross; 2) human beings – not for sale: underscoring that every individual is a unique person created in God’s own image and must therefore be fully respected in her/his dignity and integrity; 3) creation – not for sale: underlining theologically that nature has to be fully respected and protected as God’s good creation, entrusted to human care.

- (113) Rev. Dr Altmann also referred to the proposal of the SC to associate the three periods of ecclesial year within the broader thematic context for the year of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary: Advent as symbolizing the receiving and celebrating of the renewing power of the gospel; Lenten as the time for repentance and the healing of memories; Pentecost as the time to rejoice in anticipation of the unity of the church as God’s gift.
- (114) He stated that although the years 2015-2017 constitute the core time of commemorating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, 2017 is a focal time for the further formation of the global communion and the reaffirmation of the LWF’s ecumenical commitment. As focal points of the commemoration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran reformation, the 2017 LWF Assembly and Reformation day were pointed out by the Special Committee. Rev. Dr Altmann emphasized the symbolic importance of the 31<sup>st</sup> of October for Lutheran churches – despite of the historical rightness of the events connected to it and he drew especially attention to the proposals connected to the worship services during the 2017 Assembly and the Reformation Day. He pointed out that the LWF needs to identify the locations of the services to be held on the Reformation Day in 2017. The LWF Communion Office will provide materials that can be used by the member churches when preparing worship materials (liturgy, hymns, prayers, homiletic tools) for services to be held on that day. Church bells should ring in remembrance of the Reformation and as a call to prayer. The ringing of the bells of the *Stadtkirche* in Wittenberg could be shared by the LWF and then used in the services around the globe. Transmission of the worship services all around the globe should be provided via internet on the October 31, 2017.
- (115) Towards the end of his presentation, the chairperson referred to some recommendations the SC had made in regard to the activities related to the commemoration of the anniversary. He pointed out some of them: to use existing networks, e.g. youth and women networks, but also the networks of representatives of theological institutions for sharing or collecting ideas for the Reformation anniversary; to collect daily readings from Luther and other Reformers and contemporary voices, linking to the subthemes and to encourage member churches to make more use of Luther’s writings or to provide new updated translations; to develop a common liturgy for Reformation Day 2017 commemorations and services in the Communion Office; to pay attention to developing interreligious processes, particularly involving the Abrahamic religions; to encourage the member churches to develop their own themes and subthemes along the lines of the ones proposed by the SC; to encourage the member churches to make use of the LWF web site dedicated to the Reformation anniversary, as well as other existing forums for sharing with other member churches their own Reformation stories, local processes

and ideas; to be aware of major local projects such as the Luther garden in Wittenberg, the EKD Luther-decade, the Hungarian Luther animation project, 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Marangu in Africa, publication of Luther's writings in Spanish in Latin America etc. Rev. Dr Altmann also explained that a descriptive overview of the already existing Reformation 500 plans has already been prepared by the LWF Communion Office, yet it wasn't delivered to the Council members in order not to overburden them with materials.

- (116) At the end of his presentation, Rev. Dr Altmann declared that the committee had ended its work in preparing guidelines for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation and hands the further work over to the LWF Communion Office. The LWF Communion Office will continue preparations for 2017 commemorations and will present a relevant plan to the LWF Council in 2014.
- (117) After the presentation, the floor was opened for discussion.
- (118) One Council member expressed appreciation for the SC report, posing a question concerning the liturgical materials that are to be prepared by the Communion Office for the anniversary, as there were two kinds of liturgical materials mentioned in the SC report – the ones to be produced jointly with the Roman Catholics and the material that was to be produced for the LWF Assembly. Concern was expressed about eventually producing two competing materials for the liturgy, whereas there must of course be space for some differences. The chairperson pointed out that responsibility for this preparation lies with the LWF Communion Office and for finding a good solution here, a good coordination work is needed, as the joint Lutheran-Catholic liturgical working group has started its preparations already.
- (119) One speaker from the northern region had three remarks on the SC report appreciating the “trinity” of three subthemes. However, it was pointed out that there might be a danger of equalizing the creation with nature, whereas as human beings are also part of the nature. The ecumenical dimension was appreciated but also recalled that there is a need to look at the other forces which are not institutionalized. Collecting of daily readings was considered to be a good idea and it would be important to combine Luther's quotations with contemporary voices. In his answer, Rev. Dr Altmann considered it to be necessary to make a certain difference between creation and human beings: the lack of clarity of overlapping could be avoided by preparing the materials accordingly. As for the readings, Rev. Dr Altmann pointed out that the Communion Office will need to have to identify a group who will identify the daily readings.
- (120) Another participant appreciated the main theme as well as the wording “not for sale” for the subthemes. Furthermore the concentration on the content, not so much on the anniversary event itself was appreciated. Concerning the daily readings of Luther, it was proposed to take parallel quotations from the Bible.
- (121) Concern was expressed regarding the main theme of the anniversary, as “liberated” might be misinterpreted in American context and about the lack of eschatological hope and promise in the document. Rev. Dr Altmann in his response referred to the possibility or even need to extend the main theme with questions like *from what* and *what for*, that would help to avoid the danger of misunderstanding the term „liberated”.
- (122) One speaker from India paid attention to the fact that interfaith dialogues are contemporarily very challenging and offer possibilities for bringing people from different settings together. Whereas the SC report mentioned only Abrahamic religions, especially Islam, attention should also be paid to the Hinduism which becomes more and more global. Rev. Dr Altmann mentioned in his reply that also other ecumenical dialogues were considered.

- (123) It was inquired if an ecumenical approach to 2017 would also offer a good possibility to continue a dialogue about the Eucharist with the Roman Catholics. The need for continuing discussion on this was affirmed by Rev. Dr Altmann.

The Council

- (124) **VOTED:**
- to receive the Report of the Special Committee „Luther 2017: 500 Years of Reformation” with appreciation;**
  - to request the General Secretary to base the further planning of the Reformation anniversary in 2017 on this report;**
  - to request the General Secretary to share the report with member churches and encourage their participation in the LWF programs for the Reformation anniversary.**

- (125) The President gave Rev. Dr Altmann a cross from Jerusalem as an expression of gratitude for the work done by the Special Committee, and in particular for his role as Moderator of the World Council of Churches, which he will conclude at the WCC Assembly in Busan later this year.

## **12. ENVISIONING A SUSTAINABLE LWF**

- (126) The Council reflected on visions towards a sustainable LWF. Group discussions took place ensuring the participation of the different generations present at the Council. Major insights from the group discussions were presented at the plenary session 13. The outcome will also inform the framing of the revision of the LWF Strategy scheduled to take place in 2015.

