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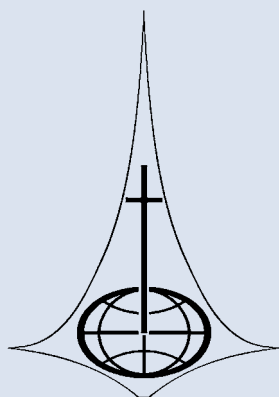
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Call for a Spiritual Ecumenism at Joint Declaration's Tenth Anniversary



Church representatives follow the festive ecumenical service in the Augsburg Cathedral marking the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification © LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch

LWF General Secretary Noko Says Walls of Separation Are Broken Down

AUGSBURG, Germany/GENEVA (LWI) – A festive ecumenical service concluded celebrations marking the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) in Augsburg, Germany. Methodists, Lutherans and Roman Catholics underlined how much had been achieved in ecumenical dialogue over the past ten years.

In his sermon in the Augsburg Cathedral, the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) Walter Cardinal Kasper stated that the JDDJ was a sign of the workings of the Holy Spirit. “We cannot be thankful enough for that and for many, many other steps that have been possible since. The godless complaining about the supposed standstill in the ecumenical movement and the miserable moaning about what has not yet been achieved, forgetting all that has been given us in the last

few years—all that is sheer ingratitude,” he asserted. “We need a spiritual ecumenism, and it has grown, thank goodness, in the last few years.” Kasper’s closing words were: “Ultimately, ecumenism is not an end in itself: it aims to go beyond itself toward reconciliation, unity and world peace. Let us thus be the vanguard and precursors of this unity and this peace.”

The second preacher at the festive ecumenical service, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), evoked “our sharing in [God’s] mission through the power of the Holy Spirit.” This enables Christians “to overcome the ever-present forces of division in church and in society. It helps us to seek responsible ways of reducing the enemy images that isolate and separate us from the gift of communion with



PCPCU president Walter Cardinal Kasper © LWF/D.-M. Gröttsch

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Lutheran World Information Subscription 2010

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The staff of the LWF Office for Communication Services wish all LWI readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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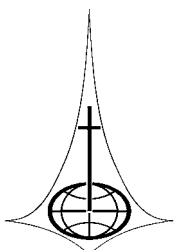
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Includes Assembly Update No. 4



**LWF CONSULTATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE,
FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY IN AFRICA**
Nairobi, Kenya, 5-10 October 2009

African Lutheran Church Leaders Explore Climate Change Impact on Food Security

Nairobi Meeting Deliberates Theological Perspectives on “Daily Bread”

NAIROBI, Kenya/GENEVA (LWI) – Climate change, food security and poverty in Africa were the focus topics of a consultation of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 5-10 October.

Over 50 participants from LWF member churches in Africa, country programs of the Department for World Service (DWS) and related partners deliberated the three topics under the theme “Vision, Realities and the Witness of the Church amid Crises of Climate Change, Food and Poverty.”

The Africa area desk at the LWF Department for Mission and Development (DMD) organized the event, hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK) and Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church (KELC).

The consultation comes at a significant moment in view of preparations for the July 2010 LWF Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany, said Rev. Dr. Musa P. Filibus, DMD area secretary for Africa. “It relates closely to the Assembly theme, ‘Give Us Today Our Daily Bread.’ To speak about the impact of climate change, food security and poverty is to articulate concern about the cry of the poor for daily bread and justice,” he explained.

The gathering would enable church leaders, theologians, development workers and partners to share experiences and deepen theological understanding of the critical issues related to climate change and food security, and the link with systemic poverty, said Filibus. Other perspectives would include trade, gender justice and the role of women as agents of transformation, he explained.

At its 2008 meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, the LWF Council urged



Newly arrived internally displaced persons put up a shelter in a camp in Eastern Chad, where LWF/DWS is working. In parts of Africa, recurring drought and conflict over land increasingly lead to internal displacement of people. © ACT International/Paul Jeffrey

the member churches to deepen their theological and ethical understanding on the human contribution to climate change and the global food crisis. The governing body emphasized the urgency and unprecedented magnitude of these challenges and their threat to humanity and the rest of creation. The Council called on the churches to move beyond lamentation to urgent and effective action.

