

Highlights

Internet Visibility of World Lutheran Communion Addressed at Round Table4

“The African spider builds webs and is always in the center of the web. But the African spider depends only on itself. Human beings can never stand alone...”

Communion Belonging Is Crucial for Small Churches, Says Argentine Church Leader6

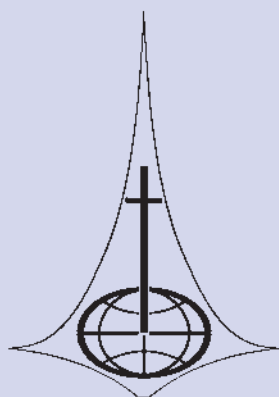
“If the worldwide Lutheran communion is doing well the local congregations flourish,” stated Rev. Alan Eldrid, president of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Argentina...

LWF Conference on the Protestant Understanding of Church..... 10

The Protestant understanding of the church was the central theme of an international LWF/DTS conference at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute near Geneva, Switzerland...

Rights-Based Perspective Crucial for Relief Work 14

Participants at a regional LWF/DWS consultation for Asia, Europe and the Middle East singled out human rights’ promotion as a crucial component of relief and development work...



LWF Council Meets in Arusha, Tanzania



Arusha-based (Tanzania) artist Benjamin Lulubuka, painted this image of Mt Kilimanjaro. © ELCT

Theme: “Melting Snow on Mount Kilimanjaro – A Witness of a Suffering Creation”

GENEVA (LWI) – Representatives from member churches of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) gather in Arusha, Tanzania, for the 25–30 June meeting of the LWF Council, hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). The meeting’s theme is “Melting Snow on Mount Kilimanjaro: A Witness of a Suffering Creation.”

The Council will begin with an opening worship service at the ELCT’s Arusha Town Lutheran Church on 25 June, at which Bishop Thomas O. Laiser of the Arusha Diocese will preach.

The agenda of the six-day meeting includes plenary presentations of the LWF President’s Address by Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Report of the Treasurer Mr Peter Stoll, and of the General

Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, followed by discussions in plenary and at the Program Committee sessions. The LWF Strategic Plan will also be presented.

The LWF Renewal Committee, chaired by Canadian Bishop Raymond Schultz will report on its work, as will the 11th Assembly Planning Committee, chaired by Ms Angelene Swart, president of the Moravian Church in South Africa.

This year’s meeting includes a “Plenary on Africa” at which former Tanzanian Prime Minister Fredrick Tluway Sumaye will deliver the keynote address.

The Council participants will join worshippers in ELCT’s Arusha congregations for

Continues on page 11

Contents

2.....Editorial

Communio

- 3.....Call for Unity as Bolivian Region Votes in Autonomy Referendum
- 4.....Tribute to Papua New Guinea Church Leader Wesley Kigasung
- 4.....Internet Visibility of World Lutheran Communion Addressed at LWF Round Table
- 6.....Communion Belonging Is Crucial for Small Churches, Says Argentine Church Leader

LWF Secretariat

- 7.....Cyclone Aftermath: LWF Ready to Assist the People of Myanmar
- 8.....LWF Applauds Initiative to Ban Cluster Munitions
- 9.....Israel's 60th Anniversary Should Be an Opportunity for Reorientation and Renewal
- 9.....General Secretary Welcomes Canadian Government Apology to First Nations
- 10.....LWF Conference on the Protestant Understanding of Church in an Ecumenical Horizon
- 1,11 ...LWF Council Meets in Arusha, Tanzania
- 12.....Human Rights Cooperation Affirmed at LWF Meeting with Norwegian Ambassador

Features & Themes

- 13.....FEATURE: "There Is a Tomorrow"
- 14.....Rights-Based Perspective Crucial to Relief Work

News in Brief

- 12.....Lobulu to Coordinate LWI Regional Production in Africa
- 16.....LWF National Committee Established in Russia

Editorial

With this special issue of *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*, the Office for Communication Services (OCS) of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is setting out in a new direction. For the first time, the global *LWI* edition produced at the Geneva secretariat will have a sister edition for the African region.

At OCS, we are constantly asking ourselves how we can best meet the challenge of faithfully reflecting the LWF sense of identity as a communion of churches. The ways in which we communicate should be—this is our belief—an authentic expression of this communion.

We are grateful for the important insights provided by the comprehensive LWF communication audit and its analysis of the publications and Web sites of all LWF units. The recommendations made by the auditors—a team of communication professionals from LWF member churches—called for “more partnership and participation in the communication process,” including “content contribution, translation, publishing and distribution.” They recommended as a starting point the launching of pilot projects in collaboration with member churches.

One such pilot project is the *LWI* African region special issue.

In close partnership with OCS, the communication office of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) is carrying out a two-year pilot project involving the publication of an African region version of *LWI* in Tanzania. It will

include international *LWI* content in English and additional pages that focus on topical issues for the region's churches in their respective popular languages. The aim is to strengthen the identity of the LWF in Africa as a communion of churches and enhance communication within the member churches and partner organizations.

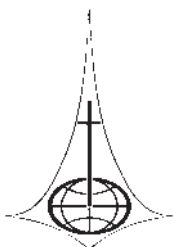
Its target groups are current *LWI* English subscribers and subscribers in Africa who previously received the French version, *FLM Info* (Fédération luthérienne mondiale – FLM Information), and additional local subscribers from the ELCT, as well as contacts through the regional Lutheran communication body, Africa Lutheran Information and Communication Network (ALCINET).

My colleagues and I are delighted that this project has become a reality. We are especially grateful to the ELCT who embraced this initiative with enthusiasm and creativity.

It is our sincere hope that this project will serve as a catalyst for other LWF regions and member churches, encouraging them to join together to seek forms of communication which contribute to our sense of identity and deeper communion.



Karin Achtelstetter
OCS Director and Editor-in-Chief



Call for Unity as Bolivian Region Votes in Autonomy Referendum

LWF General Secretary Urges Parties to Seek Genuine Dialogue for Peace and Reconciliation

GENEVA (LWI) – The General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko called for dialogue in view of the referendum on autonomy held on 4 May in Bolivia.

In an open letter to the Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church (Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Boliviana—IELB), Noko expressed his hope that “all parties [would] commit to engaging in genuine dialogue, which is the only viable path to justice, peace and reconciliation.” Through dialogue, he wrote, a solution must be found that transcended economic, political and ethnic interests and served the interests of all the people of Bolivia. “Such a solution would be a contribution not only to a sustainable peace in Bolivia, but for the whole global human community,” he continued.