## **13. LWF TWELFTH ASSEMBLY**

### **13.1 *Venue of the LWF Twelfth Assembly***

- (127) The General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge recalled that the Council in 2012 had decided that the Assembly would take place in 2017 instead of 2016 so that the Reformation anniversary and the Assembly could be celebrated at the same time. An invitation from the three member churches in Namibia had been received in due time. A team from the Communion Office visited Windhoek in March to look at the local facilities and to provide an introduction to the representatives of the three churches (Exhibit 13.1.1).
- (128) The session was chaired by Bishop Dr July who was the hosting Bishop of the last LWF Assembly in Stuttgart invited Bishop Dr Kameeta from The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), Presiding Bishop Dr Nambala from The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) and Bishop Hertel from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN-GELC) to present officially their invitation to host the LWF Twelfth Assembly.
- (129) Bishop Hertel thanked the Council for the privilege of presenting officially the invitation and to bring Namibia closer to the communion.
- (130) Presiding Bishop Dr Nambala started his presentation with the African proverb “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together” which reflects very well the idea of being in communion. He then gave a brief history of the churches by going back as far as the 19th century when the first missionary societies arrived to Namibia. Over the years the Rhenish

Missionary Society (RMS) took over from the previous missionary societies which had all come from South Africa where they had started their missionary work in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. As Namibia is a vast country the RMS requested Finnish missionaries to establish a mission in the north of Namibia. The two Lutheran missionary backgrounds, long distances from one region to the other which made it difficult to connect to each other and former policies of racial segregation, led to the creation of the three churches. ELCIN was founded in 1954 and has 700.000 members. At present the three churches are in discussion about becoming one church. 90 % of the Namibians are Christians and 60 % are Lutherans.

- (131) Bishop Dr Kameeta explained that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) grew out of the work of the Rhenish Missionary Society which came to Namibia in 1842. The RMS had taken over the missionary activities from two Lutherans from Berlin who had spread the Gospel for 67 years. The church was first called the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa (SWA). After the independence of Namibia in 1990 the ELCRN took its present name. The church was created in 1957 and has 420.000 members.
- (132) Bishop Hertel who represents the German speaking ELCIN (GELC) which is smallest of the three churches informed about the United Church Council. It was founded in 2007 as a result of first discussions about unity in sixties, interrupted due to racial segregation policies and renewed discussions as of 1990. The United Church Council discusses issues related to the church unity, speaks with a common voice to government and public, supervises the United Lutheran Theological Seminary Paulinum, streamlines partnership relationships and monitors a pilot congregation the Intercity Lutheran Congregation in Windhoek where members of all the three churches worship together.
- (133) The three bishops explained then that their invitation to host the Twelfth LWF Assembly was motivated by the immense support the Namibians had received by the LWF during the years of struggle for independence. They believe strongly that the Assembly delegates should be able to witness an independent Namibia and to encourage the Namibians to continue their struggle for peace. It was reiterated that the African Leadership at their meeting in Nairobi in December 2012 endorsed the Namibian invitation and therefore not only Namibia but Africa invited the Lutheran communion to a Lutheran country in a part of Africa which was very much oppressed and isolated at the time when the LWF Assembly took place on the African continent in Dar es Salaam in 1977.
- (134) The invitation was concluded by a powerpoint presentation. Bishop Dr July thanked the three bishops for their invitation.

The Council

- (135) **VOTED:**                    **to hold the LWF Twelfth Assembly in Windhoek, Namibia.**  
   **to hold the LWF Twelfth Assembly on 23 - 30 May 2017**
- (136) As some concern was raised about the proposed dates, the General Secretary noted that the possibility of reviewing the dates would be analyzed and communicated in case of any change.

### 13.2 *Terms of Reference for the Assembly Planning Committee*

- (137) In view of the upcoming Twelfth Assembly in 2017, the Council was requested to approve the Terms of Reference for the Assembly Planning Committee (Exhibit 13.2).

The Council

- (138) **VOTED:**                    **to approve the Terms of Reference for the Assembly Planning Committee**

**13.3 Appointment of members to the Assembly Planning Committee**

- (139) Please refer to 7.8 Appointment of members to the Assembly Planning Committee under Appointment of Ad-hoc Nominations Committee.

**14. LWF BUDGET 2014**

- (140) The General Secretary, Rev. Martin Junge, presented to the Council the LWF Budget 2014 (Exhibit 14) and the LWF Program Plans 2014 (Exhibit 14.1). The Finance Committee will bring a recommendation for action by the Council through its report.
- (141) The following key points were raised during the presentation:
- (142) The budget and program plans are now fully aligned.
- (143) The General Secretary presented a balanced budget of EUR 87.687 million (income and expenditure). 2012 income and expenditure were exceptional (over EUR 100 million) because of the emergency work carried out by DWS.
- (144) As always, this is presented as a fundraising budget. If income is less than planned expenditure will be cut accordingly. The Meeting of Officers will review progress at their October meeting.
- (145) Assumptions made in this budget include the fact that full membership fees are expected to be received. It also includes a contribution from the Endowment Fund.
- (146) Risks include fluctuations in the financial markets and currency exchange rates. However, the planning process has been sober and it is believed that this budget can be achieved.
- (147) The presentation of the 2014 budget was received with appreciation.

**15. COMMITTEE FOR THEOLOGY AND ECUMENICAL RELATIONS**

- (148) The chairperson of the committee, Bishop Dr Miloš Klátik, presented the Report of the Committee for Theology and Ecumenical Relations.

**15.1 With reference to Council Exhibit 15.1, Report of the Chairperson of the Board of the Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research**

The Council

- (149) **VOTED:**                    **to receive the Report of the Chairperson of the Board of the Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research with appreciation;**
- to thank the Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg, and its staff for its assistance to the Office for Ecumenical Relations;**
- to express appreciation for the continued support by the Institute for the bilateral dialogues and for its substantial contributions to these dialogues;**
- to reaffirm the strong commitment of the LWF to the work in ecumenical research to which the Institute is devoted.**

15.2 *With reference to Council Exhibit 9.7, Report of the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Commission, From Conflict to Communion*

The Council

- (150) **VOTED:** to receive the report of the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, From Conflict to Communion, with appreciation and commend it for reception by the Council;
- to thank the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Commission on Unity for its work, in particular the two vice-chairs, Bishop emeritus Dr Eero Huovinen (Lutheran Co-Chair), Finland, and Bishop Prof. Dr Gerhard Ludwig Müller (Roman Catholic Co-Chair until 2012), Germany, Prof. Dr Kathryn Johnson and Prof. Dr Susan K. Wood, SCL, for finalizing the document, and Rev. Prof. Dr Theodor Dieter, Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg (Lutheran) and Prof. Dr Wolfgang Thönissen, Johann-Adam-Möhler-Institut für Ökumenik, Germany (Roman Catholic), for translating the document into German;
- to commend the report to the member churches for study.

