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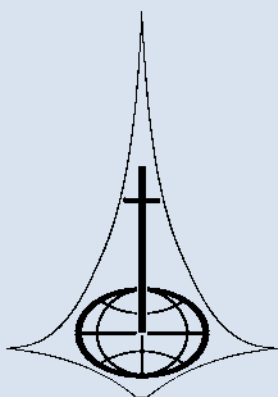
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## Nepal: Constituent Assembly Election Is a Milestone in Democratic Process



*The LWF Department for World Service (DWS) has been present in Nepal since 1984, focusing mainly on empowering the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in the country. (Photo) DWS Nepal runs a Dalit empowerment program in this remote village of Achham district in the northwest. ©LWF/DWS Nepal*

### LWF General Secretary Noko Urges International Partners to Support Struggle for Sustainable Peace

**GENEVA (LWI)** – The General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, described the recent constituent assembly election in Nepal as a key landmark in the country's democratic process and ongoing struggle for sustainable peace.

"With the election of its new Constituent Assembly, Nepal now has an historic opportunity to put 10 years of brutal and destructive civil war behind it, to re-write its constitution, and to renew its entire system of governance," said Noko in a statement released on 24 April.

That the 10 April elections were conducted in largely peaceful conditions "is a very welcome sign of the potential for democratic participation to take the place of armed conflict," the LWF general secretary noted.

According to Nepal's election commission, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)

won the most seats—a total of 217 of seats in the 601-member constituent assembly. Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala's Nepali Congress party took the second position with 107 seats, while the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) won 101 seats. Last December the country's interim parliament agreed the 240-year-old monarchy would be formally abolished in the first meeting of the new assembly. The assembly will re-write the national constitution.

Noko underscored the responsibility of Nepal's partners in the international community "whether they like the election outcome or not," to respect the democratic process and support the ongoing struggle for sustainable peace and human development in the

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### Bethlehem Lutheran Pastor and Israeli Women's Group to Receive International Peace Prize

The 2008 international Aachen Peace Prize will be awarded to Palestinian Lutheran pastor Mitri Raheb, and to MachsomWatch, an Israeli women's human rights group. The Aachen Peace Prize association is honoring the pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem and the women of MachsomWatch for their support of peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians on both sides of the separation wall put up by Israel. The national Aachen Peace Prize will go to Frankfurt political scientist Prof. Andreas Buro for his leadership role in the German peace movement.

Established in 1988 in Germany, the Aachen Peace Prize is awarded to people who have been active in grassroots peace and in promoting understanding across national divides. Prize winners receive a symbolic sum of UER 1,000 each at award ceremonies on 1 September, which is marked as Anti-War Day in Germany.

According to the Aachen Peace Prize association, Raheb, as a Christian, views a love of one's enemy to be inseparable from his work toward peaceful coexistence. "Loving one's enemies means regarding them, despite all conflict, to be God's creatures with a right to life, forgiveness, and love, not however with a right to do injustice," the organization stated, quoting the Palestinian theologian.

In addition to his pastoral work, Raheb and his congregation have set up a wide range of schools, places of employment, and tourist centers for international guests. Since 1995 the Lutheran pastor has also served as director of the International Center of Bethlehem, which he founded.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), which includes Bethlehem's Lutheran congregation, has been a member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) since 1974, and today comprises 3,000 members in six congregations in Jerusalem, the Palestinian Territories (Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, Beit Jala, and Ramallah), and in Amman, Jordan.

MachsomWatch was founded in 2001 by three Israeli women to advocate against the human rights violations suffered by Palestinians at Israeli army checkpoints in the occupied territories. The women of MachsomWatch document Israeli military actions at 30 of the roughly 580 checkpoints and roadblocks in the West Bank, at which they strive to boost mutual understanding and prevent violent conflict from arising. The volunteer organization currently has around 450 active members.

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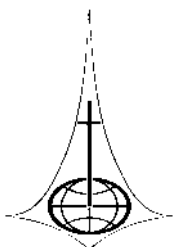
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# Costa Rican Lutheran Church President Jiménez Installed as Bishop

## Consecration Will Strengthen Ecumenical Relations

**SAN JOSÉ, Costa Rica/GENEVA** – The Rev. Melvin Jiménez Marín, president of the Lutheran Costaricense Church (Iglesia Luterana Costaricense – ILCO) was consecrated on 27 April in San José, becoming the country’s first Lutheran bishop.

A church statement issued before the installation said the bishop’s consecration should “strengthen ecumenical relations – in particular with the Roman Catholic Church.” The various historical confessions of the Christian faith can now “embrace the cause of justice, peace and fraternity, which are the visible signs of the Kingdom of God in our midst,” said the 51-year-old ILCO president. He noted the local Lutheran congregations, because of their growth and development, had expressed the desire to have a “pastor of pastors” and a voice “to guide the church and society.”

In a congratulatory letter to ILCO’s bishop designate, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko pointed out that Jiménez would be the bishop of a church that “wants to be a church without walls.” He would serve a church “that has a commitment to interact vividly with its immediate context and surrounding. A church, that is committed to offer



*Bishop Melvin Jiménez (left) receives a stole from Bishop Héctor Monterroso, Episcopal Church of Costa Rica. © ILCO*

the Word of God and the sacraments publicly, and that wants to open space to all people, independent of their condition or [origin], so that they can enjoy the transforming, reconciling and empowering presence of God in their lives and in their society.” He would be consecrated bishop of a church “that wants to be determinedly public and fundamentally inclusive,” stated Noko.

Born on 23 June 1956, Jiménez studied sociology at the University of Costa Rica. He completed his theological studies at the Lutheran

School of Theology in Chicago, USA. Ordained in 1990, he has been serving as ILCO church president since 2000. He is also the founder and leader of six non-governmental organizations actively involved in the fields of informal education, micro-credit, sustainable agriculture, social economics and child and adolescent rights.