Following up on the Council’s action, the July 2009 meeting of the LWF Africa Region Task Force on Poverty in Johannesburg, South Africa, explored further the contextual threat of climate change including increasing floods and droughts, resulting in internal displacement of people and conflict over land. The committee underlined that climate change was resulting in unpredictable seasons, failure of harvests and a water crisis. It proposed the Nairobi follow-up consultation.

A September 2009 DWS regional consultation on food security contin-

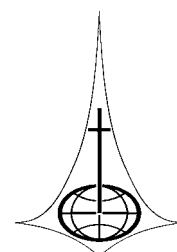
ued this focus, calling for greater sensitivity to the vulnerability of people seeking their rights amid the crisis.

The Mbabane, Swaziland, meeting attended by representatives and partners of DWS country and associate programs in Southern Africa, stated that equity in land tenure systems was key to achieving national food security. Participants underlined the need to promote community-based solutions, and called on churches to deepen their moral and ethical understanding of food security.

Still, more research and better networking are needed to influence governments to act on behalf of the poor and vulnerable hit hard by the lack of food security in the region, noted the DWS consultation.

It urged better use of climate change resources, a scaling up of disaster relief and the promotion of drought-resistant crops among other approaches.

9 October 2009



Churches Called to Hold Governments Accountable

Setting the tone for the consultation on climate change, food security and poverty on the continent, the LWF Vice President for the region said, “it cannot be business as usual,” as recurring crises continue to hurt the continent.

“We cannot continue to meditate on this, we must take action,” Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), told a press conference at the opening of the 5-10 October consultation.

Kameeta underlined the LWF’s “call for more research and better networking to influence governments to act on behalf of the poor and vulnerable people, hit hard by food insecurity in Africa.

“We cannot emphasize enough that food security is not a privilege, but a right,” said the ELCRN bishop. In Namibia, he leads a Basic Income Grant (BIG) coalition of civil society organizations advocating an initiative to alleviate poverty and improve economic development in the country.

Land Competition

Concern for Africa’s future is heightened by climate change, with rivers drying up, failing or erratic rains and prolonged droughts, resulting in poor harvests, the consultation heard. This leads to displacement and conflicts, due to competition for productive land.

“The issue of food crisis is something we are experiencing again and again in Kenya,” said Bishop Walter Obare Omwanza of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK), which is co-hosting the event with the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Obare explained the church’s intervention. “As early as 1983, the ELCK saw the looming food crisis, and embarked on a tree-planting exercise,” mainly with the help of church-sponsored schools. The project that went on until 2000 was re-launched recently to also involve congregation members actively, he added.

“We chose to convene in Kenya because we felt it is a very important place for learning and sharing experiences



LWF Vice President Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta delivered the keynote address at the consultation on climate change and food security in Africa. © LWF/Fredrick Nzwili

especially with local people forced to move, due to difficulties in securing their own food and for their animals,” said Rev. Dr Musa P. Filibus, area secretary for Africa at the LWF Department for Mission and Development, which organized the consultation.

Raise Awareness

Still, Bishop Dr Paul Kofi Fynn, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana, noted it was mainly politicians and governments, who were often heard talking about climate change. “We don’t hear the churches, and that’s why in the Lutheran church, we want to begin by telling the people the

church has a role to play,” said Fynn. “If we sensitize our people this will go a long way in solving the problem of climate change,” he said.

Concern was also raised about the church’s responsibility in holding governments accountable over the issue of land privatization to multinational corporations for the cultivation of products that benefit the global market economy.

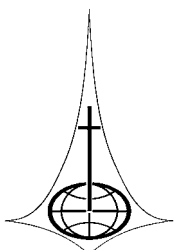
“The small land that we live on is slowly being taken away, and we keep asking ourselves, ‘Are people going to eat the flowers or the industries?’” remarked Rev. Dr Elieshi Mungure, a lecturer at the Makumira University College of Tumaini University, Tanzania, referring to the country’s export-oriented flower industry.