15.3 *With reference to Council Exhibit 9.6, LWF Gender Justice Policy*

The Council

- (151) **VOTED:** to adopt the LWF Gender Justice Policy and its recommendations (pp. 1–5) as a framework to orient the implementation of gender justice commitments at all levels of the communion;
- to receive the LWF Gender Justice Policy Methodology (pp. 6–23) and recommend its implementation through the regional expressions and member churches with the expectation that the methodology be adapted to local contexts;
- to request the General Secretary to report to the Council on the progress of the implementation of the LWF Gender Justice Policy in the Communion.
- (152) The Council
- (153) **VOTED:** to receive the Report of the Committee for Theology and Ecumenical Relations with appreciation.

16. **COMMITTEE FOR MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT**

- (154) The President invited the chairperson, Bishop Niels H. Arendt, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, to present the report (Exhibit 16).

16.1 *With reference to the report of the Committee for Mission and Development*

The Council

- (155) **VOTED:** to receive the Report of the Committee for Mission and Development with appreciation.

16.2 ***With reference to the Sharing of Resources in the LWF Communion of Churches***

- (156) Following the Report of the Committee for Mission and Development on future challenges in funding the work of the Department for Mission and Development (DMD) and in particular the member churches project work as a result of increasing tendencies by some funding partners to support member churches bilaterally,

The Council

- (157) **VOTED:** to endorse the proposal that the Department for Mission and Development takes the initiative to research and analyze these trends within the communion (making use of tools such as surveys and face to face dialogue) with the view that this could result in the discovery of new models for relationships and collaboration between partners and Department for Mission and Development, especially related to project funding.

16.3 ***With reference to the HIV and AIDS Work in the LWF***

- (158) National Bishop Susan Johnson commented about the procedure and reaffirmed the importance of distributing the voting documents of the various committees in advance to all Council members.

The Council

- (159) **VOTED:** to receive with appreciation the report of the LWF HIV and AIDS Campaign; and  
to ask member churches to consider the recommended future directions in their HIV and AIDS ministries; and  
to request the Communion Office through the General Secretary to review the recommendations in the document and develop concrete action plans on how the work is continued.

16.4 ***With reference to the Theological Framework for Capacity Development: Growing Together in Capacity for Holistic Mission***

The Council

- (160) **VOTED:** to receive the proposed Theological Framework for Capacity Development and to ask the Communion Office to use it as a basis for its work on capacity development with member churches.

16.5 ***With reference to the 500 Years of Reformation***

The Council

- (161) **VOTED:** to endorse the project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary (production of an animation film on Luther) as a project of the whole communion to be used in Lutheran churches worldwide and to encourage all member churches to contribute to the production and make use of it.

16.6 ***With reference to the Report of the Subcommittee for Mission and Development***

The Council

- (162) **VOTED:** to receive the Report of the interim Chairperson for the Subcommittee for Mission and Development with appreciation and to share with the Council the list of projects approved (Exhibit 16.1) during its meeting.

**17. COMMITTEE FOR WORLD SERVICE**

- (163) The Chairperson of the Committee, Rev. Dr Augustine Jeyakumar, presented the report of the Committee for World Service to the Council as outlined in Exhibit 17.

- (164) He reported that in Namibia and Angola over one million people are currently affected by the most severe drought in three decades and are lacking access to sufficient food and water. The Namibian government has called for international assistance and the LWF member churches have requested the assistance of World Service to enhance their capacity to reach out to the most vulnerable that are unable to access government food distributions in Namibia. He explained that the Committee for World Service appreciated the joint action planned by the LWF churches in Namibia and World Service as well as the ACT Forum and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Angola and asked the LWF Council and LWF member churches for their support.

- (165) After a brief discussion, the Council amended the proposed recommendation and

- (166) **VOTED:** to urge the LWF member churches to support the joint actions planned by the LWF churches in Namibia and World Service as well as the ACT Forum and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Angola with prayers and financial resources.

to receive the Report of the Committee for World Service with appreciation.

**18. FINANCE COMMITTEE**

- (167) The President called on the chairperson of the Finance Committee, Ms Jackson-Skelton, to present the report to the Council. Thanking the committee for its diligent work, Ms Jackson-Skelton read the report with its nine recommendations.

- (168) She then referred to the main areas discussed by the committee and brought as information to the Council: her Finance Committee report; the financial statements of the LWF Pension Fund, the LWF Foundation - Endowment Fund, and the Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg, France; the auditor's report; the LWF Council Committee structures, and an overview of the activities of the Office for Finance and Administration.

- (169) In conclusion, Ms Jackson-Skelton thanked the staff of the Office for Finance and Administration for their work and guidance to the committee members over the past year.

- (170) The President thanked Ms Jackson-Skelton for the report.

The Council

- (171) **VOTED:** to receive the Report of the LWF Communion Office Operational Plan 2012, with appreciation.

to receive the Report of the Board of the LWF Foundation – Endowment Fund with appreciation.

to receive the Report of the Auditors on the Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2012; and

to receive and adopt the Consolidated Financial Statements and the Financial Statements of the General Secretariat & Department for Planning and Operations; the Department for Theology & Public Witness; the Department for Mission and Development; and the Department for World Service for the fiscal year 2012.

to appoint PricewaterhouseCoopers as the Auditors of the LWF Communion Office for the year ended December 31, 2013.

to approve the LWF Budget for 2014 with expenditure of EUR 87,676,868, a surplus of EUR 10,202, and a cost-of-living adjustment of 0.5% in the salaries of the Geneva and field staff; and

to charge any possible deficits against the reserves of the respective departments; and

to authorize the LWF Communion Office to raise funds for the LWF Program Plan as presented in Council Exhibit 14.1;

to authorize the Meeting of Officers to approve adjustments to this budget at its next meeting.

#### 18.1 *Issues Discussed by the Committee*

##### 18.1.1 **Gender Justice Policy**

- (172) The Gender Justice Policy was discussed and supported by the committee with the suggestion that member churches be encouraged to discuss and report back regarding actions taken to implement the policy.

##### 18.1.2 **Resource Mobilization**

- (173) In accordance with the recommendation of the Meeting of Officers in November 2012, the portfolio for fundraising that was previously given to the Standing Committee for Communication and Fundraising is now the responsibility of the Finance Committee (see item and vote 9.2 Transfer of Fundraising Portfolio).
- (174) The committee received an initial report on resource mobilization with appreciation. The committee was encouraged by the update given on new initiatives and tools for resource mobilization and looks forward to the development of the funding raising strategy for its next meeting. The committee encouraged close communication between the Resource Mobilization Officer and individual member churches/agencies in order to get a better sense of how they can support the member churches in their particular fundraising efforts.
- (175) Appreciation was expressed to those member churches that have made special efforts to pay their membership fees. It was noted that the non-payment of some membership fees remains a cause for concern. Progress on this will be monitored as a regular item on the committee agenda.