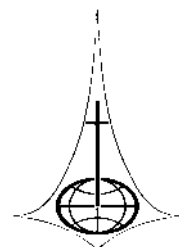
ILCO was founded in 1988 at the initiative of a group of former Lutherans and Christians from other traditions who wanted to establish a church that would promote popular pastoral care with an integral ministry of word, sacrament and service. The church currently has around 1,300 members, and has been an LWF member church since 2002.

ILCO’s work mainly focuses on strengthening Christian communities and providing support to indigenous, urban and rural populations, including farmers. People from the poorer regions and urban areas and from among indigenous groups, agricultural settings and Nicaraguan immigrants are becoming increasingly involved in the church’s congregational life.

ILCO has more than 30 congregations throughout the country, with a



*Ms Esmeralda Perez, a member of the Quitirristí indigenous community, carries a crucifix, as she leads pastors and bishops into a San José community worship center for Bishop Melvin Jiménez’s consecration. © ILCO*



social program benefitting over 5,000 people. A “church without walls,” as it calls itself, it defends the rights of people who have been excluded or live in precarious conditions. It carries out advocacy campaigns and is actively

engaged in important political and socioeconomic causes such as guaranteeing the rights of people living with HIV and the realization of just free trade agreements. In addition, ILCO supports movements fighting against

xenophobia and promoting indigenous people’s rights. It is recognized nationally and internationally for its commitment to employees’ rights and to environmental protection.

27 April 2008 (LWI)

## LWF Africa Vice-President Leads Namibians in Protest Against Arms’ Shipment to Zimbabwe

“We Cannot Be Silent and Watch,” Bishop Kameeta Cautions Churches

**WINDHOEK, Namibia/GENEVA (LWI)**

– The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Vice-President for Africa Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta has called upon churches and people in the region “to do everything in our power” to stop a Chinese arms’ shipment from reaching the Government of Zimbabwe.

“Allowing weapons to reach Zimbabwe in this highly volatile and tense situation amounts to becoming accomplices in the injustice and violence committed,” said the Namibian Lutheran bishop in a 23 April statement supporting legal action to stop a Chinese ship from entering Namibian waters with weapons destined for land-locked Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe’s political and economic crisis has increased following the delay in announcing the official results of the 29 March presidential, parliamentary and civic elections.



Namibian church leader and LWF Vice-President Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta addresses participants during the peaceful demonstration in front of the Chinese embassy in Windhoek. © ELCRN/C. Haarmann

The Chinese shipment arrived in Durban, South Africa on 10 April, but legal action by unions and other

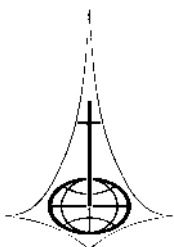
activists thwarted efforts to deliver its cargo. Also, Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa, chairperson of the sub-regional Southern African Development Community urged member states not to provide the ship with docking facilities.

In his statement, Kameeta, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) reminded churches they could not be silent and watch the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe including loss of lives. “As Christians we cannot simply walk past the injured and tortured and go about business as usual, while preaching the story of the Good Samaritan,” he said, stressing it was an “extraordinary situation” that “needs prayers and concrete action.”

Kameeta’s statement was endorsed by LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr



Namibians express solidarity with Zimbabweans currently experiencing a serious political and economic crisis. © ELCRN/D. Haarmann



Ishmael Noko, who called for the solidarity of the region's churches in defending the people of Zimbabwe. Referring to his earlier call to Zimbabwean authorities to release the election results, (see page 9) Noko said concern was not only about the government's accountability and transparency of democratic processes. "We are concerned about an imminent threat to the lives of Zimbabwean citizens at the hands of their own government," he stated.

Namibian Lutheran Bishops Dr Thomas Shivute (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia – ELCIN) and Erich Hertel (German-speaking Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia – ELCIN-GELC) supported the statement by the LWF Vice-President. The three Lutheran churches—all belonging to the LWF—coordinate their joint work through the United Church Council.

The ELCRN bishop also delivered a keynote address during a 24 April demonstration in front of the Chinese Embassy in the Namibian capital, Windhoek. Bishop Hertel was among the representatives of churches and the broader civil society who participated in the rally to support plans by the Legal Assistance Center to institute legal action against the ship's landing at a Namibian port.

25 April 2008

## LWF Global Training for Young Leaders Starts in Bangkok

### "Engage" Program Targets More Visible Youth Contribution in Church Life

**BANGKOK, Thailand/GENEVA (LWI)** – A three-year Lutheran World Federation (LWF) global youth training program was inaugurated mid-March in Bangkok, Thailand, with a workshop attended by young adults from LWF member churches in Asia and the Pacific region.

"Give Us Today Our Daily Bread"—the theme of the LWF 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly in July 2010 provides the basis for deliberations by young adults participating in the 2008–2010 program titled, "Engage: LWF Global Training for Young Leaders." It is an initiative of the LWF Department for Mission and Development and its youth desk, LWF Youth.

At the 12–18 March inaugural workshop 10 participants representing an equal number of LWF member churches from eight countries discussed the current concerns among young people in the respective churches and communities. The gathering was the first in a series of regional workshops to be held also in Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and North America, with the aim to make the contributions of young people more visible in the work of the LWF and its member churches.

"Engage" invites young adults (18–30 years old) from LWF member churches "to reflect on God's promise for our churches and our communities. Jesus teaches us to pray 'Give us today our daily bread.' What

significance does this prayer have for youth in a small community in Indonesia or Australia, in Hong Kong or Myanmar?" explained Rev. Roger Schmidt, secretary for LWF Youth. The program, he noted, "strives to translate intense inter-cultural and biblical reflection into action."

