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TO THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION COUNCIL MEETING

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

President,
General Secretary,
Sisters and Brothers,

It gives me great pleasure to bring you greetings on behalf of your sisters and brothers in the World Communion of Reformed Churches in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In a world in which we have so much parched land, with people hungering and thirsting for justice, for food, for peace, and with millions of people yearning for something different than the brokenness and suffering around us, the words of Psalm 1: 3 come to us with a fresh urgency. When unjust systems seem to be flourishing all over the world, and even churches and church bodies seem to rely on the advice of those who maintain the unjust systems, or feel comfortable when sitting with the powerful, it is refreshing that the Lutheran World Federation echoes the Psalmist who understands God's value for those who indicate a different reality is possible. We can dare to be different and be like the tree planted by streams of water – bringing life where death reigns, and bringing justice, renewal and hope to replace the injustice, brokenness and despair.

We in the World Communion of Reformed Churches are happy that the Lutheran Reformed Working Group report is now out. Our Executive Committee joyfully received it just about a month ago when we met in Hannover and we commend it to our member churches. We understand it will be before you for a similar action in this meeting. We thank God for the outcomes of our working groups and other expressions of the strong relationship between Lutherans and Reformed. We in the WCRC cherish this and pray that we continue to find new ways of strengthening that bond.

We are also grateful to God for the work we are doing together on the New International Financial and Economic Architecture. This too is a sign of our common commitment to being, for a hurting world, God's tree planted by streams of water.

In the World Communion of Reformed Churches, we have constantly expressed our desire for the day when the Lutheran World Federation and the World Communion of Reformed Churches will have a joint Assembly (what we call a General Council). This too is an expression of how seriously we take our relationship. Alas so far it has not been possible. But it is a vision which I hope we will keep working towards. Our Executive Committee would like us to work towards at least a joint governing body meeting in the near future. We hope your Council shares this vision. As we commemorate the significant year of 2017, it is our prayer that the ways in which we have our Assemblies in that year will at the very least show signs of our commitment to walking together, and giving an example to the wider ecumenical family that it is possible to be more intentional

about Assemblies/General Councils being instruments for radical steps in living out the Christian unity we have received as a gift.

I take this opportunity to personally thank you, the governing body of the LWF, for the work we have done together for many decades – but also specifically for the last 14 years in which I have served the Reformed family in my ministry as General Secretary. The close working relationship between your General Secretary, Rev. Martin Junge and myself as well as the one I had with his predecessor, Dr. Ishmael Noko have given us the space for organizations to respond more faithfully and effectively to our ecumenical calling and our quest for Christian unity. I take this opportunity to express thanks to my brother Rev. Martin Junge for the good leadership he is providing and for what we have been able to do together.

As I take leave of my current ministry on the 31st of August this year, I commend to you my successor, Rev. Chris Ferguson of Canada. I know that under Chris' leadership, the relationship between the WCRC and the LWF will continue to grow.

Our President, Rev. Dr. Jerry Pillay, our Executive Committee, my colleagues in Hannover and the entire Reformed family join me in wishing you the best of God's blessings as you deliberate in this Council meeting.

Setri Nyomi
WCRC General Secretary