### 18.1.3 Accounting System

- (176) The committee supports the LWF moving to a single accounting software system which will help with operational efficiency and timely reporting. The Committee for World Service further encouraged this move.

### 18.1.4 Finance Leadership

- (177) The committee expressed appreciation for the work and thorough preparation of the LWF Staff that support the committee, and for their patient and open style of working with the committee.

The Council

- (178) **VOTED:**                    **to approve the Report of the Finance Committee with appreciation.**

## 19. COMMITTEE FOR ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC VOICE

- (179) Ms Mikka McCracken, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, presented the report at the request of the Chairperson, Bishop Melvin Jiménez, Lutheran Costa Rica Church.

### 19.1 *Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders*

- (180) At the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' Dialogue on Faith and Protection in December 2012, LWF President Munib Younan suggested that there be a "Code of Conduct" for faith leaders to welcome migrants, refugees and other forcibly displaced people, and stand together against xenophobia. This proposal received widespread support and was embraced by the High Commissioner. At the Dialogue's closing plenary, the High Commissioner "volunteered" the LWF to represent the Christian voice in follow-up activities. From February-April 2013, a coalition of leading faith-based humanitarian organizations and academic institutions drafted "Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders." These affirmations (Exhibit 9.5) were publicly released at the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations in Geneva on June 12, 2013. It is hoped that these Affirmations will enjoy broad support around the world among faith leaders at local, national, and international level, and that the Affirmations will have the practical effect of fostering support for refugees and other displaced people in the faith leaders' communities.

- (181) Supportive comments were received from three Council Committees.

The Council

- (182) **VOTED:**                    **to endorse the document "Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders", commend it to the LWF member churches for their endorsement and widespread dissemination, and urge the member churches to bring the affirmations to the councils of churches and the interfaith bodies in their respective countries.**

### 19.2 *Climate Change: A Challenge to Our Church*

- (183) The LWF delegation to the December 2012 Doha Conference—the 18<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP18) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)—was made up entirely of youth. The LWF delegation prepared a statement (Exhibit 9.8) in which they made a number of recommendations to the LWF and its member churches. The committee deliberated on these recommendations.

- (184) One Council member was impressed by the LWF presence in Doha and that the LWF had been well represented by the youth and the work they did.

The Council then

- (185) **VOTED:**                   **to adopt the following resolution:**
- to recall the Public Statement of the Tenth Assembly in 2003 on the United States and the Kyoto Protocol, the Resolution adopted by the LWF Council in 2008 on Climate Change, and the Resolution adopted by the Eleventh Assembly in 2010 on Climate Change; and**
- to endorse the recommendations from the LWF Delegation to the December 2012 UN Climate Conference in Doha, calling upon the LWF and its member churches to:**
- a) **Develop or update a holistic climate change strategy that addresses advocacy, carbon emissions, training and awareness raising, and humanitarian assistance;**
  - b) **Engage with civil society to continuously advocate and lobby governments towards increased action and ambition on mitigation and adaptation;**
  - c) **Further explore the issue of climate change through theological reflection in Lutheran, ecumenical and interfaith frameworks;**
  - d) **Commit to becoming carbon-neutral at the communion, national, congregational and individual level;**
  - e) **Influence the culture to live in sustainable ways and address the negative impacts of social inequality and unsustainable consumerism;**
  - f) **Continue to engage in United Nations processes related to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, particularly through ecumenical, interfaith and youth networks.**

- (186) There was one abstention.

### 19.3 ***Public Statement on Freedom of Religion or Belief***

- (187) “Religious freedom and interfaith relations” is one of the LWF’s seven global advocacy priorities (LWF Strategy 2012-17, p. 25). Over its 66-year history, the LWF has spoken many times on issues touching on freedom of religion. However, there is not as yet a general statement that outlines in a comprehensive way the LWF position on freedom of religion or belief.
- (188) Presiding Bishop Dr Alex G. Malasusa, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, requested a factual clarification of the reference to his church in point 5. Rev Naoki Asano, Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, and Ms Jenette Alisha Purba, the Indonesia Christian Church, made a similar request with reference to the burning of churches in Indonesia. Both adjustments were made.

The Council then

(189) **VOTED:** to adopt the following Public Statement on Freedom of Religion or Belief:

1) From its founding in 1947 to the present day, the Lutheran World Federation has supported the freedom of religion or belief and been concerned about violations of it. The first resolution of the First Assembly of the LWF (Lund 1947) focused on advocacy for “homeless and displaced persons and refugees without regard to their origin, language, nationality, or status.” It included this call to national governments and to the United Nations:

*... above all to defend the sacred right of refugees and minorities to conduct their Church affairs in their mother tongue and according to their own Confession.*

2) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948. A Lutheran pastor, Frederick Nolde, represented the World Council of Churches in the deliberations that led to the Universal Declaration. He is credited as being the main drafter of Article 18, which reads as follows:

*Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his (sic.) religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his (sic.) religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.*

This freedom has been elaborated in two major United Nations documents: Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981).

3) Over the years, LWF Assemblies and Councils have adopted numerous resolutions touching on human rights in general and freedom of religion in particular. These include:

a) Fourth Assembly of the LWF (Helsinki 1963), Statement of Principle on Freedom to Attend Religious Meetings:

*The Lutheran World Federation believes that the right given by God to every man (sic.) to exercise religious freedom ought to include the right to attend an international assembly of Christian churches to which his church has designated him as a delegate.*

b) Sixth Assembly of the LWF (Dar es Salaam 1977), Statement on Human Rights, contains this paragraph:

*We affirm that it is our task as Christians to promote, together with those who have different beliefs, the realization of full freedom of thought, conscience and religion; and we emphasize the right to practice the community of faith across national borders. We explicitly declare that freedom of conscience includes the right not to adhere to any religion.*

- c) Seventh Assembly of the LWF (Budapest 1984), Statement on Human Rights. The first observation in that broad statement was the following:

*In recent years, the world community has been especially concerned about ... The denial of religious freedom, be it in the form of private or public worship, open witness to the faith, the education of the young, or the right to live according to one's conscience ...*

- d) Eighth Assembly of the LWF (Curitiba, 1990). The Assembly Message contains this paragraph:

*This fostering of respect for and tolerance of religious beliefs different from our own is possible only if we are willing to listen and share in the hopes and aspirations of others. This does not mean watering down our own faith but rather, by listening to the faith and convictions of others, we have the opportunity to deepen our own commitments and to define our identity in relation to others and not over against them.*