Voters in Bolivia’s prosperous state of Santa Cruz went to the polls in a referendum on far-reaching autonomy for the region from the rest of the country. Opinion polls predicted a majority “yes” vote. Three other departments were planning similar referenda on autonomy in the coming weeks. Critics denounce the referenda, claiming they would split the country apart.

In a statement, IELB president Rev. Luis Cristóbal Alejo Fernández strongly appealed to all Bolivians to stand together. “As a prophetic church, we also reject all separatist agendas; we therefore call for dialogue and peaceful negotiations to bring about a speedy resolution to this dispute,” he wrote.

On behalf of the IELB, Alejo called on the people of Bolivia to hold peaceful demonstrations to pray for the nation’s peace and unity. He said that institutions, churches and social groups should speak out with one voice for Bolivian unity, and called on the Bolivian people “not to allow violence and discrimination to take



Representatives from the IELB and Pentecostal churches join in a peaceful demonstration for peace prior to the referendum on autonomy. ©IELB/S. Ramos

us away from the project of life given us by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

On 30 April, representatives of Lutheran, Methodist and Reformed churches, as well as Pentecostal churches and ecumenical organizations in Bolivia, issued a joint statement expressing their concern regarding the current conflict: “This situation could be exacerbated if we let ourselves be won over by disinformation, an absence of dialogue and the interests of individuals and groups that are damaging the harmony and peace of our country.”

“As God’s creatures,” the church leaders stressed, their primary mission was to “accept our differences and establish the consensus, space for reconciliation and dialogue needed to live in dignity without resentment, vengefulness or compromising our principles.”

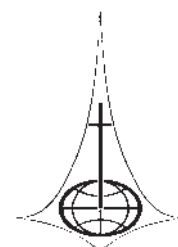
On the eve of a referendum that might have significant implications for the future of Bolivia, the LWF general secretary encouraged the ecumenical community in the country “in [their] efforts ... to ‘be church’ and to raise a prophetic voice in this

difficult and dangerous moment for [their] country.” He continued, “Our prayers for peace will accompany you and the people of Bolivia ... and we will continue to accompany you in the period of national dialogue and reconciliation that must follow.”

In his open letter, Noko stressed that Christ’s message was one of grace and reconciliation. “In all the rich diversity of the peoples and contexts of the world,” he wrote, “we are called to unity. Your ministry in Bolivia, as for all churches throughout the world, is for unity in diversity. In the midst of political confrontation such as that currently being experienced in Bolivia, the true path of that ministry can be more difficult to pursue, especially when political actors seek to manipulate diversity for short-term political purposes.”

The IELB has around 22,000 members, the majority of whom are part of the indigenous population. The church has been a member of the LWF since 1975.

4 May 2008



Tribute to Papua New Guinea Church Leader Wesley Kigasung

Bishop Wesley Kigasung, LWF Council Adviser Dies

GENEVA (LWI) – An active crusader for justice in his church, nation and global ecumenical context, is how the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) described the contribution of Bishop Dr Wesley Kigasung, head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (ELC-PNG) who died on 14 May 2008, aged 57, following illness.

In a 19 May letter to ELC-PNG General Secretary Rev. Isaac Teo, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko expressed deep condolences to Kigasung's family, the church and people of Papua New Guinea on behalf of LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson, the Council and staff. Kigasung has been an LWF Council adviser since 2003, serving on the Program Committee for Ecumenical Affairs.

The LWF general secretary particularly recalled his 2004 pastoral visits with Kigasung to Mount Hagen and other parts of the country to respond to some urgent challenges of conflict within the church, and extolled the PNG bishop for his pastoral commitment to reconciling difficulties within the church. "Bishop [Kigasung] was a fine pastor and theologian who firmly believed and worked for peace and reconciliation both in church and society," stated Noko.

At the various church-related fora locally and internationally, Kigasung earned coworkers' respect for the dignified way in which he related to others, noted Noko, citing the bishop's contribution at the July 2003



Papua New Guinea Bishop Dr Wesley Kigasung responds to the keynote address at the July 2003 LWF Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada. © LWF/D. Zimmermann

LWF Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada, as one of the respondents to the key note address.

Noko also noted Kigasung's deep passion about ecological issues, including his leadership in an appeal to the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea on the harmful environmental effects caused by the Ramu nickel mine in Mandang Province.

"Always friendly, flashing a welcoming smile, he will be sadly missed by all who have been touched by him and his leadership," said Noko of the LWF Council adviser.

Born on 16 July 1950 in Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea, Kigasung pursued his undergraduate theological

studies at the Martin Luther Seminary in Lae, 1970-1975, and further studies in theology and history at the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby, 1976-1979. From 1979 to 1980, he served as a pastor in the remote Kaintiba district in the Gulf Province. He returned to the seminary in Lae where he lectured in church history until the end of 1982. He went for further studies in Germany in 1983, and proceeded to the USA where he graduated with a Master of Theology from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago in 1986, and a Doctor of Theology from the same institution in 1989. He resumed teaching at Lae in late 1989, and was appointed the seminary's principal in 1991, a position he held until his election as ELC-PNG bishop in 1998.

Bishop Dr Wesley Kigasung is survived by his wife Susie Manempen Kigasung, two daughters and two granddaughters.

According to information from the church office, a state funeral for Kigasung took place on 20 May in Port Moresby, followed by a church funeral service on 24 May in Lae and burial on 25 May at his home village in Aluki, Bukawa area of Morobe Province.

The ELC-PNG has 900,000 members, and has been an LWF member church since 1976.

See www.lwf-assembly.org/News-016-EN.html

20 May 2008

Internet Visibility of World Lutheran Communion Addressed at LWF Round Table

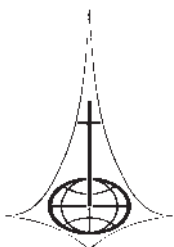
"Spider Webs," Networks and a Blooming Garden Proposals for a New LWF Web Site

GENEVA (LWI) – "The African spider builds webs and is always in the center of the web. But the African spider depends only on itself. Human beings can never stand alone. They need to build bridges between one another against isolation,"

said Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) at a mid-May communication conference in Geneva.