During the Bangkok workshop, the participants explored together the concept of "daily bread" in different biblical texts. Envisioning and analyzing

projecting what should have happened within this period. "Today no child has to sleep on an empty stomach; no girl has to sell herself just for food," wrote Ms Helga Thomas, Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church in India. The people in her community, she says, "now are much more informed about diseases, and are leading a hygienic life." She plans to set up a street theater project with young people to provide information on HIV and AIDS.

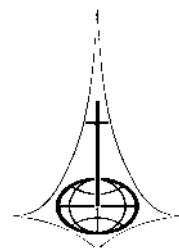


Young women participants in the Asia and Pacific region workshop of the LWF Youth program, "Engage: LWF Global Training for Young Leaders" included left to right, Helga Thomas (India); Cecily Neilson (Australia); Lydia Fong (China/Hong Kong); and Lina Khleif (Israel). © LWF/A. Wilson

ing formed part of the training. The young participants studied project planning methods to develop small-scale activities that would effectively respond to their respective needs and contexts.

In one exercise, the participants wrote a letter dated ten years in the fu-

Ms Lydia Fong, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong, hoped for a spiritual renewal among the youth in her church: "For our church, the greatest changes were in the choir, music section, and youth fellowship. We finally set up our own band, with



our own set of drums, and all the [other] instruments. It's really amazing to have a band, so that we can have more communication within the youth group." Lydia is starting a song-writing competition for all the church's youth groups.

Schmidt said he was optimistic the program would achieve its goal. "Young Christians in our churches have so much to offer. They provide their perspectives on various contemporary issues and on the biblical message. They are energized to make things happen together with

other young people. Many churches could use more of this energy and involve them in decision making," he added.

More about LWF Youth activities at: [www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)

2 April 2008

## Ecuador's State Minister Patiño Commends LWF Churches for Support in Foreign Debt Review

### Latin America: Church Leaders' Conference Discusses Illegitimate Foreign Debt

**TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras/GENEVA (LWI)** – "As Christian brothers and sisters, we must fight for our vision of human development without descending into extremes of affluence and poverty." Ecuadorian Minister of State Ricardo Patiño made these remarks at the 2008 conference of church leaders from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches in Latin America. Illegitimate foreign debt was one of the major discussion topics of the 31 March to 4 April gathering in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

"We have discovered errant clauses in a number of treaties that have strongly impaired previous Ecuadoran governments with regard to legitimate legal rights," said Patiño, who is also president of the national Commission for the Complete Auditing of Public Debt (Comisión para la Auditoria Integral del Crédito Público – CAIC). Ecuador's President Rafael Correa founded CAIC in July 2007 to look into the legality and legitimacy of the country's public debt between 1976 and 2006.

As an example, Patiño pointed to a treaty clause signed by the government, in which it relinquished its claims to any legal rights irrespective of whether or not the law would be in its favor. "There are treaties that stipulate that even if the Ecuadoran government were to overpay its creditor banks, the banks would have no obligation to return these funds."

When asked whether Ecuador had refused to repay any of its foreign debt, Patiño replied: "If illegitimate actions can be proven in the course of

investigating the treaties or the treaty negotiations, we will not repay such debts. However, the Ecuadoran government will repay its foreign debt in cases where transactions have taken place legally and legitimately."

Patiño expressed his appreciation to the LWF and Latin American

Rev. Martin Junge, area secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean in the LWF Department for Mission and Development (DMD), described Patiño's participation in the regional church leadership conference as significant. "We are pleased that the minister accepted our invitation

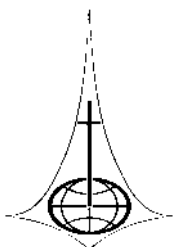


Participants in the 2008 conference of church leaders from the LWF member churches in Latin America gather for devotion under a guanacaste tree. © LWF/ALC/T. Vázquez

Council of Churches (Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias—CLAI) for their support in the process of reviewing Ecuador's foreign debt. "We received your support when we were but a small office in a university. Now that we are part of the government, we hope to realize that which we demanded from the government back then. We are grateful that you continue to support us in this effort," he added.

to come and report to the region's church leaders on Ecuador's foreign debt review," said Junge. The Latin American theologian noted that the Ecuadorian government invited the direct participation of the LWF, which currently chairs CAIC's working group on the legal aspects of foreign debt.

The LWF member churches in the region started the advocacy program on illegitimate foreign debt



in 2004. Supported by DMD, the program's goal is to raise awareness at various levels of the church about the illegitimacy of foreign debt, both in the developing countries and industrialized world.

Delegates to the 2003 LWF Tenth Assembly said in a public statement that the debt burden was "a major barrier against eradication of poverty and fulfillment of basic human rights for all." The represen-



Ecuadorian Minister of State Ricardo Patiño  
© LWF/M. Thilby

tatives of LWF member churches urged international financial institutions and "the dominant nations in the world" to accept responsibility for the bad policies, decisions and practices, which had led to the debt crisis. They underscored "an urgent need to develop mechanisms at an international level in order to find ways" to introduce justice-oriented debt management.

30 May 2008

## Latin American LWF Member Churches Say Regional Cooperation Has Strengthened Lutheran Communion

LWF General Secretary Noko: "Church Communion Is More than a Concept"

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras/GENEVA (LWI)

– Representatives of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches in Latin America say an evaluation of their regional cooperation indicates they have developed closer relations and mutual trust at local and regional levels, thereby strengthening their interaction as a Lutheran communion.

"Our relations have grown closer together, along with our mutual trust and a growing readiness to think and act as a Lutheran communion not only locally, but also regionally," stated a working group that dealt with the evaluation report during the 2008 LWF Latin American Church Leadership Conference (Conferencia de Liderazgo–COL) held from 31 March to 4 April in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Concluded in February 2008, the evaluation was launched at the April 2007 COL meeting in Santiago de Chile. It focused on the relations and cooperation among the 14 LWF member churches in Latin America from 2003 to 2007, and is also aimed at supporting the region's role in the LWF renewal process. "The concept of communion requires clear forms of expression that must be identified in a joint dialogue," said Rev. Martin Junge, area secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean in the LWF Department for Mission and Development (DMD).

LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko said he was greatly encouraged by the churches' evaluation process. "In my entire service in the LWF, this is the first time that I see churches in one region engage in such an extensive exercise. To my knowledge you are the first in the communion. This exercise is in itself a demonstration that the gift of communion among the Lutheran churches within the Latin American region is deepening." The general secretary said he was particularly impressed by how pastoral resources were being shared between the churches, and by their cooperation in theological training.

For Junge, the evaluation report had also demonstrated that COL's responsibilities and expectations as an expression of communion in the region have to be put in more precise terms. "The pressing question also arises as to how the regional process involving the LWF member churches can be anchored more deeply in the local churches. This involves both communication strategies and the design of participatory processes in the region," he added.

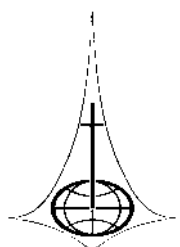
The church leadership conference decided to establish a working group to draft a document stating the common understanding of the LWF member churches in Latin America with regard to their identity, and a

description of COL's mandate. The document should also outline the strategic tasks necessary to strengthen the regional process.

Costa Rican Bishop Melvin Jiménez Marín, who was elected as the new COL moderator during the Tegucigalpa meeting, explained that the draft document would not be about institutionalizing the regional process, which includes the conference itself. "It is instead about maintaining our current consensus, upon which we wish to continue to build," he added.

### LWF Renewal

The conference also focused on the LWF renewal process, which the general secretary highlighted in his presentation titled "The LWF Today and its Perspectives for the Future." Noko stressed that for the LWF member churches, "being in communion radicalizes our common life to the extent that we have to rethink, reshape and put in place appropriate relational structures that serve the communion in such a way that living together will not be business as usual. [...] Communion is more than a concept. It must be expressed in concrete spiritual and economic ways. [...] Being in communion through Christ implies, among others, that like him, our fellowship is radically inclusive."



With a view to the renewal process Jiménez stated his positive view of the LWF regionalization process, which was being discussed by the COL churches. This would particularly be the case “if it were to be understood as the expression of a strategy involving broader and more intensive participation.”

At the COL conference, the LWF church leaders also discussed

the CLAI board, the church leaders said they saw the current situation as a challenge to “further support and intensify” their support for CLAI’s work. They would “uphold the commitment, with the power that the Holy Spirit grants us, to continue to work toward strengthening CLAI as an institution.”

This year’s COL meeting also debated further the document

document’s discussion at congregational level.

“It became clear at the conference that the region’s churches had different approaches and interpretations and that the topics discussed in the document would surely also be viewed differently,” noted Junge. “The churches seem to view as an opportunity the five-year framework set in Lund for the churches to continue their exchange on this topic with interregional and international consultations, and to view the document as a help toward conducting this discussion in an informed and factual manner,” he added. The document is available in the four LWF official languages—English, German, French and Spanish—and published in booklet formats in Spanish and Portuguese.

The LWF Latin America and Caribbean region stretches from Mexico in the north to Chile and Argentina in the south, comprising 16 member churches – 14 in Latin America, and two in the Caribbean. In addition, there are nine LWF recognized congregations in Latin America, all together representing around 822,000 Lutherans. While some of the region’s churches were founded in the 18th century by immigrants, mainly from Europe, others were started by North American and European missionaries, still others have local roots.

30 May 2008



At the opening worship: (right) Rev. Hernán López, Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras (ICLH), distributes Holy Communion to Rev. Victor Ortiz, a visiting pastor to the ICLH. © LWF/M. Thilby

the current developments within the Latin American Council of Churches (Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias - CLAI), including the February 2008 resignation of the general secretary and regional secretaries of the ecumenical body. In a letter to

adopted at the March 2007 LWF council meeting in Lund, Sweden, titled “Proposed Guidelines and Processes for Respectful Dialogue on Marriage, Family and Human Sexuality.” They agreed to commission a guide to facilitate the

## Rwandan Lutheran Bishop Urges Youth to Choose Peace

In his opening address to a regional ecumenical youth gathering in the Rwandan capital Kigali, **Bishop George Kaliisa** of the Lutheran Church of Rwanda (LCR) reminded young adults of their invaluable contribution to “transforming the world into a better place.” He urged young people “to use God’s gifts to distinguish between good and evil... and make choices for peace”

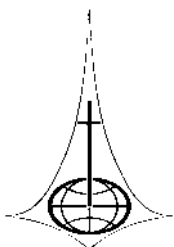
The 27–30 March conference organized by the New York (USA)-based Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Office for World Community was titled “Great Lakes Youth Conference: We Are the Future of Africa!” It brought together youth from six African countries and the United States to “bear witness” to the more than 1 million people killed in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and to work toward building a future of peace. The participants including representatives

from LWF member churches were drawn from Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania and the USA.

The gathering presented opportunity for youth in the Great Lakes countries to discuss, worship, interact and learn about conflict resolution, peace-building and reconciliation. Discussions focused on dialogue with church leaders; visits to Rwanda’s genocide memorials; reconciliation workshops; and launching of youth-led income generation projects.

*(From a contribution by George Arende, Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church)*

More information about the conference is available on the LWF Youth blog at: [www.lwfyouth.org](http://www.lwfyouth.org)





# LWF Calls for Release of Zimbabwe's Election Results 'Without Further Delay'

## General Secretary Noko Affirms Solidarity with Victims of Deprivation, Humiliation

**GENEVA (LWI)** – The General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, has expressed great concern for the situation in Zimbabwe, and called on the country's authorities to release the results of the recent election without further delay in order to allay growing tensions and suspicions.