- e) Ninth Assembly of the LWF (Hong Kong 1997), Statement on Freedom of Religion. The Assembly called upon member churches (and in the first case, the ecumenical community):

*to redouble their efforts and to cooperate widely in promoting and defending religious freedom in their own societies and internationally.*

*... to focus on religious freedom in the context of their economic, social, cultural, civil and political human rights:*

- *through prayers and intercessions, Bible studies and worship;*
- *through educational materials, seminars and public manifestations;*
- *by participating in programs of cooperation with people of other faiths; and*
- *by interceding with state authorities and religious authorities wherever necessary in defense of individuals or groups whose rightful religious freedoms are being curtailed or denied.*

- f) LWF Council (Turku 2000) received a report on “The Involvement of LWF member churches in Promoting and Defending Religious Freedom.” This report concluded in part:

*Religious intolerance has been a source of untold violence and immeasurable human suffering over the ages, up to this very day. It is, in one form or another, a feature of the day-to-day experience of many member churches of the LWF. The right to religious freedom, on the other hand, provides a source and basis for peaceful co-*

*existence. It also mirrors a respect for the dignity of every human person, which the churches are committed to promote.*

- g) Tenth Assembly of the LWF (Winnipeg 2003), the Assembly Message stated in regard to The Mission of the Church in Multifaith Contexts:

*With the world mission conferences in San Antonio (USA) and Salvador (Brazil), we affirm that “we cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot set limits to the saving power of God.” In light of this, we must continue to ... affirm religious freedom ...*

- 4) Since 1986, the United Nations has had a Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief. (This mandate was at first entitled, “on the Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.”) The Special Rapporteur makes thoughtful and very helpful reports to the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly. These reports address current critical issues relating to freedom of religion. The Special Rapporteur also makes country visits and communicates to the relevant countries urgent concerns relating to the violation of the right to freedom of religion or belief.
- 5) Current scholarship<sup>1</sup> as well as the reports of the Special Rapporteur, finds that “to the extent that governments deny religious freedoms, violent religious persecution and conflict will increase.”<sup>2</sup> And, “when social and government restrictions on religion are reduced, violent religious persecution is reduced.”<sup>3</sup> Evidence of these assertions is found in many places in the world today. For example, in Indonesia, the government fails to enforce national laws which guarantee freedom of religion with the result that church buildings have been forcibly closed or even destroyed (including from the Huria Kristen Batak Protestan / Batak Christian Protestant Church) following the demands of extremist Muslim groups. In Iran and Syria we hear reports of the imprisonment and abuse of Christian clergy. In Pakistan the laws of blasphemy are used by some to take revenge on their enemies or to exploit weak persons and communities. In Tanzania we note with concern the burning of several houses of worship in the aftermath of violent riots, including one church building of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. In Nigeria, we grieve the many deaths caused by continuing violence that is clothed in religion, especially attacks on churches and other houses of worship.

(1)

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1 See, e.g., Grim and Finke, *The Price of Freedom Denied: Religious Persecution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century* (2011)

2 Op. cit., p. 212.

3 Op. cit., p. 210.

**6) The LWF Council:**

**6.1 Reaffirms the strong support of The Lutheran World Federation for the universal right of all persons to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.**

**6.2 Calls upon member churches and the ecumenical community to redouble their efforts and to cooperate widely in promoting and defending religious freedom in their own societies and internationally, including the freedom of public and private worship in the form and language of their choice.**

**6.3 Calls upon the LWF and its member churches to intercede with state authorities and religious authorities wherever necessary in defense of individuals or groups whose rightful religious freedoms are being curtailed or denied, including the right to change religions and the right to wear or display religious symbols.**

**6.4 Pledges the cooperation and support of the LWF for the United Nations mechanisms that promote and protect religious freedom, and in particular the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief.**

**6.5 Calls upon Lutherans and other people of faith around the world to pray for all people who suffer because of the lack of freedom of religion or belief.**

**19.4 Public Statement on Central America**

- (190) One speaker inquired about the intended audience for point a) to which the chairperson, Bishop Melvin Jiménez, responded that it would primarily be the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Secretary-General.

Then the Council

- (191) **VOTED:** to adopt the following Public Statement on Central America:

**The Council of The Lutheran World Federation expresses its deep concern about the continuing situation of violence and violations of human rights in Central America, especially in Honduras and Guatemala. These are countries with exceptional social insecurity—the homicide rate in Honduras is the highest in the world, and Guatemala is in the top ten. These crimes are mainly associated with gangs and organized crime, but they affect all people, especially those who are the poor and weak.**

**We believe it is urgent to seek peace, and that it is our duty as churches to be supportive of the peace initiatives that are being attempted in response to the cries of the people of Guatemala and Honduras. They ask for our prayers and expressions of love and solidarity.**

**The LWF Council:**

**Calls for concrete actions to help bring calm to the region -- actions to address the continuing situation of violations of human rights and the high levels of violence. In particular, the Council:**

**a) Repeats the LWF's appeal for the establishment of a Honduras Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), to complement the OHCHR's existing Guatemala Office, and urges both these offices to redouble the UN's efforts to overcome the current impunity of those who commit murders and who attack human rights defenders.**

**b) Gives thanks for the peace processes that have started in Honduras and El Salvador between the gangs and the government authorities, with the important participation of the churches and civil society. We call upon the international community to redouble efforts in support of these processes, with an aim to consolidate a lasting peace for the benefit of all citizens.**

**c) Welcomes the upcoming visit of the LWF General Secretary to the Central American region in October, with the hope that he can make the respective governments aware of the concerns of the Communion about the violations of human rights and urge them to take immediate action to manage an end to the violence.**

**d) On behalf of the Communion, we extend our prayers and solidarity with the churches and people of Central America. May they be encouraged in their continuing struggle for peace and for the defense of the human rights of the weak and the most vulnerable in society.**

#### 19.5 *Resolution on Syria*

- (192) It was requested that reference be made in the proposal to address the stated intention of certain countries to arm opposition forces and to the fact that some member churches and the World Council of Churches had appealed also for the release of Orthodox clergy who had been abducted. These suggestions were accepted and the relevant adjustments made.
- (193) *"The Apostle Paul taught that if one member of the body suffers, all suffer together and that if one member is honored, all rejoice together. As the Council of The Lutheran World Federation meets in Geneva, Switzerland, 13–18 June 2013, the people of Syria are again in our thoughts and prayers.*
- (194) *We grieve for the suffering the people of Syria are enduring. Recent estimates have placed the number of people killed during the past two years of fighting at 93,000. Of this dreadful number, more than 1300 have been children under the age of 10. The tragedy of this violence is matched only by the humanitarian disaster that has touched the lives of all Syrians. Some 1.5 million refugees have fled the country, while another 4.5 million people are displaced internally.*
- (195) *As a global communion of churches, we grieve that religion also is being used as a weapon to perpetuate the conflict in Syria. We reject violence perpetrated in the name of God and call on all parties to the fighting to do the same.*