“At the end of the day, people are coming to the churches crying, and the churches are forced to go out and start gathering food, as they should. That’s why we are saying we need to speak for the people. These government members are also our [church] members, but [we] don’t tell them the truth,” stressed Mungure, a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

The consultation’s aim is to help church leaders deepen their theological understanding of climate change, food crisis and economic globalization, and to identify strategies for responding to these challenges.



ELCK Bishop Walter Obare Omwanza (left) follows the presentation by Rev. Dr Elieshi Mungure, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. © LWF/Fredrick Nzwili



Lutheran Church Leaders Seek Just Agreements at Copenhagen Conference

The consultation on climate change, food security and poverty ended in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, with a call on the LWF member churches to challenge their governments to demand fair, equitable and legally binding climate change agreements at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December.

Representatives of LWF member churches in Africa, diaconal institutions of churches in the region and mission partners also urged the LWF and ecumenical delegations attending the Copenhagen conference to demand adequate compensation for rehabilitating the environment in Africa.

“Climate change is a justice issue because those who have played an insignificant role in causing it are suffering the most,” delegates stressed in the final statement of the 5-10 October, consultation.

“We... listened to testimonies from people directly affected by climate change. As ascertained from them, rains do not fall or are very erratic, rivers and lands are drying up; resulting in poor harvests,” the participants said in the statement that addressed a range of issues related to the continent’s vulnerability to the impact of climate change.

LWF member churches were urged to engage their governments to address food insecurity and poverty, as well as add their voices in demanding justice for those made vulnerable or marginalized by climate change.

Mindset

“I see this [consultation] as a starting point in trying to make the people aware of the problem, ramifications and consequences. I think something more needs to be done after this,” said Rev. Dr Modeste Rakoto, president of the Malagasy Lutheran Church and current chairperson of the Lutheran Communion in Central and Eastern Africa (LUCCEA). “We have general principles and general deadlines... but

the next step should be steps toward good actions to make the people cope,” he said in an interview with *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*.

However, the biggest challenge, according to the LUCCEA leader was changing mind-sets so that people can address the situation.

Climate Change Challenges

Presiding Bishop Naison Shava of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ) said churches in Africa needed to build up confidence in actively addressing the challenges of climate change.



(Left) Rev. Emelda Ombese from the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church and Presiding Bishop Naison Shava of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe follow the consultation’s plenary proceedings.
© LWF/Fredrick Nzwili

“The tendency in the church has been to be very highly empowered in production of documents and taking positions on paper, but we have been weak in terms of actions,” said Shava. “We have had this trend for quite some-time. That’s why I am saying; we need to look into ourselves introspectively and move toward action,” he added.

“We must hate evil, love good: establish justice in the gate,” remarked Namibian Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta, LWF vice president for the African region earlier while presenting the key note address titled,

“Theological and Ethical Questions and Public Role of the Church.” He challenged Lutheran churches to “move away from ambulance approaches to addressing structural issues head on. Let us be bold, prophetic examples of doing justice, not charity.”

Continent’s Vulnerability

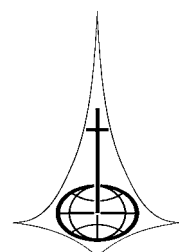
Africa is least equipped to cope with the impact of climate change, participants noted in the consultation’s final statement. The region’s vulnerability is further heightened as its food production mainly depends on

rainfall-fed agriculture. Indeed, the UN Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change warns that in 20 years, Africa could lose up to 60 percent of its agricultural productivity.

(Nairobi (Kenya)-based correspondent Fredrick Nzwili reported on the regional consultation for LWI.)

The consultation’s final statement is available on the LWF Web site at:

[www.lutheranworld.org/
LWF_Documents/
LWF-2009_Nairobi_Regional_
Consultation-EN.pdf](http://www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/LWF-2009_Nairobi_Regional_Consultation-EN.pdf)



Lead the Drive for Justice and Peace, Asian Faith Communities Urged

LWF Interfaith Consultation Challenges Religious Leaders to Promote Understanding

DHAKA, Bangladesh/GENEVA (LWI) – Use your institutions to develop opportunities for common action, a Lutheran World Federation (LWF) consultation has urged religious communities in Asia.