The LWF Office for Communication Services (OCS) hosted the

19-22 May round table that focused on the creation of a new LWF Internet site. The more than 45 participants represented LWF member churches, partner organizations and regional networks, as well as LWF staff persons



and representatives of international organizations with offices located in Geneva's Ecumenical Center. Discussions revolved around ways in which a holistic understanding of communion could be reflected on an Internet site.

OCS director Karin Achtelstetter emphasized implications of a new Web presence, which expressed the new understanding of communion: "If we take the LWF's self-understanding as a communion of churches seriously, the online presence of the Lutheran communion needs to be an authentic expression of this self-understanding."

Moreover, according to Rev. Dr Hans-Peter Grosshans, DTS Study Secretary for Theology, "In the Lutheran understanding 'communio' is mainly realized in the coming together of people who share their faith and lives". He spoke of his conviction that a modern Internet presence can foster fellowship among all Lutherans throughout the world and would highlight "the diversity of individuals and their contribution to the richness of the communal life of the Christian community."

Rev. Dr Kjell Nordstokke, Director of the LWF Department for Mission and Development (DMD) stressed the need to prioritize "building up mutual relations of unity and witness as a communion of Lutheran churches, with ecumenical commitment." This would ensure that all Lu-

therans everywhere would feel they are part of a global community.

During the four-day event, participants on the basis of presentations, best practices' examples and working groups, examined various scenarios for an enhanced Internet presence of both the LWF and global Lutheran communion.

Audience Identification

With regard to the official LWF Internet site, the participants called for the development of a more user-friendly site, more focused on its real audience, using a content management system (CMS).

In order to embody the holistic understanding of a world communion of churches in an Internet site, the participants suggested that the current Web pages of Lutheran churches and institutions be linked via a special Web site, using the metaphor of a garden.

Commenting on this choice, Ms Daranne Harris, director of Communications and Education at Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) said, "The image of a garden helps us to understand that all Lutherans can contribute to the new Internet presence of the LWF, moreover that we are part of it together."

Internet specialist Björn Ericsson from the Church of Sweden said the primary concern was to improve

information dissemination and added, "I think that there is good potential to improve possibilities to share information, for example on discussion forums and blogs which would make the Internet presence more interactive."

LWF/DMD youth intern, Mr Cheong Mun Chan from Hong Kong stressed the importance of providing young people greater opportunities to participate in discussions on LWF topics interactively, especially those currently involved in DMD-sponsored internships.

Mr Dirk-Michael Grötzsch, head of the LWF/OCS "Visibility" team, which is in charge of developing the new LWF Web site, expressed his deep satisfaction with the wealth of proposals made by the participants. These proposals will be rapidly integrated into a development plan to relaunch the LWF Web site. The concept of a world Lutheran communion Web page in a "Lutheran garden" configuration will be presented to the Program Committee for Communication Services for discussion at the June 2008 LWF Council meeting in Arusha, Tanzania.

(The author, Claudia Schubert of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover, is doing a pastoral internship at the LWF Office for Communication Services under the sponsorship of the Evangelical Church in Germany.)

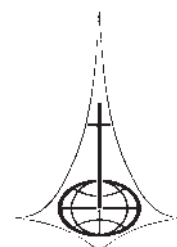
19 June 2008



Ms Daranne Harris from Canada, gives some input.
© LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch



Discussion about the proposed "Lutheran Garden" for an LWF communion Internet presence: (Left to right) Rev. Timo Reubbala, Finland; Ms Lorraine Molepo, South Africa; Mr Harold Sikkema, ACT International, Geneva; Mr Tapani Pentikäinen, Finland; and Mr Luis Eduardo Ramirez Medina from Colombia. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch



Communion Belonging Is Crucial for Small Churches, Says Argentine Church Leader

Emphasis on Regional and Global Cooperation

GENEVA (LWI) – “If the worldwide Lutheran communion is doing well the local congregations flourish,” stated Rev. Alan Eldrid, president of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELU) in Argentina and Uruguay, during a 28 May visit to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Geneva secretariat.

In an interview with *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*, Eldrid emphasized the significance of belonging to the worldwide Lutheran communion, especially for small churches like the IELU.

He underlined the significance of a holistic understanding of the communion of Lutheran Christians, saying he welcomed the changed understanding of the Lutheran communion as reflected in its expanded name: “The Lutheran World Federation – A Communion of Churches,” affirmed at the 2003 Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada. It makes it clear that all Lutherans are on the road together and accompanying one another.

“We should understand ourselves as a church, as a community at one table. The table of sacraments, sharing, discussions—the table at which we sit together with room for everyone,” noted Eldrid. He said a holistic understanding of the Lutheran communion would also lead to a change in the understanding of diakonia. It is about being “supporters and no longer coordinators. . . . People in need should receive assistance but as a process of helping them to help themselves, so that they can use their knowledge first for themselves and then assist others.”

“We benefit greatly from cooperation with the LWF, especially in the AIDS response campaign,” said Eldrid, citing a program started back in 1986 by Argentine pastor Lisandro Orlov, with visits to people living with HIV. “The program has kept growing and it is helping to change the church,” he said of the initiative that promotes



IELU president, Rev. Alan Eldrid, during the LWI interview with Ms Claudia Schubert in Geneva.
© LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

theological reflection, particularly on open-mindedness toward others, and advocates against discrimination.

Eldrid, who was recently re-elected for another four-year term, also spoke of the illegitimate debt advocacy program of the Latin American LWF member churches, begun in 2004, with support from the Department for Mission and Development, and coordination at local level. Although it is still a young initiative, “we have already achieved quite a lot. With time it will blossom and flourish even more,” he said of the churches’ efforts to increase awareness about foreign debt illegitimacy at different church levels in developing and industrialized countries.

On 2 November the 11,000-member IELU will mark the centenary of Lutheran mission in the Spanish language in the country. “We are thrilled about the mission centenary. Mission in Spanish began surprisingly early and was unique at the time,” noted Eldrid, saying the celebrations will culminate in a public presentation of the diaries and letters of American missionary Silas David Daugherty, documenting the 1908 beginning of mission in Argentina.

The first Lutherans arrived in Argentina from northern Europe in

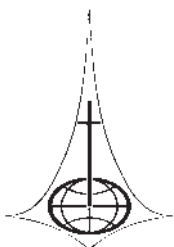
the second half of the 19th century. Lutheran communities were gradually formed, worshipping in their respective local languages, which eventually led to a paradigm shift in the congregational life of Spanish-speaking mission: worship was conducted in the national language and the first Spanish-speaking congregations were founded. “The feeling of togetherness among Lutheran Christians in Argentina was further enhanced through the national language services,” said the IELU president.

