

THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

# Meeting of Council

Medan, Indonesia

12 - 17 June 2014

## **COUNCIL ACTIONS**



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION



## **REPORT OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

### ***Election of Council member in replacement of Maria Immonen***

**It is voted:**

- to elect Dr Minna Hietamäki (female, lay) from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland as Council member in replacement of Ms Maria Immonen (female, lay) from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland.

### ***Appointment of Dr Minna Hietamäki to the Committee for Theology and Ecumenical Relations***

**It is voted:**

- to appoint Dr Minna Hietamäki to the Committee for Theology and Ecumenical Relations.

### ***Election of Council member in replacement of Dr Mangisi S.E. Simorangkir***

**It is voted:**

- to elect Ephorus Jaharianson Saragih (male, ordained) from the Simalungun Protestant Christian Church as Council member in replacement of Dr Mangisi S.E. Simorangkir (male, ordained) from the Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia.

### ***Appointment of Ephorus Jaharianson Saragih to the Committee for Mission and Development***

**It is voted:**

- to appoint Ephorus Jaharianson Saragih to the Committee for Mission and Development.

### ***Election of Council member in replacement of Rev. Mark S. Hanson***

**It is voted:**

- to elect Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton (female, ordained) from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as Council member in replacement of Rev. Mark S. Hanson (male, ordained) from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

### ***Appointment of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton to the Committee for Advocacy and Public Voice***

**It is voted:**

- to appoint Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton to the Committee for Advocacy and Public Voice.

***Election of Council member in replacement of Rev. Oi Peng Lok***

**It is voted:**

- to elect Bishop Aaron Chuan Ching Yap (male, ordained) from the Lutheran Church in Malaysia as Council member in replacement of Rev. Oi Peng Lok (male, ordained) from the Lutheran Church in Malaysia.

***Appointment of Bishop Rev. Aaron C.C. Yap to the Committee for Theology and Ecumenical Relations***

**It is voted:**

- to appoint Bishop Rev. Aaron C.C. Yap to the Committee for Theology and Ecumenical Relations.

***Appointment of six Lutheran members to the International Dialogue Commission with Pentecostals***

**It is voted:**

- to appoint the following members to the International Dialogue Commission with Pentecostals:
  - Rev. Prof. Dr Walter Altmann (male, ordained) (co-chair)
  - Rev. MA Anna Balogová (female, ordained, youth)
  - Rev. Dr Cheryl M. Peterson (female, ordained)
  - Rev. Dr Wilfred John Sundaraj Samuel (male, ordained)
  - Rev. Buntausa Amos Sunday (male, ordained, youth)
  - Rev. Mag. theol. Johannes Zeiler (male, ordained).

***Replacement of one member of the Assembly Planning Committee***

**It is voted:**

- to appoint Ms Kinga PAP (female, lay) from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary as Assembly Planning Committee member in replacement of Rev. Agnes Pángyánszky.

***Appointment of International Worship Planning Committee***

**It is voted:**

- to appoint the following members to the International Worship Planning Committee for the LWF Twelfth Assembly

Rev. Dr Stephen Larson (male, ordained) (chair)  
Rev. Sonia Skupch (female, ordained)  
Rev. Seth Mesiaki Ole Sululu (male, ordained)  
Ms Lilla Mornár (female, lay/soon to be ordained, youth)  
Professor Dr Jochen Arnold (male, ordained)  
Ms Karin Runow (female, lay).

The Committee noted that there were two additional vacancies on the International Worship Planning Committee allocated to Asia and Namibia respectively.

**It is voted:**

- to authorize the Meeting of Officers to fill the two additional vacancies on the International Worship Planning Committee.

The Committee urges the Meeting of Officers to consider filling the Asia vacancy with a youth.