(196) *We have a special concern for our Christian sisters and brothers of all traditions in this land where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. At the same time, we pay heed to their reminder that they are part of the fabric of Syrian history and society, with a desire to live in peace with all their neighbors. The rich religious and ethnic tapestry that has characterized Syria for centuries is at risk of fraying beyond repair. We have already seen the conflict spill over into neighboring countries, exporting misery to other civilian populations.”*

(197) The Council, having before it the preceding four paragraphs as background information, then

(198) **VOTED:**                    **to adopt the following resolution:**

**The LWF Council recalls its 2012 resolution on Syria and**

**1. Continues to join with the United Nations in appealing for an end to the violence and all forms of human rights abuses;**

**2. Reiterates its call upon all parties to urgently protect all Syrian populations and to take steps to alleviate rather than inflame violence;**

**3. Calls upon all outside parties to refrain from supplying combatants and weapons;**

**4. Appeals to the Syrian government and opposition forces to allow immediate international humanitarian access to all persons in need in the wake of the increasing violence;**

**5. With our LWF Member Churches and with the World Council of Churches, we raise our voice to appeal for the release and safe return of the two Orthodox bishops kidnapped near Aleppo in April of this year, as well as the priests who have also been abducted;**

**6. Urges the international community to offer generous assistance to internally displaced persons and refugees from the Syrian conflict;**

**7. Renews its support for those who seek dialogue instead of further fighting, for the good of all people in Syria as well as its neighbors; and**

**8. Continues to stand in solidarity with the Christian churches in the Middle East and many of their neighbors as they yearn for the nurturing of modern civil societies which respect human rights, including women’s rights, the freedom of speech and expression, freedom of religion, and the rights of all religious and ethnic minorities.**

(199) There was one abstention.

#### **19.6 Resolution on Christian Presence and Witness in the Middle East**

(200) *“Current developments in the region place Arab and Middle Eastern Christians in an existential crisis. Some Christian communities do not know if they will be able to remain in the geographic areas their people have inhabited since the beginning of Christianity.*

- (201) *We recognize that Arab and Middle Eastern Christians often feel misunderstood and even abandoned by their sisters and brothers around the world.*
- (202) *While lesser in number than their neighbors, Christians are not less in their contribution to the countries and societies in which they live. They are, instead, part of the fabric of their societies. We especially pay heed to the reality that many Muslims share the same perspectives and concerns expressed by our Christian companions.*
- (203) *Arab and Middle Eastern Christians warn against western forms of Islamophobia that simply dismiss Arab and Islamic culture. The Christians in this region see their Muslim neighbors to be, like them, children of God and, therefore, reject forms of understanding the Muslim world that attempt to separate Muslims and Christians from one another as if they are not neighbors.*
- (204) *In this time of turmoil and change, we commit to accompanying Arab and Middle Eastern Christian sisters and brothers. We will listen carefully to their needs, even as we celebrate with them the heritage of their indigenous presence in their lands and their mission to bring life abundant for themselves and for all their neighbors.*
- (205) *We are impressed with the stated commitment of Arab and Middle Eastern churches to develop work among youth and women in order to engage all of the assets in their communities.*
- (206) *We express our solidarity with the work and witness of the Middle East Council of Churches as a vital ecumenical body in this troubled time.”*
- (207) The Council, having before it the preceding seven paragraphs as background information, then
- (208) **VOTED:**                    **to adopt the following resolution:**

**The LWF Council,**

- 1) Together with the World Council of Churches and the Middle East Council of Churches, affirms the long-standing commitment of Christians in the Middle East to be recognized as an integral part of their societies and joins them in upholding this tradition;**
- 2) Supports the desire of those Christians in the region who want to remain in their countries with their people;**
- 3) Encourages our Christian sisters and brothers as they work for peace based on justice in their respective countries; and**
- 4) Gives thanks for the Lutheran ministry and work being carried out in the Middle East through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and through The Lutheran World Federation; these help support the continuity of Christians in the Middle East, both in holistic mission and in diakonia.**

**19.7    *The LWF Gender Justice Support: 58<sup>th</sup> Session of UN Commission on the Status of Women***

- (209) A number of editorial suggestions were proposed and accepted.

- (210) "Each year, the United Nations convenes a global policy-making body, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). It is a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) dedicated exclusively to the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of women. This event brings together Member State representatives, public and private social sector actors and grassroots advocates from around the world to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and the advancement of women worldwide.
- (211) The 2014 UN CSW will meet for its 58<sup>th</sup> session in New York from 10 to 21 March under the main topic, 'Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls.'
- (212) For at least 15 years, the Lutheran Office for World Community and The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Women in Church and Society program have worked together to bring the global voices and power of LWF women to the negotiating tables of the UN CSW.
- (213) As Lutherans who are people of faith, we believe that gender justice is something we strive for because of our faith and therefore helps actualize the stewardship of all members-- both men and women-- in the church. Gender justice and gender equality are in themselves goals that need to be achieved. It is about respecting the basic human rights of every individual to abolish injustices, such as discrimination, violence or oppression. The equal yet varied vocations of humankind call us all to work together for peace and reconciliation in relationships, churches, governments and the world. The churches are called to speak up for those without a voice and to protect every human's inviolable and sacred rights and value.
- (214) In addition, we believe that we are justified and freed by grace through faith in the transformative life, death and resurrection of Christ. Through the freedom we have in Christ, we are called to service—diakonia--for a just, peaceful and reconciled world. Lutherans and other people of faith are an important part of community-based relief and development services and have many good inputs to offer, especially the participation of women and girls in social change.
- (215) Gender justice and gender equity are also important components for effective long-term development. Accountable and sustainable development requires the recognition of women as key actors in community development. Empowering women to claim their rights to education, self-determination and the right to their own body creates vast positive effects within development work. We, as churches and related agencies, see the effects: more children survive their early years; increased economy for households; decrease in domestic and family violence; and more equitable representation within government.
- (216) The LWF has long been committed to gender justice and, in addition to previous statements, the June 2013 Council meeting in Geneva, Switzerland considered a 'Gender Justice Policy'. The LWF Gender Justice Policy proposes to ensure 'the protection and promotion of dignity of women and men who, being created in the image of God, are co-responsible stewards of creation.' This guiding framework will help work toward more 'equality and balanced power relations between women and men and the elimination of institutional, cultural and interpersonal systems of privilege and oppression that sustain discrimination'<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> "Gender Justice Policy", page 2 (Council Exhibit 9.6).