He expressed the hope that in the future “the feeling of being together [and] belonging to a network will be further strengthened, so that all Lutheran Christians will feel at home in the local churches and in the worldwide communion.”

The IELU became an independent national church in 1948, and joined the LWF in 1951.

(The interview with President Eldrid was conducted by Claudia Schubert of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover. She is doing a pastoral internship at the LWF Office for Communication Services under the sponsorship of the Evangelical Church in Germany.)

19 June 2008



Cyclone Aftermath: LWF Ready to Assist the People of Myanmar

Appeal to Authorities to Allow Entry of International Humanitarian Assistance

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia/GENEVA (LWI)

– The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has expressed its readiness to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Myanmar (Burma) in the aftermath of the cyclone disaster there, and at the same time appealed to the authorities in the country to facilitate the entry and movement of relief teams and supplies in order to avoid a larger-scale disaster.

The LWF Department for World Service (DWS) regional representative in South East Asia Mr David Mueller said the regional office would participate in the Action by Churches Together (ACT) International response to the impact of the cyclone Nargis which struck Myanmar on 3 May, leaving an estimated 100,000 people dead and more than 1 million homeless.

Rev. Chandran Paul Martin, LWF Deputy General Secretary and acting General Secretary, appealed to the authorities in the country to facilitate the entry and movement of humanitarian assistance so that a larger-scale disaster could be avoided. “I very much hope and pray that wisdom and compassion will prevail, and that the authorities in Myanmar will remove any unnecessary obstacles to the entry and movement of international humanitarian teams and supplies,” said Martin in a letter to Rev. Jenson R. Andrews, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Myanmar (Lutheran Bethlehem Church). The LWF deputy general secretary said the enormity of the disaster would require an international response mirroring that which followed the [2004] Asian tsunami. “Every hour of delay means more suffering,” he noted.

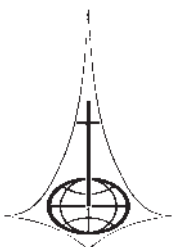
According to Mueller, LWF/DWS is ready to send staff from its country program in Nepal to provide essential support in logistics, appeal preparation and coordination, as well as communications and financial reporting. Additional staff persons from the LWF/DWS country programs in Cambodia and India are on standby to leave for Myanmar as part of the ACT response, upon clarification of the government’s policy in relation to such international help. LWF/DWS anticipates close cooperation with the LWF member church in Myanmar in the humanitarian emergency response.

DWS has underlined its commitment to following the emergency response phase with a long-term rehabilitation and development presence in service to the people of the country. “We feel strongly that with-



A survivor of the Myanmar cyclone stands near the remains of her home village.

© NCA/ACT International



out addressing the longer-term development perspective, our intervention in emergency relief work will lose potential value,” said LWF/DWS Director Rev. Eberhard Hitzler.

Hitzler expressed the hope that LWF partners would strongly support DWS’s commitment to respond to the suffering people of Myanmar (Burma), and that the country’s authorities would

allow ACT, LWF and others to offer their assistance as soon as possible.

The LWF is a founding member of ACT International, the Geneva-based global alliance of churches and related agencies working to save lives and support communities in humanitarian emergencies worldwide.

The Department for World Service is the LWF’s humanitarian and

development agency with field programs in 37 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe. Its work with marginalized and disadvantaged communities involves cooperation within global networks that include ecumenical, governmental and non-governmental partners.

9 May 2008

LWF Applauds Initiative to Ban Cluster Munitions

General Secretary Noko Decries Weapons’ Obstacle to Reconstruction, Human Development

GENEVA (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) welcomed the adoption of the new treaty to ban cluster bombs, agreed at the international Dublin Conference on Cluster Munitions, and urged countries that had not participated in the initiative to join the process.

In a public statement released on 30 May, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko praised the governments and civil society organizations that had worked together during the 19–30 May conference “to realize a framework for ridding the world of cluster munitions, following the example of the landmine

ban treaty.” He called on those who had not signed on to sign the new “cluster munitions convention when it opens for signature in Oslo later this year, and to contribute to the swift implementation of a comprehensive ban on cluster munitions.”

Noko’s statement underlined the LWF’s longstanding opposition to indiscriminate weapons such as land mines and cluster munitions, saying their deadly effects continued to be felt decades after a conflict had ended.

“In post-conflict locations around the world, civilians—especially chil-

dren—are maimed or killed by such weapons every day,” said Noko, citing the LWF’s initiatives to protect communities from the lingering threat of land mines especially in Cambodia and southern Sudan.

He called upon LWF member churches to continue in their own countries “to work for the rapid and complete global abolition of land mines, cluster munitions and all such indiscriminate weapons.”

The full text of Dr Noko’s statement follows:

Statement from LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko on Cluster Munitions Ban

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) welcomes the multilateral agreement reached in Dublin for the banning of cluster munitions. The LWF has had a longstanding opposition to indiscriminate weapons such as land mines and cluster munitions, the deadly effects of which may continue to be felt for decades after a conflict has ended.

In post-conflict locations around the world, civilians—especially children—are maimed or killed by such weapons every day. These individual tragedies are compounded by the long-term impacts on community and national development. In Cambodia, for example, the LWF has long been engaged in efforts to rid the country-

side of land mines, in order to protect the people and communities from this lingering threat. And in southern Sudan, cluster munitions left over from conflict present a deadly obstacle to our work for the re-establishment of communities, reconstruction of infrastructure and human development.

I therefore applaud the initiative and persistence of the 110 governments and many civil society organizations that have worked together to realize a framework for ridding the world of cluster munitions, following the example of the landmine ban treaty. I call upon those countries that have not participated in this initiative to join the process, to sign

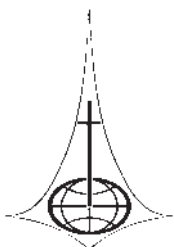
the new cluster munitions convention when it opens for signature in Oslo later this year, and to contribute to the swift implementation of a comprehensive ban on cluster munitions.

I also call upon those countries that still remain outside the framework of the landmine ban treaty to sign, ratify and implement this treaty without further delay.

I urge all member churches of the Lutheran World Federation, in their own countries and contexts, to continue to work for the rapid and complete global abolition of land mines, cluster munitions and all such indiscriminate weapons.