## **LWF TWELFTH ASSEMBLY**

### ***Theme of the Assembly***

**It is voted:**

- to adopt “Liberated by God’s grace” as theme for the LWF Twelfth Assembly;
- to approve that the three sub-themes to be used to structure the content of the LWF Twelfth Assembly:
  - Salvation – not for sale
  - Human beings – not for sale
  - Creation – not for sale

### ***Structure and Length of the Assembly***

**It is voted:**

- to adopt the following main dimensions to structure the life of the Assembly:
  - Celebration (worship, Eucharist, prayers);
  - Enrichment, reflection and discernment (Bible studies, small group discussions, plenary discussion, keynote addresses, exposure visits);
  - Joint decision-making (business sessions for actions on reports, elections, Assembly message, other Constitutional matters);
- to commend to the various Assembly preparatory committees, for their information and consideration, the comments and proposals to be found in the relevant parts of the discussion notes of the Assembly Planning Committees’ meetings.

**It is voted:**

- to consider the following specific purposes for the LWF Twelfth Assembly:
  - a. Commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, with special reference to its ecumenical and global contexts.
  - b. Help empower the Lutheran Communion and its churches as they begin their witness and service for the next 500 years, discerning and sharing how the Lutheran Reformation continues to be alive and active in the church and in the world.
  - c. Learn about and reflect upon the local context of Namibia and the regional context of Southern Africa, with special reference to reconciliation and healing and to the impact of the involvement of the Lutheran World Federation.

**It is voted:**

- to approve the following duration of the Twelfth Assembly:

9 May 2017	Meeting of Officers
9 May 2017	Pre-Assembly Council meeting
10 - 16 May 2017	Assembly
17 May 2017	Post-Assembly Council meeting

***Composition of the LWF Twelfth Assembly***

**It is voted:**

- to approve the categories of participants for the LWF Twelfth Assembly as outlined in Council Exhibit 12.1.1 (*enclosed*)

***Proposed key for nominating delegates***

**It is voted:**

- to approve the revised key for the nomination of delegations as follows:

Church Membership	No. Delegates
Up to 25,000	1
25,001 - 100,000	2
100,000 - 500,000	3
500,001 - 1,000,000	4
1,000,001 - 2,000,000	5
2,000,001 - 3,000,000	6
3,000,001 - 4,000,000	7
4,000,001 - 5,000,000	8
5,000,001 - 6,000,000	9
6,000,001 - 7,000,000	10

Additional Regional delegates for gender and youth balance: Africa: 8, Asia: 8, Europe: 6, LAC: 6, North America: 4

Total delegates: 370 (approximate 167 men, 131 women, 72 youth (40 young men and 32 young women))

### ***Logo for the Assembly and Reformation Anniversary***

#### **It is voted:**

- to approve the Logo for the LWF Twelfth Assembly as presented in Council Exhibit 12.1.3; *(a separate mail will follow)*
- to approve the Logo for the Reformation Anniversary as presented in Council Exhibit 12.1.4. *(a separate mail will follow)*

## **COMMITTEE FOR THEOLOGY AND ECUMENICAL RELATIONS**

### ***Report of the Board of the Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research***

#### **It is voted:**

- to receive the Report of the Chairperson of the Board of the Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research with appreciation;
- to express appreciation for the continued support by the Institute for the bilateral dialogues and for its substantial contributions to these dialogues; and
- to affirm the strong commitment of the LWF to the assessment process which the Institute is about to enter.

### ***Report of the Lutheran–Reformed Joint Commission between the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), 2006—2012***

#### **It is voted:**

- to receive the Report of the Lutheran–Reformed Joint Commission between the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), 2006—2012 and its recommendations with appreciation and to commend the report to the member churches for study.

## **COMMITTEE FOR MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT**

### ***DMD Review Process***

#### **It is voted:**

- to approve the renewed DMD programmatic directions of Communion Building, Church Growth and Sustainability, and Capacity for Diakonia in accordance with the General Secretary's Report (Exhibit 9, p. 5).

### ***Task Force on Resource Sharing in the LWF Communion of Churches***

**It is voted:**

- that DMD establishes mechanisms for communion solidarity for member churches to share gifts and support each other. These support mechanisms could include funding such as a communion solidarity fund, sharing of human resources and other capacity building aspects.