- (217) Together with the ACT Alliance, the LWF calls for an ambitious post-2015 development framework which reflects a rights-based approach to development. The post-2015 development framework needs to address root causes of poverty, conflict, insecurity and ecological destruction and the key concerns of poor people and communities. In relation to this development framework we should encourage the importance of empowering women and girls.”

The Council, having before it the preceding eight paragraphs as background information, then

- (218) **VOTED:**                   **to adopt the following resolution:**
- to encourage the Communion Office to develop a proactive process to encourage Member Church and agency participation, preparation and intervention for the upcoming UN CSW 58 on the theme "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls."**

### 19.8 *Resolution on Youth Unemployment*

- (219) An editorial suggestion was made and accepted.
- (220) Ms Danielle Catherine Leker, Protestant Church in the Netherlands, and Mr A. Elijah Zina, Lutheran Church in Nigeria, shared personal testimonies about the impact of the unemployment crisis in their respective contexts.
- (221) “At the 11th LWF Assembly in Stuttgart ‘we hear[d] the complaints of young people who face their future without jobs that can support them and their families ...’<sup>5</sup> The financial crisis and the weakening of the global financial recovery in 2012 and 2013 have aggravated the youth jobs crisis. The queues for available jobs have become longer and longer for jobseekers. Many of these young people are from the LWF member churches. They ‘sat in darkness and in gloom, prisoners in misery and in irons’ (Ps107:10) and gave up looking for jobs.
- (222) Many young people who finish their studies at university level struggle to find a job because employers ask for a job experience of at least three to five years. And if they find a job it is not one of their choice, not one which meets their expectations and is in accordance with their professional background – they have to take it in order to survive. Many must even leave their countries to find work.
- (223) The International Labor Organization estimates that in 2013 the global youth unemployment rate is at 12.6 per cent and close to its crisis peak. This means that 73 million young people are unemployed.
- (224) We acknowledge that the issue of youth unemployment is not distant to us, because there are young members of the present LWF Council who are unemployed or who are uncertain of their employment.
- (225) Therefore, facing this crisis situation, the LWF communion of churches cannot keep quiet.

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5 Public Statement, “‘Daily Bread’ Instead of Greed: An LWF Call for Economic and Climate Justice,” 11<sup>th</sup> LWF Assembly, Stuttgart, Germany, July 2010.

(226) As we are preparing for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Reformation, let us draw upon Luther's understanding of vocation and his commitment to a just and sustainable economy for all as we work for transformation of unjust economic structures which perpetuate youth unemployment and poverty.

(227) The long-term impact of the youth employment crisis will affect negatively the future of this generation, our churches, and the whole LWF communion. Therefore the LWF Council calls the member churches for immediate and targeted action to address the youth employment crisis.”

The Council, having before it the preceding seven paragraphs as background information, then

(228) **VOTED:** to adopt the following resolution:

**The LWF Council calls upon the Member Churches:**

**to increase awareness of youth unemployment, to pray and to look for ways how to help unemployed young people;**

**to urge the governments of their countries to promote macroeconomic policies and fiscal incentives that are just and support employment of young people; and**

**to urge the private and public sectors as well as labor unions to share in the responsibility for increasing youth employment.**

#### 19.9 *Global Financial Crisis*

The Council

(229) **VOTED:** to adopt the following resolution:

**The São Paulo statement “International Financial Transformation for the Economy of Life”<sup>6</sup> was adopted on 5 October 2012 at a meeting held in response to and as a continuation of the decades of work around issues of economic, social and ecological justice with which the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the World Council of Churches, the Council on World Mission, and The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) have been involved.**

**The LWF Council commends the São Paulo statement to the member churches for their study and advocacy, and encourages the Communion Office to continue to engage in the follow-up processes.**

#### 19.10 *Issues for discussion by the Council*

(230) The committee did not present items for discussion by the Council.

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<sup>6</sup> See Council Exhibit 19.2 and <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/poverty-wealth-and-ecology/finance-speculation-debt/sao-paulo-statement-international-financial-transformation-for-the-economy-of-life>

19.11 **Issues discussed by the Committee - for information to the Council**

- (231) The committee discussed items from the President's Address and the General Secretary's Report that related to advocacy.
- (232) The committee discussed the Report on COOP 2012 (Exhibit 9.1) that relates to the Office for International Affairs and Human Rights.
- (233) The committee also discussed the LWF Gender Justice Policy (Exhibit 9.6) and sent its comments to the Committee on Theology and Ecumenical Relations.

The Council

- (234) **VOTED:**                    **to receive the Report of the Committee for Advocacy and Public Voice with appreciation.**

**20. STANDING COMMITTEE FOR CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP**

- (235) The chairperson, Ms Colleen Cunningham, presented the Report of the Standing Committee for Constitution and Membership.

20.1 **Statutes of the LWF Foundation (LWF Council Exhibits 9.4 and 9.4.1)**

- (236) In order to reflect the new LWF organizational structure, certain amendments were proposed to be made to the Statutes and Bylaws of the LWF Foundation. Amendments to the Statutes required approval by the LWF Council. Amendments to the Bylaws required the approval of the LWF Board of Trustees. In both cases, following action by the LWF Council, the amendments must then be submitted to the Swiss supervisory authority for its approval.

- (237) The only amendments proposed were technical in nature:
1. In Article 5.3 of the Statutes and in Articles 3.4 and 3.5 of the Bylaws, replace "Director for Finance and Administration" with "Head of Finance".
  2. In Articles 3.5 and 4.1.1 of the Bylaws, rather than refer to specific LWF offices for administrative functions, simply refer to the LWF.

- (238) The full texts of the LWF Foundation Statutes and Bylaws, in the original German and in English, with the proposed amendments noted, were made available as Exhibits 9.4 and 9.4.1.

The Council

- (239) **VOTED:**                    **to approve the amendment to the LWF Foundation Statutes, Article 5.3 replacing "Director for Finance and Administration" with "Head of Finance".**

20.2 **Terms of Reference for the LWF Meeting of Officers**

- (240) At its November 2012 meeting, the Meeting of Officers reviewed its Terms of Reference. The Meeting of Officers recommended that its Terms of Reference be updated and revised as shown in Exhibit 9.3.