Geneva, 30 May 2008

More LWI News at
www.lutheranworld.org/News/Welcome.EN.html



Israel's 60th Anniversary Should Be an Opportunity for Reorientation and Renewal

LWF General Secretary Appeals for Dialogue for Just Peace in Holy Land

GENEVA (LWI) – As the State of Israel marked the 60th anniversary of its founding in mid-May, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) affirmed the Lutheran communion's responsibility and challenge to continue working "to remove any vestiges of antisemitic attitudes toward our Jewish sisters and brothers, through processes in which we encounter each other as human beings with a shared faith heritage."

In a 15 May letter to Israeli President Shimon Peres on the anniversary's occasion, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko said the LWF joined "in celebrating the survival and flourishing of the Jewish people after their centuries of exile and the genocidal catastrophe of the Second World War." He underscored the LWF's recognition of the burden of responsibility borne by Lutheran churches for antisemitic and discriminatory attitudes toward the Jewish people.

Anniversaries are also a time for reflection, reorientation and renewal, noted Noko in his letter to Peres, in which he expressed concern for the relationship between Israel and Pal-

estine. He said the week also marked the 60th anniversary of the Palestinian people's Nakba – when they were dispossessed of their homes and land, and became refugees.

The LWF general secretary noted the relationship between Israel and Palestine had been marked by deepening divisions, exclusion, hatred and brutal violence, which "can never secure a sustainable peace for either community."

Peace, noted Noko, could only be achieved through a dialogue that does not exclude anyone, and expressed appreciation for efforts to break down the barriers of "non-dialogue" in the Middle East situation such as those initiated by former US President and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Jimmy Carter. He said the official refusal to talk to Palestinian party Hamas and Hamas' refusal to recognize the State of Israel both lead to the "the same dead-end." In the absence of dialogue and encounter, enemy images and the desire to obliterate the "other" only increased. "The 'other' will always be present, and peace will either be

achieved with them or not at all," he cautioned.

The LWF general secretary also underscored the responsibility of the international community to accompany, support and encourage Israelis and Palestinians in the search for a just peace in the Holy Land "as it did in the birth of the State of Israel." He appealed to the global religious communities that hold the Holy Land holy to "be catalysts for peace, acting not in support of one community against the other but in support of the establishment of a just peace."

Saying peace could not be postponed for the sake of all Israelis and Palestinians, Noko urged concerted efforts from both sides and global support "to ensure that no more anniversaries of this date will pass without a just peace in the Holy Land."

The LWF is present in the Holy Land through its member church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and the East Jerusalem-based LWF Department for World Service regional program.

16 May 2008

LWF General Secretary Welcomes Canadian Government Apology to First Nations

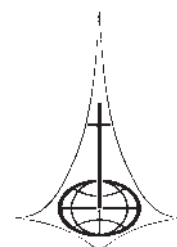
Churches Urged to Confront Their Own Responsibilities Honestly

GENEVA (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko has welcomed the Canadian government public apology to the First Nations, as a significant indication of the willingness to confront painful legacies of injustice against Indigenous Peoples.

On 11 June Prime Minister Stephen Harper offered a public apology to former students of Indian residential schools run by the government and religious groups from the 1870s to 1970s, describing the "aggressive assimilation" policy as a sad chapter in Canada's history.



Aboriginal chief Morris Shannaccappo of the Rolling River First Nation wears his traditional headdress, during a bearing on Indigenous Peoples at the July 2003 LWF Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada. © LWF/D. Zimmermann



In a statement released on 13 June, the LWF general secretary expressed the hope that Canada's apology and a similar one in February by Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, would serve to provoke recognition of Indigenous Peoples and their sufferings in other parts of the world.

"Honest examination of past wounds is a necessary step to the

healing of memories. I pray that these apologies represent the beginnings of an open process of deeper reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-indigenous peoples," said Noko.

He expressed gratitude to the Lutheran church leadership in Australia and Canada for publicly declaring support for the official apologies issued by their respective governments,

saying it was an indication of the churches' engagement in the search for reconciliation.

"In this process, churches must confront their own responsibilities openly and honestly, in order to heal and be healed," stressed Noko.

The full text of Dr Noko's statement follows:

Statement from LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko on Canadian Government Apology to First Nations

I welcome the apology issued on 11 June 2008 by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper for the abuses committed against children of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in federally-financed residential schools in Canada. This important acknowledgement of responsibility follows a similar apology issued in February this year by Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd for policies that had inflicted profound suffering on Australia's Aboriginal people.

I believe that such formal expressions of responsibility and remorse are not only of historical and symbolic significance. They begin to address past injustices and attitudes which, if

not addressed, perpetuate the suffering and discrimination. These statements indicate a growing maturity and willingness in both countries to confront painful legacies of injustice against Indigenous Peoples.

Honest examination of past wounds is a necessary step to the healing of memories. I pray that these apologies represent the beginnings of an open process of deeper reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-indigenous peoples in Canada and Australia. I am grateful that Bishop Susan Johnson, National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and Rev. Michael Semmler, President of the Lutheran

Church of Australia, both declared their support for the official apologies issued by their respective Heads of Government, indicating the engagement of the Lutheran churches in Canada and Australia in the search for reconciliation. In this process, churches must confront their own responsibilities openly and honestly, in order to heal and be healed.

I pray that these initiatives will also serve to provoke recognition of Indigenous Peoples and their sufferings in other parts of the world in which injustices against them – and even their existence as peoples – are not yet acknowledged.

13 June 2008

LWF Conference on the Protestant Understanding of Church in an Ecumenical Horizon

The Confessing Church in the Contemporary World

GENEVA (LWI) – The Protestant understanding of the church was the central theme of an international conference of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for Theology and Studies (DTS) held at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute near Geneva, Switzerland.

Scholars from 11 countries participated in the 12–16 June gathering, with the theme "The one holy, catholic and apostolic Church – reflections on the understanding of the church in an ecumenical horizon." According to Rev. Dr Hans-Peter Grosshans, DTS Study Secretary for Theology, the meeting would help make the Evangelical Lutheran understanding of the church more visible. It is the

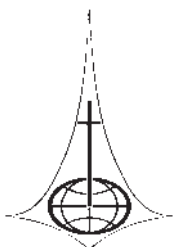
"historical obligation of the Evangelical Lutheran church to make the ecclesiological consequences of Reformed theology clear to itself and to other churches," he said prior to the meeting, organized in collaboration with the University of Geneva Faculty of Theology.