## **COMMITTEE FOR WORLD SERVICE**

The Committee for World Service appreciates the close relationship and cooperation and agrees with the request of the Associate Programs, to strengthen the link between LWF World Service and its Associate Programs by creating an advisory position to the Committee for World Service for one representative of the Associate Programs to be nominated collectively by the Associate Programs for a 3 year term.

**It is voted:**

- to create an advisory position to the Committee for World Service for one representative of the Associate Programs of the Lutheran World Federation, World Service, to be nominated collectively by the Associate Programs for a 3-year term.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### ***LWF Audited Reports and Financial Statements***

**It is voted:**

- to receive the Report of the Auditors on the Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2013, and
- to receive and adopt the Consolidated Financial Statements and the Financial Statements of the Department for Theology and Public Witness, Department for Mission and Development, Department for World Service, Department for Planning and Operations and General Secretariat for the year ended December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013.

### ***Appointment of Auditors***

**It is voted:**

- to appoint PricewaterhouseCoopers as the LWF auditor in Geneva for the fiscal year 2014.



### ***Communion Office Operational Plan 2015-2016***

**It is voted:**

- to approve the LWF Communion Office Operational Plan 2015 – 2016;
- to authorize the General Secretary to revise the COOP as need arises;
- to request the General Secretary to report annually to the Council about the implementation of the LWF Communion Office Operational Plan.

### ***LWF Budget and Program Plans for 2015***

**It is voted:**

- to approve the LWF Budget for 2015 with expenditure of EURO 106,297,472 (Council Exhibit 13.1);
- to charge any possible deficit against the reserves of the respective departments;
- to authorize the LWF Communion Office to fundraise for the LWF Program Plans as presented in Exhibit 13.1.1;
- to authorize the Meeting of Officers to approve adjustments to this budget as necessary.

### ***LWF Membership Fees for 2015 & 2016***

**It is voted:**

- to approve the updated membership fees for 2015 and 2016 amounting to EURO 2,916,989 as presented in Exhibit 10.1 and to strongly encourage all member churches to pay their full fair membership fees;
- to approve the LWF minimum membership fee of Euro 77.00.

### ***Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH)***

**It is voted:**

- That the Council affirms the actions taken by the LWF Board of Trustees, namely:
- 1. to express gratitude to the AVH management board as well as to the LWF member churches for their various efforts to address the cash flow crisis of the AVH;
  - to request the AVH management and board as well as LWF member churches to continue with these efforts until the situation is resolved;
  - to request the AVH management and the LWF Communion Office to continue deploying all possible efforts to resolve the current cash flow situation;
  - to request the General Secretary to closely monitor the developments so as to ensure:
    - The LWF's ongoing solvency
    - The avoidance of a qualified audit of the AVH operations

- to request the General Secretary to regularly update the Board of Trustees on the situation;
- 2. to reconfirm the commitment of the LWF to the AVH and its diaconal services;
- to welcome the AVH board's proposal to explore options about how best to minimize the risk of liability of the LWF while at the same time ensuring a continuing strong linkage and commitment of the LWF and its member churches to the AVH;
- to endorse the recommendation of the AVH board and to request the General Secretary to start such an exploration process immediately by seeking advice from experts on various aspects and dimensions to be considered while developing possible scenarios;
- to request the General Secretary to undertake this exploration in close communication with the Board of the AVH, and
- to request the General Secretary to regularly report to the Board of Trustees about the progress and findings of this exploration.

### ***Twelfth Assembly Budget***

#### **It is voted:**

- to approve the Revised Twelfth Assembly Budget of Euro 2,994.964;
- to approve the member church Assembly Fees as reflected in Exhibit 12.1.6 Annex 2 (revised) and to commend to the member churches the payment of the fees before the 2017 Assembly; *(a separate mail will follow)*
- to authorize the Meeting of Officers to take any further action on the budget, as needed.