In a statement issued on 10 April, Noko stressed the elections' significance for Zimbabweans who "long waited for this day, and they went to the polls, standing in queues for hours, in order to lodge their vote." The unconscionable delay of the outcome "does not correspond to the legitimate expectations of the citizens of Zimbabwe. The unacceptable vacuum of information concerning the election outcome only encourages speculation and suspicion. The longer the delay, the greater the potential for unrest," he stated.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission has not released the results of the 29 March presidential, parliamentary and local elections at the time of the LWF statement. The race pitted President Robert Mugabe's ruling Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) – Patriotic Front (PF) mainly against the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and an independent party.

The LWF general secretary said the Zimbabwean government and ruling party were responsible for the lack of information and accompanying tension as they had failed "to act affirmatively for the release of the election results." He cited one of the consequences as "a deepening lack of trust in President Mugabe and his government," which had implications at local and international levels. "And if the government of Zimbabwe has lost the respect of its own citizens, what other member of the international community should respect it?" posed Noko, who is a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ).

He expressed particular concern about reports of intimidation and violence against opposition representatives and supporters, the media and specific groups within the country, attributed both to official security forces and to groups of 'war veterans.' Noko reminded the government of its responsibility for "the safety and security of all Zimbabweans" and obligation to prevent all forms of political violence and intimidation.

He affirmed the LWF's solidarity with the country's churches in their appeal to the government, opposition, security forces and all elements

of Zimbabwean society "to exercise maximum restraint and calm, pending the release of the official results of the elections."

Pointing to the wider context of the political and economic crisis, especially the worsening "disconnect between society and authority," Noko commended Zimbabwe's neighbors for "a powerful demonstration of solidarity with the victims of misrule," who have sought refuge there in huge numbers.

Zimbabweans, noted Noko, had suffered humiliation and deprivation "not at the hands of external oppressors, but at the hands of their own government." He expressed the hope that the people would be spared further agony and possible violence from the delayed election results, as this would only deepen the current humanitarian crisis. It was Noko's prayer that the election results, rather than creating new divisions, would be "the beginning of healing, restoration and reconciliation in this wounded land."

The LWF is present in Zimbabwe through the ELCZ, and Lutheran Development Service (LDS) the Department for World Service associate program in the country.

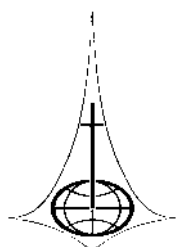
*The full text of the LWF statement on Zimbabwe's election results follows:*

### Statement from LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko on the delayed election results in Zimbabwe

The Lutheran World Federation is following the developments in Zimbabwe with great and growing concern. The significance of the opportunity that the recent parliamentary and presidential elections represent for Zimbabwe cannot be overstated. It is an opportunity for the government to hear the voice of the citizens, and an opportunity for the people of Zimbabwe to exercise their rights as citizens. Zimbabweans long waited for this day, and they

went to the polls, standing in queues for hours, in order to lodge their vote. But the current situation, in which the release of the full election results has been unconscionably delayed, does not correspond to the legitimate expectations of the citizens of Zimbabwe. The unacceptable vacuum of information concerning the election outcome only encourages speculation and suspicion. The longer the delay, the greater the potential for unrest.

The LWF calls on the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and the authorities in Zimbabwe to release the election results without further delay, in order to allay growing tensions and suspicions. In the meantime, the LWF joins the calls issued by the churches of Zimbabwe for the government, opposition, security forces and all elements of society in Zimbabwe to exercise maximum restraint and calm, pending the release of the official results of the elections.





*Basic commodities are in short supply in Zimbabwe, estimated to have the highest inflation rate in the world at around 150,000 percent. A man buys bread from a trader in the Budiviro region of the capital Harare.*  
© Reuters/P. Bulawayo

The LWF is particularly concerned about reports of intimidation and violence against opposition representatives and supporters, against media representatives and against specific groups within Zimbabwean society. The LWF notes that the reports received attribute the intimidation and violence both to official security forces and to groups of 'war veterans'. The government of Zimbabwe has a responsibility to ensure the safety and security of all Zimbabweans, and must act to prevent political violence and intimidation by whomsoever committed.

By failing to act affirmatively for the release of the election results, the government and the ruling party are responsible for the lack of

information and the accompanying tensions and suspicions. The result is a deepening lack of trust in President Mugabe and his government. And if the government of Zimbabwe has lost the respect of its own citizens, what other member of the international community should respect it? But the wider and longer-term effects on the nation are even more troubling than the immediate political crisis. The people of Zimbabwe have not only lost trust in the current government, but in the very structures and institutions of governance in the country, damaging the fabric of the nation itself. The wider consequences of this worsening disconnect between society and authority in Zimbabwe are reflected in a whole range of so-

cial ills and the breakdown of many fundamental social structures and institutions. This is tragically evident in the millions of Zimbabweans taking the dangerous course of crossing borders, sometimes through crocodile-infested rivers, to neighboring countries. The hospitality provided by Zimbabwe's neighbors is a powerful demonstration of solidarity with the victims of misrule in Zimbabwe, but stretches their own limited resources and is a source of instability in the region as a whole.

The people of Zimbabwe have suffered greatly in recent years. The potential that Zimbabwe once demonstrated as a leader in education, health and food production, as well as in the political liberation of the peoples of Africa, has been all but destroyed and forgotten. Amidst a growing sense of intimidation and fear in the country, Zimbabweans have been suffering humiliation and deprivation not at the hands of external oppressors, but at the hands of their own government. The unrest and possible violence that might yet emerge from a delayed election outcome can only serve to deepen the humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe. I pray that the people of Zimbabwe will be spared this further agony, and that the outcome of this election, rather than creating new divisions, will be the beginning of healing, restoration and reconciliation in this wounded land.

*10 April 2008*

## 2008 LWF Directory Online

The 2008 edition of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Directory is available online in PDF version on the password-protected LWF Monitoring and Reporting System (MaRS) Web site. Registered users can download and print out this version, which is updated regularly.

