

Greetings to the

Council Meeting of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

Medan, Indonesia 11 – 17 June 2014

Theme: "Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water" (Psalm 1:3)

Respected President, General Secretary,

Council Members of the Lutheran World Federation

Distinguished Guests,

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

Let me first of all welcome you to the Asian continent. As an Indonesian, let me also join my Indonesian friends and churches in this country, to warmly welcome you to Indonesia.

It is a great privilege for me to bring you warm greetings from the Christian Conference of Asia, a fellowship of 101 member churches and 17 National Councils of Churches/National Christian Councils in 21 countries in Asia, spreading from Iran in the West to Japan in the East; Nepal in the North to Aotearoa -New Zealand in the South of our large Asian continent. Thank you for inviting me to this special occasion.

The theme of this Council "Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water" is an inspiring one. In the midst of many signs of decay and death around us, it is a great challenge to hear that we are called to be "Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water." Sadly, many of our trees and forests in Asia have been cut on a massive scale by giant machines, in the name of development and also to gain maximum profit. Our streams and rivers are heavily polluted with household garbage and chemical wastes, to the extent that they are unable to provide freshness and to sustain life on this planet. Yet we are called by God the Creator, the Redeemer and the Sustainer to revive the genuine images of the Tree and the Streams of Water that nourish life.

This call is also crucial for Asian churches, as our communities are facing various forms of deterioration in the quality of life. Although Asia is experiencing economic development, ironically, at the same time Asians are experiencing situations of increasing poverty, inadequate health care, economic exploitation, massive flow of migrant workers, human trafficking, depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation; drastic climate change, frequent natural disasters; communal violence, growing trends of religious intolerance, politicization of religion, the challenge to religious freedom and human security, nuclearization and various forms of corruption. In such a context, we the churches are called to be "Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water." Planted by streams of water, enables the

roots of the tree to go deep into the soil and gain its strength, to produce fruit in its season, without the leaves withering. In order to fulfill this call, we need to constantly relate to God, meditate on God's will day and night, so that we will not follow the path of the wicked, but rather let our trees produce leaves for the healing of the nations. (Rev. 22:2)

In the midst of mounting threats to life, peace and justice for all, we need to closely work together, more than ever before. May the Spirit of God guide you in your deliberations.

Thank you.

Rev. Dr. Henriette Hutabarat Lebang

General Secretary