### ***Report of the 2013 Communion Office Operational Plan***

#### **It is voted:**

- to approve the Report on the implementation of the 2013 Communion Office Operational Plan, with appreciation.

## **COMMITTEE FOR ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC VOICE**

### ***Public Statement on Climate Justice***

#### **It is voted:**

- The Lutheran World Federation, a communion consisting of 72 million Lutherans worldwide, regards the challenge of present and future Climate Change with utmost seriousness. Both from the perspective of our belief in God as the Creator and from the perspective of justice and human rights,

Climate Change is a matter that must be urgently addressed by human beings in our age.

- “As Christians, we do not live in the despair and melancholy of the tomb, but in the light of the Risen Christ. Our resurrection hope is grounded in the promise of renewal and restoration for all of God’s Creation, which gives us energy, strength and perseverance in the face of overwhelming challenge. For us, this promise is more than an abstraction. It is a challenge to commit ourselves to walk a different course and serve as the hands of God in working to heal the brokenness of our hurting world.” (*Joint statement of the Episcopal Church, the Church of Sweden, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), May 2013*)
- The LWF expresses its gratitude for its longstanding partnership with the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the ACT Alliance in caring for creation and working together for climate justice.

This statement aims to:

- provide background information about the engagement of the LWF with climate justice,
- present the position of the LWF regarding Climate Change, and
- propose ideas for the work of LWF on this issue up to 2016.

#### Background

- 2014 is crucial year in shaping the human response to Climate Change, during which the United Nations will determine the scale and ambition of a global warming treaty. In this context, religious leaders play an important role in advocating for an ambitious and binding global agreement on climate change. The upcoming December 2014 UN Climate Change Conference in Lima (Conference of Parties [COP] 20) will lay the foundations for binding agreements which must be reached in Paris in December 2015 (COP21). Throughout the year, there are significant moments in the climate advocacy calendar, and LWF will be represented at all of them:
  - The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) session in Bonn, Germany
  - The UN Climate Summit in New York, USA
  - COP20 in Lima, Peru

At this critical juncture we look back and 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,
- the Resolution adopted by the LWF Eleventh Assembly in 2010 on Climate Change,
- the recommendation from the LWF Delegation to the COP18,
- the capacity building work on advocating for climate justice by the Department for Mission and Development and the Department for Theology and Public Witness, and

- the work of the LWF Department for World Service in responding to this issue through its projects of adaptation to climate change in the field.
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) fifth Assessment Report (AR5) is in the final stages of completion. It concludes that the reality of Climate Change is “unequivocal” and that there is increasing certainty that anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions play a measurable and significant role.
- Science detects human influence in the warming of the atmosphere and the ocean, in changes in the global water cycle, in reductions in snow and ice, in global mean sea level rise, and in changes in some climate extremes. This evidence for human influence has increased since AR4 in 2007. It is therefore extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of scientifically observed warming since the mid-20th century. (IPCC, 10.3-10.6, 10.9)
- It seems that many aspects of climate change will persist for centuries even if we succeed in halting the increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This presents the need to create a long-term, multi-century Climate Change commitment as a result of past, present and future emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> gases. (IPCC, p. 27)

#### The Position of the LWF

- As a result of these reports, the LWF understands that:
  - Climate change is real and influenced by human actions;
  - Increasingly severe impacts are already being experienced on every continent, with growing economic and social costs;
  - If we act now it will still be possible to keep global warming below the internationally agreed danger-threshold of an increase of 2 degrees Celsius. To achieve this, carbon pollution must be reduced quickly; and
  - Climate change is a matter of social and economic justice, as it most affects the poorest people and displaces the most vulnerable.
- As those who live in the resurrection hope of renewal and restoration for all of God’s Creation, we believe we cannot stand by and ignore the impacts of Climate Change. Creation groans under the weight of human action and inaction (Rom 8:22). Our hope for justice and peace for all, and our trust in God, forms the impetus for this statement. We believe that taking global action now can make a difference.