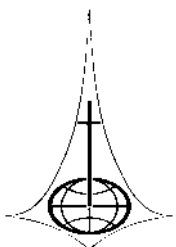
The Directory includes information about the Federation's 140 member churches, recognized churches, council, congregations, and national committees, as well as on international and regional Lutheran bodies, and other related contacts.

Also listed are the LWF's governing bodies: the LWF Council and its seven Program and two Standing Committees; the 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly Planning Committee; Project Committee; Standing Committee for World Service; as well as the LWF Foundation – Endowment Fund. Also included is information on the LWF

Secretariat in Geneva and its departments, offices, and staff, and on the Strasbourg (France)-based Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research, Institute for Ecumenical Research. An organigram illustrates the organizational structure.

The last section of the Directory provides a glossary of member church, recognized church, council, and congregation names in their local and the LWF's four official languages—English, German, French and Spanish, also available on the LWF Web site at: [www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)

The data is based on information received within the LWF secretariat in Geneva, and according to an annual survey of those listed. For further details please contact the LWF Office for Communication Services, Ms Colette Muanda at: [cmu@lutheranworld.org](mailto:cmu@lutheranworld.org)



## Nepal: Constituent Assembly Election Is a Milestone in Democratic Process

*Continued from p. 1*

Himalayan state. He said the election and its outcome was an opportunity “that Nepal and the international community cannot afford to miss.”

He highlighted the expectation that the new Constituent Assembly would not only write a good constitution, but would also establish governance systems and mechanisms

that would translate constitutional pledges into meaningful actions. “The suffering of Nepal’s people in the past, and the hopes of its children for the future, demand it,” he stressed.

The LWF has been present in Nepal since 1984 through its Department for World Service (DWS) country program. DWS Nepal focuses on empowering the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups

including Dalits and freed *Kamaiyas* (former bonded laborers) to achieve a just and sustainable livelihood, and promotes full recognition of the rights and dignity of women. It also supports the efforts of civil society groups in addressing injustice and representing disadvantaged people.

*The full text of the LWF statement on the Constituent Assembly election in Nepal follows:*

### Statement from LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko on Constituent Assembly election in Nepal

With the election of its new Constituent Assembly, Nepal now has an historic opportunity to put 10 years of brutal and destructive civil war behind it, to re-write its constitution, and to renew its entire system of governance in order to better serve its 27 million people. The fact that the elections on 10 April 2008 were conducted in largely peaceful conditions is a very welcome sign of the potential for democratic participation to take the place of armed conflict.

Those who have been elected to the Constituent Assembly have a collective responsibility to faithfully fulfill the mandate entrusted to them on behalf of and in full accountability to all the people of Nepal, and to ensure that the peace process does not fail. Nepal’s partners in the international community also have a responsibility, whether they like the election outcome or not, to respect the democratic process and to support the ongoing struggle for sustainable peace and human development in the country. This election and its outcome is a key landmark in that process. It is an opportunity that Nepal and the international community cannot afford to miss.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has been present in Nepal since 1984, supporting projects and programs for the empowerment of the poor and for the most marginalized groups—Dalits, freed



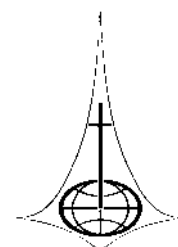
*Tibetans entering Nepal from the northern border with China temporarily reside in a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) transit center in Kathmandu. Since 2005, LWF/DWS Nepal has been running the Tibetan New Arrivals project with support from UNHCR. © LWF/DWS Nepal*

Kamaiyas, Haliyas and Janjatis. The LWF has also sought to promote the full recognition of the dignity and rights of women in Nepal. We call for the Constituent Assembly to ensure that the new constitution and system of government will guarantee equal rights and opportunities to all Nepalis, and that the most marginalized groups are fully integrated in the process of rebuilding the nation.

Respect for the human rights of all the people of Nepal is the best and only assurance of sustainable peace and development in the country. It is a currency that cannot be received from outside, but can only be granted by Nepalis to themselves. But even the most progressive and best-writ-

ten constitution will not by itself be sufficient to realize those rights. The promises the new constitution will make to the people of Nepal must be implemented in practice, or those unfulfilled promises will simply set the stage for further conflict. The expectation of all those who care for the future of Nepal is that the Constituent Assembly will not only write a good constitution, but will also to set in place the systems and mechanisms of governance that will translate constitutional pledges into meaningful actions. The suffering of Nepal’s people in the past, and the hopes of its children for the future, demand it.

*24 April 2008*



## Further Action Sought on Women’s Ordination and Witness Among LWF Member Churches

Women Affirm Progress Made, Call for More Work to Remove Obstacles

GENEVA (LWI) – Ahead of the 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in July 2010, LWF member churches are being challenged to be open to hearing and learning from one another about the positive experiences ordained women are having on churches within and beyond the Lutheran communion.

A communiqué by participants in a recent consultation called to assess the situation with regard to women’s ordination in the LWF member churches, invites the churches to see the ordination of women “not primarily as a societal or women’s issue but as a matter that goes to the heart of what it means to be the church.”

The exclusion of the public witness of ordained women in proclaiming the Word and celebrating the sacraments compromised the church’s witness to God’s reconciliation and freedom in Christ, stated the statement from the consultation titled “The Ongoing Reformation of the Church: The Witness of Ordained Women Today.” It was organized by the LWF Department for Theology and Studies (DTS) in collaboration with the desk for Women in Church and Society (WICAS) at the LWF Department for Mission and Devel-



Participants in the March 2008 Geneva consultation of the LWF/DTS program on “Women in Ministry as Ecumenical Witness” included from left to right, Ms Dagmar Magold, Switzerland; Rev. Dr Constance F. Parvey, USA; Mag. Magdalena Sevciková, Slovak Republic; and Ms Ursula Liesch, LWF/DTS staff person. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

opment (DMD) and the Office for Ecumenical Affairs.