Grosshans said the conference ushers in a new LWF/DTS study program, in which the phrase from the Nicene Creed "We believe in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church" will be interpreted from the perspective of the Evangelical Lutheran church and contemporary Protestant theology and given new life.

The study program's first meeting in Bossey focused on the significance

of the Nicene phrase in its entirety for today's Protestant churches. Follow-up meetings to be held in South America, Asia and Africa, will examine significance of the four hallmarks of the church—oneness, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity—for today's Protestant churches. The program will address questions such as: "What is the importance for Protestant churches of achieving the 'one, holy, catholic and apostolic' Church? And what is meant, from a Protestant point of view, when referring to the church in terms of oneness, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity?"

Participants at the Bossey meeting came from Brazil, Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Malaysia,



Myanmar, Switzerland, United States of America and Zambia.

Different Contexts

While many of the participants are specialists on questions of ecclesiology, their experience of the concept of “church” occurs in very different contexts and extremely diverse religious, political, legal and economic situations, said Grosshans. “They represent various theological styles, methods and approaches, and demonstrate the great diversity of theological thinking within the Evangelical Lutheran church,” he added.

In addition to Lutheran scholars, other confessional traditions represented at the conference included the Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Baptists and Reformed. For Grosshans, the Evangelical Lutheran understanding of the church must not seek to assert itself in opposition to other Christian confessions, but rather with them. Emphasis must be placed on ecumenical dialogue and pursuing contextual attempts to define what church is and make it a reality.

Since the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) by representatives of the LWF and the Roman Catholic Church on 31 October 1999 in Augsburg, Germany, “church” has increasingly been the central theme of ecumenical dialogues, said Grosshans. The JDDJ reception made it poignantly clear that the main obstacle to church unity was



LWF/DTS Study Secretary for Theology Dr Hans-Peter Grosshans (left) and Prof. Johanna Rabner from Germany, during a discussion session of the Bossey conference. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

the divergent conceptions of the church. The Evangelical Lutheran understanding of the church has, by and large, defined itself in terms of its difference with other confessions. Until now, Lutheran churches and Protestant theology have paid far too little attention to clarifying the understanding of church on the basis of their own principles.

The DTS study secretary went on to say that the Protestant understanding of church therefore lacks a clear identity and consequently, an essential prerequisite toward making progress in ecumenical discussions on the topic of “church.” Until now Protestant churches have not been sufficiently

successful in making clear how, based on their understanding of the church, they can bring about the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church in accordance with the Gospel and the implications this has for the life and organization of the churches. In many ways, Protestant churches have regressed with regard to Reformation ideals, due to their understanding of their own ecclesiality.

The rich and diverse experiences in many Lutheran churches all over the world, which could deepen our interpretation of these hallmarks of the church, have not been brought to fruition, he added.

12 June 2008

LWF Council Meets in Arusha, Tanzania

Continued from p. 1

Sunday morning services on 29 June. The program provides further possibilities to see the church’s diaconal work around the Arusha region. Pre-Council exposure visits also include the work of LWF member churches and Department for World Service in neighboring Kenya and Rwanda. A pre-Council youth workshop will be held 19–23 June in Arusha.

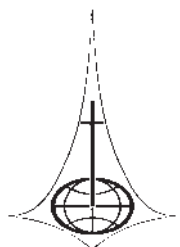
Africa’s second largest LWF member church and the world’s fourth largest Lutheran church, the 4.6 million-member ELCT joined the LWF in 1964. It has 20 dioceses, and is headed by Presiding Bishop Alex G. Malasusa.

The Council is the LWF’s governing body between Assemblies, meeting once every 12 to 18 months. It consists of the President, who is

elected by the Assembly, the Treasurer, who can be elected from among the membership or from outside, and 48 persons elected by the Assembly.

The Assembly, the LWF’s highest governing body meets every six years. The 11th Assembly will be held 20–27 July 2010 in Stuttgart, Germany, hosted by the Evangelical Church in Württemberg.

19 June 2008



Human Rights Cooperation Affirmed at LWF Meeting with Norwegian Ambassador

Need Identified for Further Collaboration on Climate Change Issues

GENEVA (LWI) – During a visit to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) secretariat in Geneva, a Norwegian government representative affirmed ongoing cooperation between her country and the LWF, and expressed the hope for further collaboration especially in the area of human rights.

first official visit with LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko and other staff members on 27 May.

Implementing human rights for all people is a central aim of the UN and of the Norwegian government, said Ambassador Angell-Hansen. Overcoming violence was a major area

of decent working conditions and climate change.

Discussions featured on the various levels of cooperation between the two partners. In 2007 the Norwegian government gave financial support to the Shiketti Integrated Community Development Project (SICDP), an initiative of the LWF Department for World Service (DWS) country program in Eritrea. The SICDP partnership included the installation of 400 energy-saving stoves in private homes, and dam reconstruction to secure water supply to community members.

Norway also gives financial assistance to the LWF-run Augusta Victoria Hospital on the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem. The hospital is part of the DWS Jerusalem regional program, providing more than 50 years of service to Palestinians in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

In 2007, Norway's Foreign Office supported the Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA), an initiative launched in October 2002 by General Secretary Noko to promote solidarity and religious coexistence in Africa. IFAPA embodies participation on an equal basis of Africa's major faith communities in initiatives focused on strengthening interfaith dialogue and cooperation, and peace building.

20 June 2008



LWF Deputy General Secretary Rev. Chandran P. Martin (right) greets Norwegian Ambassador Bente Angell-Hansen (left) during her visit to the LWF secretariat. © LWF/H. Putsman

"I am pleased to hear that we are active in the same areas and will work together for human rights," said Ambassador Bente Angell-Hansen, representative of the Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva on the occasion of her

of concern, she noted, saying she anticipated closer cooperation with the LWF Office for International Affairs and Human Rights on this issue.

"Advocating human rights for all is also a key mandate for the LWF," stressed Noko. He spoke of the need for further work together on the issue

Lobulu to Coordinate LWI Regional Production in Africa

Ms Elizabeth Lobulu, communication coordinator at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) has taken up the role of LWI Regional Production Coordinator in a new partnership between the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Office for Communication Services (OCS) and the ELCT. (see pilot project description on page 2 editorial)

Effective 1 May 2008, Lobulu coordinates the production and distribution from Tanzania, of a regional edition of the printed monthly LWF newsletter – *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*. It will include the international *LWI* content in English and ad-

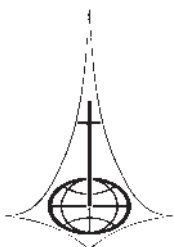


Ms Elizabeth Lobulu © ELCT

ditional pages profiling topical issues for churches in the region in their popular languages.