#### Call for Commitment by the World’s Leaders

- 1. The LWF calls on world political and business leaders to:
  - a. Design and agree on elements of a strong global response to climate change that reflects the strong and growing scientific and environmental evidence and draft an ambitious new climate agreement to tackle climate change in the coming decades;

- b. Urge Heads of State and key decision makers to make it a personal priority to address the human contribution to Climate Change, and make firm commitments for deeper cuts in carbon pollution;
- c. Make national contributions meaningful by ensuring that they feature convincing targets to reduce carbon pollution while providing money to help poorer countries take climate action as well; and
- d. Respect the principles of equity, ensuring that the response includes provisions to assist the most vulnerable communities to adapt to the impacts of Climate Change already being experienced, and to account for the loss and damage being caused.

#### Call for Commitment by Member Churches

- 2. The LWF calls on its member churches to:
  - a. Take action now to initiate or strengthen policies and practices aimed at becoming sustainable and eco-friendly, with the goal of becoming carbon-neutral at organizational, congregational and personal levels by 2050;
  - b. Help and galvanize each other in the communion by sharing their good practices through the LWF Facebook page *LWF for Climate Justice*;
  - c. Engage in sustained climate justice advocacy with local and national governments as soon as possible, in the perspective of COP20 in Lima, Peru, and all along the process leading to COP21 in Paris, France. This advocacy would be based upon the advocacy call of the LWF and the policy papers on climate justice of the ACT Alliance;
  - d. Promote and work with ecumenical and interfaith climate justice initiatives in the local, national and regional contexts; and
  - e. Sign up to the #fastfortheclimate campaign on the 1st day of each month until December 1, 2015, at the beginning of COP21 in Paris:
- “We fast in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable who are unduly affected by extreme weather events. We fast to underline the urgency of the negotiations on climate change. We fast in many different places and faith communities worldwide, united in a common practice. We fast for climate justice.”  
<http://www.lutheranworld.org/fastfortheclimate>.

#### A Joint Commitment to Global Action

- As leaders of the Lutheran World Federation – A Communion of Churches, we commit to join the global Christian community, and people of all faiths and persuasions, on the journey for climate justice. This task is one that we can only achieve when we unite in a common cause, living out our joint destiny on this fragile, beautiful world which we all share.

### ***Resolution on Universal Code of Conduct on Holy Sites***

#### **It is voted:**

- to endorse the Universal Code of Conduct on Holy Sites;
- to encourage member churches to support initiatives in their contexts; and
- to call upon the United Nations to adopt a UN resolution in the spirit of the Code.

(see “Universal Code of Conduct on Holy Sites” enclosed as Appendix 1 to Exhibit 18) (*enclosed*)

### ***Public Statement on Indonesia***

#### **It is voted:**

- The LWF Council, meeting in Medan, Indonesia 12-17 June 2014, is thankful to the thirteen Indonesian Lutheran member churches for their warm welcome and hospitality. Indonesia has the fourth largest number of Lutherans in the world—5.8 million—and two-thirds of all Lutherans in Asia are Indonesians. We give thanks to God for the Indonesian sisters’ and brothers’ vibrant and faithful witness to the Gospel and for the way in which they live out their faith in love and service for the neighbor. They live in communion amidst diversity. It has been a great blessing to have our meeting here.
  
- We have marveled at the immense size and diversity of Indonesia, the fourth-largest nation of the world, with more than 17,000 islands and more than 500 languages and dialects, tied together by the unifying language of Bahasa Indonesia. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world—86% of its 240 million people. The Indonesian state is based on the philosophy of Pancasila—Five Principles: belief in God, just and civilized humanity, the unity of Indonesia, representative democracy, and social justice.
  
- There are so many impressive achievements of the Indonesian people to celebrate and for which to give thanks. Among them are:
  - A constitutional framework that provides for freedom of religion and the equal rights and dignity of each citizen;
  - The lively revival of democracy since 1998;
  - The huge treasure of how Indonesians deal with diversity, allowing so many people to live together peacefully, in most places at most times;
  - The valuable “local wisdom” which helps to promote the cultural and religious respect for each other;
  - The vibrant civil society; and
  - The way the country has been helped by women and men working together toward addressing the important concern of gender justice.
  