The Council

- (241) **VOTED:**                    **to amend the Terms of Reference for the LWF Meeting of Officers by adopting the text contained in Exhibit 9.3.**

### 20.3 *Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad and Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church*

- (242) The chairperson, Ms Colleen Cunningham, noted that the LWF was informed that the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad (EELC Abroad) and the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC) had reached an agreement by which the Estonian Church Abroad has become an international diocese of the Estonian Church. The Agreement Confirming the Visible Unity was signed by the Most Revd Andres Taul, Archbishop of the EELC Abroad, and the Most Revd Andres Pöder, Archbishop of the EELC, on November 13, 2010 in Tallinn and on November 28, 2010 in Toronto.
- (243) The EELC confirmed that after the restoration of the unity, there is now only one Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church. The “chief shepherd” of the reunited church is Archbishop Andres Pöder. The EELC Abroad continues its activity as the EELC Diocese Abroad.
- (244) LWF Bylaw 2.3.1 provides that when a merger takes place involving only member churches, if the new church declares that it wishes to belong to the Federation it will be considered a member church. The EELC did so. Accordingly, it remains an LWF member church and no further action is required from the Council. Because of this merger the number of LWF member churches changes from 143 to 142.
- (245) It was asked whether this merger had prompted a discussion about the fairness of the current membership fees structure. Mr Ralston Deffenbaugh, LWF staff, responded that the church, having merged, would be receiving only one invoice in future, based on the formula for membership fees.

The Council then

- (246) **VOTED:**                    **to note with joy the merger of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad into the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and consider the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church as a founding member of the Lutheran World Federation.**
- (247) Ms. Kadri Eliisabet Pöder, Council Adviser and member of the EELC, expressed her thanks to the Council, and that of her church, for this action.

### 20.4 *United Protestant Church of France*

- (248) It was reported that an LWF member church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of France, has merged with a non-Lutheran church, the Protestant Church of France. The new church is called the “Église protestante unie de France”—United Protestant Church of France. This merger took place at a joint synod meeting held 17 – 20 May 2012. The inaugural festivities for the new church were celebrated on 11 May 2013.
- (249) LWF Bylaw 2.3.1 provides that if a merger takes place involving one or more Lutheran churches and one or more non-Lutheran churches, the united church may apply for membership in the Federation. The application of the United Protestant Church of France was found to be in order. The number of LWF member churches would remain at 142.
- (250) Rev Martin Junge informed the Council that he had written to the member churches about fair membership fees and that there had been response to this. In the case of the United Protestant Church of France, the 2013 fee would be higher than the previous year so it was a matter of conversation with them.

The Council then

- (251) **VOTED:**                    **to welcome with joy the United Protestant Church of France into membership in the Lutheran World Federation.**

**20.5    *Issues for discussion by the Council***

- (252) As there were no issues referred to the Council for discussion, no further action on issues was required.

**20.6    *Issues discussed by the Committee - for information to the Council***

- (253) The committee reported that the Bylaws amendments which were adopted by the Council in 2012 will become effective as of 20 June 2013, one year after their adoption because no objection has been received from a member church by Communion Office.
- (254) The committee was informed that the Communion Office had received communications or been informed about membership-related matters from the following churches and that the Office will be following up on these communications: Communion of Protestant Christian Church (ONKP) (Indonesia); North American Lutheran Church; Guatemala Lutheran Church; North Western Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church (India); Uganda Lutheran Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Gambia.
- (255) The committee made a request to the Communion Office that, if and when all aspects of the application of the ONKP are in order, a mail vote be taken by the committee in advance of the next Council meeting with a view toward making a possible recommendation to the Council so that the ONKP could be received into membership while the Council is meeting in Indonesia in 2014.
- (256) The committee expressed strong concern over the application for membership of the North American Lutheran Church. It referred the application back to the Communion Office and raised two questions:
- (257) Can the LWF accept a church into membership that has reservations about relationships with other LWF member churches?
- (258) Why does the applicant want to be an LWF member when it appears that their understanding of “communion” and “altar and pulpit fellowship” is not that of the LWF?

The Council

- (259) **VOTED:**                    **to receive the Report of the Standing Committee for Constitution and Membership with appreciation.**

**21.    **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNICATION AND FUNDRAISING****

- (260) Ms Anna-Maria Klassen, Chairperson of the committee presented the report (Exhibit 21).
- (261) The Council took note of the issues discussed by the committee and
- (262) **VOTED:**                    **to receive the Report of the Committee for Communications with appreciation.**

**22.    **PERSONNEL MATTERS****

- (263) The Council met in an Executive Session with a separate Agenda.

## **23. REPORTS FROM LWF NATIONAL COMMITTEES**

- (264) In keeping with Article IX of the LWF Constitution, National Committees had been requested to submit annual activity reports (Exhibit 23 and following).
- (265) The Council was informed that the reports had been received from the national committees of Finland, India, Indonesia, Germany and Denmark. The reports, presented for information to the Council, were received. The report from the National Committee of Russia had not arrived.

## **24. PLACE OF COUNCIL MEETING IN 2014**

- (266) The General Secretary informed the Council about an invitation to host the Council meeting in 2014 (Exhibit 24). The National Committee of Indonesia had pledged to raise funds related to the local costs.

The Council

- (267) **VOTED:**                    **to hold the Council meeting on 12 – 17 June 2014 in Medan, Indonesia**

## **25. OTHER BUSINESS**

- (268) There was no other business.

## **26. CLOSING**

- (269) First of all Bishop Dr Younan gave thanks to God for the proceeding and the work of this Council. He was especially thankful to the Lord as there had been uncertainties at the beginning of the meeting, but the LWF President was confident the Holy Spirit guided all the discussions and helped the Council through the difficulties.
- (270) The President then expressed his gratitude to the Council members for the work done together. He said the meeting had shown that they are really a communion of churches that love each other in their disagreements and differences, and who are on the way to equal discipleship.
- (271) Bishop Dr Younan noted the Council had given an example of maturity, for which he was thankful. It was clear that the communion is alive even in difficulties, not for itself but for witnessing in this world, for holistic mission, diakonia, and good work of all the member churches.
- (272) He went on to say he needed to thank many people, starting by the General Secretary, who is the motor behind all what the communion is doing. He was thankful also to the Communion Office Leadership Team and to all staff committed to make it easy for the Council members with accommodation, papers, and all the details that made 150 people work smoothly.
- (273) The President expressed his thankfulness for the worship and very interesting morning and evening devotions. Everything had been beautifully done by the local church. Sunday had been a most beautiful ecumenical service downtown; all local pastors are to be thanked for putting the LWF governing body in the spiritual life. Special appreciation went to Terry McArthur, as "Minister of music", for having moved the Council members.
- (274) The hard work of the interpreters was highly appreciated, as well as the work of the communications staff, minute recorders, and the work of other people that had not been visible.

## **MINUTES**

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- (275) The President said he was very happy because all Council members had been very cooperative. The Advisers were equally thanked for their commitment and cooperation.
- (276) Former LWF President, Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson gave special thanks to Bishop Dr Younan for his humor, guidance, travels, and leadership. Council members echoed with a big applause to the President.
- (277) The meeting adjourned at 09h50 on 18 June 2013.
- (278) The closing worship followed.

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