Lobulu, 54, has led the ELCT communication unit since 1994. She joined the church in 1988 as assistant editor and later editor of its *Uhuru na Amani* newsletter. From 1980 to 1988, she worked with the Tanzania News Agency (SHIHATA) as a features' writer and editor. She pursued journalism training at the Tanzania School of Journalism in Dar es Salaam, 1978-1980, and the International Institute for Journalism in Berlin, Germany, 1992.

Lobulu is married, with three children.



FEATURE: "There Is a Tomorrow"

LWF World Service Provides Assistance in Post-Conflict Situations

GENEVA (LWI) – Although the work of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for World Service (DWS) includes specific challenges in "post-conflict areas" such as Liberia and Haiti, providing a framework within which people can secure their future after the scars of war or instability remains crucial.

It is important for people not to lose sight of one thing: "There is a tomorrow!" said Ms Sylvia Raulo, LWF/DWS representative in the Caribbean and Haiti. She noted the Haiti is described as "a failed state" as it has experienced several decades of dictatorships and chronic instability. It has been considered as a "post-conflict area" since 2004, the same year the United Nations established the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) as the situation continued to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region. The Latin American country is located on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola, which it shares with the Dominican Republic, where the LWF program is also working.

Reconstruction of infrastructure and political structures in Haiti is



LWF supports Haiti's education system: Girls in a classroom.
© LWF/DWS Haiti

being carried out with the help of United Nations troops and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Raulo explained in a presentation entitled "Peace Building and Reconciliation in a Post-Conflict Context" at the April 2008 DWS annual forum in Montreux, Switzerland.

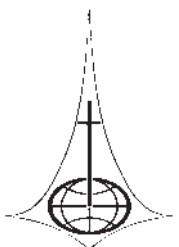
She defined the conditions in Haiti as "post-post-conflict" where

old tensions were again coming to the fore. In recent years, the country had experienced a wave of violence triggered by food shortages for a population already suffering the impact of a dysfunctional government and the inevitable negative consequences of the international market and trade on the national economy. Initiatives aimed at stabilizing the situation, such as intervention by UN troops' assistance and aid projects soon found themselves up against organized crime. The LWF program provides both practical and psychological assistance through the building up of infrastructure and the education system, trying to create some degree of stability and supporting trauma management projects for war victims and development workers.

Since 2003, the DWS Caribbean/Haiti program has concentrated on organizing rural community structures, strengthening participation in municipal decision-making processes and the creation of jobs especially in rural areas as an essential element in the fight against poverty. Its strategic priorities target the strengthening of institutions at community level through professional associations and women's groups;



A group of internally displaced persons during Liberia's civil war.
© LWF/S. Förster



integrating a participatory approach in community development; promoting coordinated networking with its partner organizations; and human rights advocacy aimed at promoting core values such as justice, equal treatment and human dignity.

Liberia: Civil War

Liberia in West Africa is confronted with similar challenges, according to Ms Elke Leidel, coordinator of the LWF/DWS regional program for the West African region. It has been classified as a “post-conflict country” since the end of the 1999–2003 civil war, and has been receiving UN support to safeguard peace. Liberians are struggling to survive against high rates of infant mortality, unemployment, unhygienic conditions and an inadequate transport system, which

largely resulted from the five-year conflict. However, there are positive developments with the growing number of investors and job creation.

After more than a decade of hostilities and civil conflicts in West Africa, the main emphasis of DWS work is on peace building and reconciliation. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, the LWF program collaborates closely with other partners in psychosocial care and trauma healing. In past years, when DWS was also present in Guinea, the emphasis was on emergency aid, reconstruction and the return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

DWS is LWF’s relief and development agency working with marginalized and disadvantaged populations. It works globally in networks and partnerships involving ecumenical, governmental and non-governmental

organizations in 37 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and in Europe. DWS response targets all people in need irrespective of their ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality or political conviction. Emergency aid response is coordinated through Action by Churches Together (ACT) International, the Geneva-based alliance of churches and their related agencies, of which the LWF is a founding member.

(A contribution by Ms Judith Straub, trainee in the LWF Office for Communication Services)

More information about DWS work at: www.lutheranworld.org

You can support the work of LWF/DWS by donating online at: donations.lutheranworld.org

10 June 2008

Rights-Based Perspective Crucial for Relief Work

LWF Consultation on Peace and Human Rights in a Multifaith Context

JERUSALEM/GENEVA (LWI) – Participants in a Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for World Service (DWS) regional consultation for Asia, Europe and the Middle East singled out human rights’ promotion and protection, greater interfaith understanding, and tolerance as crucial components of the LWF’s relief and development work.

Raising awareness among staff, primary focus groups and duty bearers about the need to integrate a rights-based approach into all relief and development plans and work was identified as an important task. The 30 participants in the 31 March–4 April meeting at the LWF-run Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) on the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem, stressed the need to empower vulnerable and marginalized rights holders to assert their rights.

“Peace and Human Rights in a Multifaith Context,” was the theme of the consultation, attended by representatives of LWF/DWS country programs in the Balkans, Bangladesh,

Cambodia, India, Jerusalem and Nepal, and LWF staff persons from the Geneva secretariat and representatives from partner organizations in Canada, Finland and Sweden.

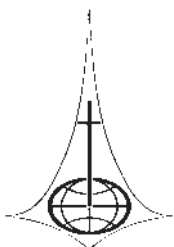
Mr Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, DWS program coordinator said the regional gathering offered opportunities for intensive experience-sharing

among the participants. Advocacy for and protection of human rights are crucial for promoting peace and justice in a dignified way, he said.

As a faith-based organization, DWS should speak out openly and advocate justice and dignity using a rights-based approach throughout its work, Bueno de Faria explained.



Around 30 representatives from the LWF Department for World Service and international partner organizations attended the regional consultation hosted by DWS Jerusalem at the Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem. © LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch





PICCR director Randa Siniora © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch



ELCJHL Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan addresses participants. © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch

“The situation is quite complex, but it does not require a complex response, if churches and faith-based organizations commit themselves to foster interfaith understanding and tolerance,” he said.