- We have also learned that there are pressing challenges with which the people of Indonesia are grappling. Among them are:
  - Inconsistent enforcement of the rule of law as the country has been decentralized, with certain laws and practices enforced in different ways in different regions and local areas;
  - The need for the national government and local authorities to protect the rights of all religious communities, especially the Shia, Ahmadiyya, Christians, Buddhists, Confucians, and those who practice local religious traditions;

- An increasing separation of people in their daily lives along religious lines;
  - Economic justice issues such as increasing gaps between the rich and the poor, and the use of land; and
  - Environmental degradation, deforestation, and increasing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- 
- The LWF Council joins and supports the Indonesian churches in their efforts to uphold freedom of religion, their interreligious solidarity in working against injustice and in responding to human need, and in their continuing engagement in dialogue with different religious groups to promote understanding, just and peaceful communities and environmental protection.
- 
- We give thanks to God for the people and churches of Indonesia.

### ***Public Statement on Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa***

#### **It is voted:**

- We, the members of the Council of the Lutheran World Federation, meeting in Medan, Indonesia June 12-17, 2014, representing 72 million Lutherans in 144 member churches in 79 countries;
  
- Bearing in mind the recent statements made by the Lutheran Council in Africa and the General Church Council of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria;
  
- Having shared the pain caused by, inter alia, the abduction of more than 270 school girls and, in separate incidents, the abduction of women by Boko Haram in Nigeria; bombings in Kenya and Tanzania; and violence in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and South Sudan which spills over to Chad, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Cameroon and other countries in the region;
  
- We strongly and unreservedly condemn violence irrespective of who the perpetrators are.
  
- We therefore resolve to call upon:
  - Boko Haram to release the school girls and others abducted in Nigeria unconditionally and immediately;
  - The Nigerian and all African governments and all other U.N. member states to act jointly in order to prevent such barbaric actions to be taken in future and to take action together now to secure release of all those abducted;
  - Al-Shabaab and its allies to desist from using violence as a vehicle to air and articulate their grievances;
  - Seleka and Anti-Balaka in the Central African Republic to desist from killing their fellow citizens. Especially egregious are acts of violence perpetrated in the name of religion;

- The combatants in South Sudan, who have already caused much bloodshed, interrupted the planting season and are directly responsible for an impending famine which will likely affect 7 million people, to cease hostilities;
- The faith communities in the region to engage in inter-faith dialogue so as to foster the spirit and culture of peaceful co-existence in this part of God's world, which God has given to all its people;
- The churches of the Lutheran World Federation and their ecumenical partners to engage in critical reflection on the pain and suffering people are experiencing from the violence in sub-Saharan Africa and to continue to pray for peace and work for justice in Africa and the whole world.

### ***Public Statement on Ukraine***

#### **It is voted:**

- The Council of the Lutheran World Federation, meeting in Medan, Indonesia June 12-17, 2014, is deeply concerned about the conflict in Ukraine which has intensified since December 2013 and has already resulted in nearly 400 deaths. This conflict, while centered in Ukraine, has the potential of destabilizing all of Europe.
- We have learned from the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine, our member church there, that many of the Ukrainian people feel helpless and cut off from the international community and that many are receiving misinformation about the reality in Ukraine. Our brothers and sisters have expressed fear that no one is willing to respond adequately to their situation, placing economic interests over the protection and preservation of human rights.
- Our member church asks for our prayers and expressions of love and solidarity.
- Therefore, the LWF Council, together with the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of European Russia, affirms the unity and indivisibility of the Church of Jesus Christ everywhere regardless of political divisions and calls on all member churches to:
  1. Pray that God may grant wisdom to all decision-makers to establish peace, stability and common understanding between the Ukrainian and Russian nations for the sake of the people of Ukraine and in order that the current conflict does not escalate or spread to other places in the region;
  2. Pray for all churches in Ukraine and pledge our spiritual support for the well-being of all people; and
  3. Pray for the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of European Russia that they may continue to witness to unity in Christ despite political boundaries and divisions.