The consultation was part of the DTS “Women in Ministry as Ecumenical Witness” program, begun this year with the aim to encourage especially churches that do not ordain women to view their ordination as an asset for new ecumenical developments rather than as an obstacle to furthering such relationships. One of the program’s main objectives is to clarify the biblical and theological bases for

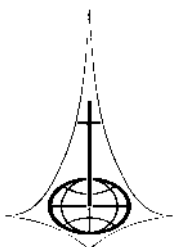
women as part of the priesthood of all believers, and in ways that challenge cultural and other obstacles.

DTS points out that the presence of women in all aspects of church ministry was shifting the overall ecumenical landscape especially in relationship to the understanding of ministry and other aspects of ecclesiology including sacraments. Its study program underscores the significance of a Lutheran contribution to this aspect of ecumenical reconfiguration not only because of the sizeable number of women in church leadership but also because of the “bridge” position between Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox churches respectively.

At the consultation, the women participants from LWF churches in parts of Africa, Asia, Europe and North America also appealed to “each member church to bring to the 2010 Assembly a report of what they intend to do with regard to this matter if they do not ordain women already, or, if they do so now, how they are addressing remaining practical obstacles and seeking to further the partnership of women and men in the ministry of the church.”



Rev. Dr. Elieshi A. N. Mungure, Tanzania (middle) contributes to a discussion at the LWF consultation. Left is Ms Aberash Dinsa, Ethiopia, and right, Prof. Turid Karlsen Seim, Norway. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch



They acknowledged the progress made with respect to women's ordination in the LWF member churches over the past 50 years, and affirmed the LWF's consistent support, especially through statements of its governing bodies, toward the full realization of the ministry of ordained women and men in the church.

The reception of the ministry of ordained women had been overwhelmingly positive with thousands

of ordained women "increasingly visible on all levels and in every facet of the church's work," and resistant attitudes and cultural assumptions "are being transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit," stated the LWF communiqué.

Participants however pointed out that women entering positions of oversight and leadership in their churches face yet new challenges that called for training and resources

in order to realize the genuine partnership of women and men in the church's ministry. Some churches, they observed, "do not want to discuss the ordination of women because they fear this may split the church or threaten ties with partners who oppose this." Open discussions with local church members were called for with the aim to elucidate the theological grounds for women's ordination, and not only the opposing perspectives.

The women's consultation called for the witness of women pastors and those in oversight positions to be highlighted in the 2017 commemoration of the Reformation.

The full text of the communiqué from the Geneva consultation is available on the LWF Web site at: [www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)

For more information about the LWF "Women in Ministry as Ecumenical Witness" program, please contact DTS director Rev. Dr Karen Bloomquist at:

[Bloomquist@lutheranworld.org](mailto:Bloomquist@lutheranworld.org)

16 May 2008



Hamburg (Germany) Bishop Maria Jepsen (left) and Dr Kathryn Johnson, LWF interim Officer for Ecumenical Affairs. © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch

## Janssen Elected New Bishop in Oldenburg, Germany

**Rev. Jan Janssen**, 45, has been elected as the new bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldenburg, Germany. The synod elected Janssen in the second round of voting on 23 May in Rastede, Lower Saxony. He will be installed on 29 September in Oldenburg's Lamberti Church, succeeding Bishop Peter Krug who will be retiring.

Bishop-elect Janssen thanked the synod for its support, announcing that he would "accept the election with his whole heart" and would "take on the task with serene self-confidence and trust in God." He said he would first reacquire himself with the church members, considering particularly those who were marginalized.

Jan Janssen was born in Bad Bevensen and has been a pastor of the German Protestant *Kirchentag*, based in Fulda, since 2002. He has been head of the worship program for the *Kirchentag*, Germany's largest meeting of Protestant laity, with an average of 100,000 participants.

Janssen studied theology in Münster and Göttingen (Germany) and in Bern, Switzerland. He served as an intern pastor in Oldenburg from 1992 to 1994, and as a pastor in Wiefelstede near Oldenburg for two years. He subsequently managed the project team for the Leipzig *Kirchentag* in 1996 and 1997, after which he was pastor of the *Christus- und Garrisonkirche* in

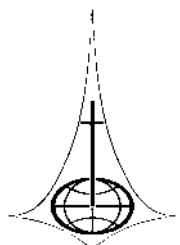


The newly elected bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldenburg, Rev. Jan Janssen (right with his spouse Maike), and outgoing Bishop Peter Krug (left) and synod president Sabine Blütchen (second from left) at the synod meeting in Rastede. © epd-bild/T. Frick

Wilhelmshaven, where he was also in charge of the "Church by the Sea" as part of Expo 2000.

Janssen is married, with three children.

With some 463,000 members, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldenburg has been a member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) since 1957.



## FEATURE: 'I Won't Be Climbing the Hills Again for Water'

### Rwanda: Interfaith Initiative Will Promote Health, Reduce Poverty

**KIBUNGO, Eastern Rwanda/GENEVA (LWI)** – Judith Mukurugwiza is among residents of Muganza village who are still celebrating “the arrival of water” in her locality. Yet the hilly, wet and evergreen neighborhood, abundant with banana crop has had plenty of water for as long as the 63-year-old grandmother can remember. Indeed as one approaches the village from the main highway, several clear water points are visible. But according to experts, most of it is unsuitable for human consumption.

“We are so happy! We have all reasons to celebrate,” Mukurugwiza told *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*, during a recent visit to the area. “What I now see here is clean water and safe too. I won't be climbing the hills again for water,” she stressed.