During discussion, participants noted that fostering interfaith understanding and tolerance called for awareness raising and education among church leaders and other workers on the nature of diakonia, as well as developing user-friendly information, education and communication materials. This should include communicating basic information about world religions and various approaches to diaconal work. They pointed to the need to create opportunities for members of different faiths and interest groups to become mutually acquainted and engage in common action.

The implementation of joint programs and projects that bring different faith communities together in a non-religious setting could contribute substantially to better understanding and tolerance, participants at the meeting agreed. Sensitivity to local conditions and contexts was cited as important, in ensuring the sustainability of joint projects and preventing conflict between faith groups.

Education

Mr Anoj Chhetri, DWS Nepal program coordinator, spoke about aware-

ness raising and advocacy in a country in which the LWF program has been supporting Bhutanese refugees and other marginalized and disadvantaged populations for 17 years. Ordinary people, in particular, are totally unaware of their rights. Hence, a central concern of the program is educating people with regard to exercising and defending their rights, he said.

Dr Inn Sam, DWS Cambodia deputy representative, said supporting local communities in asserting their rights is a priority for the LWF program. He pointed out the need to emphasize government accountability regarding human rights respect and protection as provided for in international treaties. Raising people’s awareness requires considerable education. “Some people are powerful, others are powerless. We try to empower the powerless,” said Ms Vuthy Chhuon, the program’s human resource manager. “Greater commitment is needed, especially with regard to interfaith conflicts, if conflicting parties are to be brought to the dialogue table and greater mutual understanding is to be achieved,” she added.

Adverse Human Rights Situation

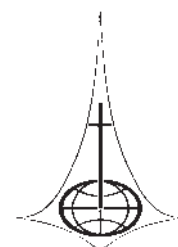
The current conflict between Israel and Palestinian territories held the center stage during the meeting in Jerusalem. Israeli and Palestinian participants reported on the consequences

of the extension of Jewish settlements, as well as the construction of security infrastructures and walls separating Israel and the Palestinian territories and the resulting impact on the daily lives of Palestinians.

Ms Randa Siniora, director general of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen’s Rights (PICCR), said the human rights situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip had become more critical at all levels. Each month dozens of Palestinians lose their lives as the result of Israeli reprisal attacks in response to rocket fire from Palestinian territories. In addition, conflicts between Hamas and Fatah are making her organization’s efforts increasingly difficult. This concerns both visits to prisoners and training and capacity-building programs.

Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) denounced as scandalous the fact that world political leaders have allowed the Palestinian people to live in refugee camps for 60 years. Without justice, relief work and development aid are merely inflated words, said Younan, who is LWF Vice-President for the Asian region. He noted the LWF wants justice and seeks to empower the weak and refugees.

The struggle by the Palestinian people to obtain their rights must be non-violent, the Lutheran bishop



stressed. It is a sin to kill another Palestinian; it is a sin to kill anybody.

Younan expressed his conviction that peace was possible. He said when he mentions the two-state solution along the pre-1967 borders, he also affirms Israel's right to exist. But this also implied that natural resources such as water and land must be shared equitably. He however, sees the Jewish settlements as a major stumbling block, saying the settlement policy must end and settlements beyond the 1967 borders must be dismantled. This, together with the partitioning of Jerusalem, is an absolute precondition for an enduring peace.

The world community must recognize that Palestinians have been the victims of injustice, Bishop Younan concluded.

The Department for World Service is the LWF's humanitarian and devel-



Palestinian families, including these children, spend long hours waiting to cross the security checkpoints at Kalanda near Ramallah in the West Bank.
© LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch

opment agency with field programs in more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia,

Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe. Its work with marginalized and disadvantaged communities involves cooperation within global networks that include ecumenical, governmental and non-governmental partners.

The LWF is a founding member of Action by Churches Together (ACT) International, the Geneva-based global alliance of churches and related agencies working to save lives and support communities in humanitarian emergencies worldwide.

More information on LWF/DWS is available on the LWF Web site at: www.lutheranworld.org

To donate toward the LWF Department for World Service work please see:

donations.lutheranworld.org

20 June 2008

LWF National Committee Established in Russia

A National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has been established in the Russian Federation. It comprises the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (ELCROS), the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia (ELCIR), as well as the ELCROS regional churches—the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of European Russia; and of the Urals, Siberia and the Far East.

The aim of the LWF National Committee is to proclaim the Word of God together, and foster common activities and contacts with the state and the Lutheran communion at na-

tional and global levels. “[It] offers an opportunity for many new activities. In the upcoming period we will have to think about our specific contribution to strengthening the Lutheran communion,” said ELCROS Archbishop Dr Edmund Ratz, following the 25 April committee founding meeting in St Petersburg, Russia.

ELCIR Bishop Arri Kugappi, expressed the hope that the new body would help its members “in creating a kind of ‘practical symphony’ with cooperation at many levels.”

(By Marina Chudenko, ELCROS public relations officer.)

The Lutheran World Federation

– A Communion of Churches
150, route de Ferney
P.O. Box 2100
CH-1211 Geneva 2,
Switzerland

Telephone +41/22-791 61 11
Fax +41/22-791 66 30
E-mail: info@lutheranworld.org
www.lutheranworld.org

Editor-in-Chief
Karin Achtelstetter
ka@lutheranworld.org

English Editor

Pauline Mumia
pmu@lutheranworld.org

German Editor

Dirk-Michael Gröttsch
dmg@lutheranworld.org

Layout

Stéphane Gallay
sga@lutheranworld.org

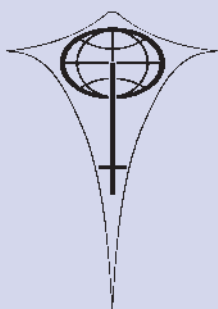
Circulation/subscription

Colette Muanda
cmu@lutheranworld.org

The Lutheran World Information (LWI) is the information service of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

Unless specifically noted, material presented does not represent positions or opinions of the LWF or of its various units.

Where the dateline of an article contains the notation (LWI), the material may be freely reproduced with acknowledgement.



Published and distributed by:
The Lutheran World Federation
150, route de Ferney
P.O. Box 2100
CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland
Tel. +41/22-791 61 11
Fax +41/22-791 66 30
E-mail info@lutheranworld.org
www.lutheranworld.org