## ***Public Statement on Welcoming the Stranger***

### **It is voted:**

- The LWF Council, meeting in Medan, Indonesia 12-17 June 2014, appreciates the affirmations thus far expressed by faith leaders in the *Welcoming the Stranger* statement, launched in June 2013 and endorsed by the LWF Council at that time. Many faith leaders and secular organizations have signed this document which was produced under the strong leadership of the LWF together with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other partners.
  
- We see today that Welcoming the Stranger is as necessary as ever before in our world. It is part of our duty to act with love toward those in need, regardless of their religion, gender or nationality. Bearing in mind that migration can sometimes lead to great challenges, we want to focus on the positive outcomes, on the benefits of welcoming strangers:
  - In many countries refugees and migrants have enriched the fabric of society;
  - In many countries it has been refugees and migrants who have formed the churches there;
  - Many churches have received many benefits from the migrants which, in turn, have enriched the whole communion; and
  - New ways of living the faith have been brought by migrants and refugees to existing congregations, thereby enriching them.
  
- We note that there are an increasing number of refugees in the world. Whether migrants, refugees, or those marginalized, all need our solidarity and support.
  
- Many of them need housing, jobs, and education. We have to continue to address these needs. We recognize that there is a connection between the economic situation in a country and the preparedness to welcome strangers. We recognize that we have to work to avoid the development of tensions between the citizens of a country and the incoming migrants. All persons in a country of refuge, "including the stranger, are subject to its laws and none should be subject to hostility or discrimination." (*Welcoming the Stranger*, 2013).
  
- How can we as Lutherans, as Christians, react to this challenge?
  - We can tell the story of the Holy Family who were a refugee family shortly after the birth of Jesus;
  - We can tell of the strong call in the Bible for all people of faith to welcome the stranger;

- We can tell the stories of our fathers and grandfathers, our mothers and grandmothers who have often been migrants themselves or received migrants into their communities;
  - We can tell the story of the LWF which has supported refugees from its beginning and ever since with tangible assistance, such as food, shelter, education, etc., and other forms of care;
  - We can tell the various stories of former “strangers” who became a blessing for their societies;
  - We can confess that we have not done enough. We should have greater confidence in the support God will provide: God will give us all that we and they need;
  - We can recognize that it is often the poorest countries in the world that have been the first to take up and welcome refugees from other poor nations; and
  - We can stand in solidarity with the communities where the newcomers are and help them address the burdens and fears of welcoming the stranger.
- Therefore it is urgent that we encourage our congregations and all people of faith to build their relationships with the “strangers” among them, and to be more open, to have more faith, and to trust God’s own support.

## **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP**

### ***Communion of Protestant Christian Church (ONKP)***

#### **It is voted:**

- to welcome with joy the Communion of Protestant Christian Church (ONKP) into membership in the Lutheran World Federation.

### ***Guatemala Lutheran Church (ILUGUA)***

#### **It is voted:**

- to welcome with joy the Guatemala Lutheran Church (ILUGUA) into membership in the Lutheran World Federation.

### ***Addition to the Council’s Rules of Procedure***

#### **It is voted:**

- to add a new Section 10 to the Rules of Procedure, as follows:

#### **10. Attendance at Meetings**

Members of the Council, Advisers, and members of committees or commissions appointed by the Council are expected to attend meetings, and are requested to give timely notice if they are unable to do so. Those who are absent for two consecutive meetings may be requested by the regional vice-president to resign. Those who are absent for three consecutive meetings shall be considered to be “no

longer present for his/her term of office” (see LWF Constitution Section VIII(1)).

## **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNICATIONS**

No resolutions were proposed.

## **PLACE OF COUNCIL MEETING IN 2015**

### **It is voted:**

- to hold the Council meeting on 18 – 23 June 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland.

oOo