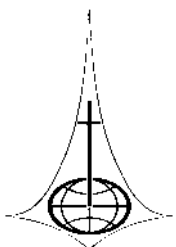
Muganza is one of the villages in the Gatore sector of Rwanda's eastern district of Kirehe that recently benefited from a piped water project initiated by the Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA) and its local partner, the Interfaith Commission of Rwanda. The project was inaugurated on 19 March by Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and president of IFAPA, together with Rwanda's Minister for Water, Environment and Natural Resources Mr Bikoro Munyanganizi, and Mr Niels Christiansen, Global Vice President of Public Affairs for the global nutrition company Nestlé. The Nestlé group provided financial and technical support for the project amounting to some USD 350,000. The LWF Department for World

Service (DWS) program in Rwanda coordinates the project's implementation within its integrated rural development activities there focusing also on food security, sanitation and environmental protection.

Kirehe district has a topography rich in water resources ranging from rivers and springs to swamps, wetlands and lakes. The most common sources of domestic water supply are streams and mountain springs, many of which are currently unprotected and poorly accessible to the local population. A survey conducted by LWF/DWS Rwanda confirmed the water potential from the springs around Gatore sector based on a gravity supply system. The IFAPA water project serves an estimated 21,600 people with filtered clean water collected into concrete reservoirs,



Community members in the hilly Gatore sector of Rwanda's eastern district of Kirehe now have access to clean drinking water through an interfaith initiative supported by the Lutheran World Federation. © LWF/F. Nzwili



and distributed through 39 km of pipelines and 156 water points.

## Increased School Enrollment

Pointing at the ochre-red color in the surrounding springs and streams Mukurugwiza recounted the community's struggles with unhygienic water, "which was all we had until now. Women and children spent countless hours looking for drinking water, and it was neither clean nor safe. We would often fall sick," she explained.

Another Muganza resident, Alexis Ngarukiyentwari, was already counting the gains his family would accrue from the new project. The frequent and strenuous trips to the stream nearly six kilometers away were finally over, as was the payment of around 100 Rwandan francs (approximately 20 cents—USD) for a 20-liter can of drinking water bought at a private supply point, he said. The 25 Rwandan francs charged per family per month to maintain the IFAPA water project is reasonable, considering also the supply point is less than one kilometer from his house, he remarked.

"The children will go to school in good time, and they will fall sick less frequently. We will also water our small gardens," he explained.

## Health and Sanitation

Apart from the immediate availability of safe drinking water, other long-term objectives of the new project include higher primary school enrollment; increased poverty reduction activities especially among women; fewer cases of both child mortality and water-borne diseases; and increased maternal health.

"The practical effects and benefits will be immediately obvious to the women who no longer have to take lengthy and risky trips to collect water for their families, and the children who can go to school instead of carrying jerricans over the hills and val-



*Ms Judith Mukurugwiza during the interview with LWI. © LWF/F. Nzwili*

leys," stressed Noko at the project's launching. "The children can now enjoy water for drinking and cleaning in their schools. Families can now enjoy a little rest and leisure that they did not have before," he added.

## IFAPA Women's Campaign

The LWF general secretary led the initiative to establish IFAPA in October 2002. The continent-wide network of national and local interfaith groups of Africa major religious traditions—African Traditional Religions, Baha'i faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism—promotes practical interfaith action for peace in the region. An IFAPA women's campaign titled "A Mother's Cry for a Healthy Africa," advocates access to safe drinking water as one of its major goals.

The project in Rwanda includes training on hygiene and sanitation and the manufacture of bricks to construct pit latrines. Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini of the Anglican Church in Rwanda, chairperson of the country's Interfaith Commission, underscored its impact for community health and economic output. "We spend so much money on some diseases that could be avoided. This project is a preventive program," he said, pointing out that many children died from illnesses as-

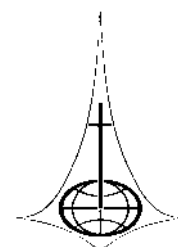
sociated with non-availability of safe drinking water.



*Bishop George W. Kalisa, Lutheran Church of Rwanda © LWF/F. Nzwili*

## Community Reconciliation

Bishop George W. Kalisa, Lutheran Church of Rwanda (LCR), described the Gatore water supply initiative as a role model in strengthening interfaith collaboration in the country's reconciliation process after the 1994 genocide. He expressed the hope that community members' organization



around the project's maintenance would provide opportunities for peace building activities and enhance conflict management mechanisms.

The LCR has been an LWF member church since 2002.

The Interfaith Commission of Rwanda will oversee the project's management through a water users' committee, identified by community members and local authorities, and trained by LWF/DWS Rwanda.

The committee of two women and two men, according to DWS Rwanda social worker Sammy Kalisa, includes representatives from all the major religious communities represented in the area. "They will receive reports from technicians, decide the requisite maintenance, and manage finances," he said.

The Gatore Primary School administration promotes a "stay-clean" policy, which was challenged by the shortage of clean water. "We asked the children to wash their hands after using the toilet, but we knew we did not have enough water," explained science teacher Pierre Karinganike.

"We are now relieved because we have this water. Before they used carry water from home, but this was too little. They could only wash their hands once a day, which was not enough. Many often got sick, and there were incidents of diarrhea," he said.

"Now the children are happy. They will have better health too," added Karinganike, to the sounds of school children playing around the new water tanks outside.

*(By Nairobi (Kenya)-based LWI correspondent Fredrick Nzwili)*



*Gatore Primary School pupils celebrate the arrival of safe drinking water in their school. © LWF/F. Nzwili*

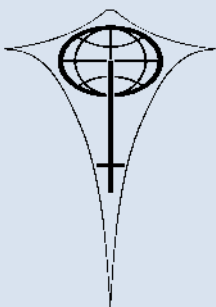
More about LWF/DWS Rwanda at:  
[www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)

on IFAPA's Web site at:  
[www.africa-faithforpeace.org](http://www.africa-faithforpeace.org)

*8 April 2008*

More information about "A Mother's Cry for a Healthy Africa" is available

**More LWI News at**  
[www.lutheranworld.org/News/Welcome.EN.html](http://www.lutheranworld.org/News/Welcome.EN.html)



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