Delegates called on the LWF to establish a platform to exchange positive experiences of interfaith collaboration in the region.

The “Consultation on Interfaith Diapraxis: Building Communities of Solidarity and Mutual Interest,” held from 8 to 10 September in Dhaka, Bangladesh, also called for religious, community and political leaders to work for tolerance and reconciliation.

The 50 delegates attending the consultation represented LWF member churches, ecumenical partners and religious groups (Christian, Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim) from Bangladesh, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Jordan, Korea and Thailand.

The Asia desk of the LWF Department for Mission and Development organized the meeting aimed at fostering interfaith relations. It was hosted by the Department for World Service (DWS) associate program Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS) in collaboration with the Bangladesh Lutheran Church and the Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The final statement from the gathering affirmed the importance of religious freedom; the need for joint social action among faiths; and the urgency to develop leadership committed to interfaith action.

Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan, LWF vice president for the Asian region, told the consultation that religious leaders have an important role to play in promoting understanding among people of diverse faith commu-

nities. The faith communities need to address people’s suffering, challenge structures of injustice and help build a modern, civil society, he said.

The LWF vice president noted that diapraxis emphasized the practical dimension and visibility of dialogue among the faithful. Religious leaders, he said, should utilize their faith to speak the truth and promote justice. They should set an example to their followers by their words and deeds, and by opposing extremism, said Younan, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

community, said Rev. Dr Packiam Samuel, general secretary of the Interfaith Coalition for Peace in India.

RDRS executive director, Mr Kamaluddin Akbar, explained that despite Bangladesh’s large Muslim majority and some scattered instances of discrimination, religious harmony exists in the country.

Still, he said, there was need for change before either dialogue or common action among faiths could succeed.

Ms Sally Lim, LWF regional expression officer for Asia, noted that the 2005 Asian tsunami brought people



(From left to right) Mr Kamaluddin Akbar, RDRS executive director, addresses the diapraxis consultation. Other presenters included LWF Vice President for Asia Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan, and LWF Deputy General Secretary Rev. Chandran Paul Martin. © RDRS

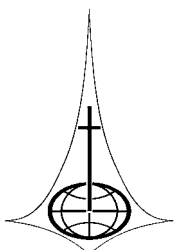
Opportunity for Common Action

LWF Deputy General Secretary Rev. Chandran Paul Martin told the consultation that the call to “feed the hungry” shared across faiths offers opportunity for common affirmation and action among religions.

Interfaith groups in India, for example, are creating programs that focus on promoting shared life in

of various faiths together in solidarity and action. This kind of common action should focus on creating solidarity, added Rev. Dr Martin Sinaga, study secretary for theology and the church at the LWF Department for Theology and Studies.

Brother Jalarth D’Souza, who runs the Bangladesh Inter-Religious Council for Peace and Justice talked about how Hindus look after



a Muslim shrine at Chittagong in the southeast.

Cultural Patterns

However, Rev. Martin Adhikary of the Leprosy Mission Bangladesh warned against limiting religious belief to a particular culture or pattern.

There is “need to take action to stop propaganda,” and stereotypes about other religions, remarked Dr Syed Samsuzzaman, RDRS director for resources and the environment. Muslim scholar Prof. Shamsher Ali, vice chancellor of Southeast University in Dhaka, illustrated the importance of stressing commonalities among faiths groups.

Indian Hindu scholar Dr Prabhakar Bhattacharya called for the linking of faith with the current life situations of believers.

Buddhists have long believed in the principle of diapraxis, said Dr Parichat Suwanbubha of Mahidol University in Nakhon Pathom, Thai-



RDRS work in Bangladesh includes awareness-raising in rural communities about gender equity and affirmation of women's rights in order to counter exclusion, deprivation and discrimination. © RDRS/D. Sibily

land. Too often faiths teach by using texts. “But we should link it with the present day situation of the people,” he added.

(This article is compiled from reports by Ms Sabrina Sharmin of RDRS Bangladesh.)

The final statement from the diapraxis consultation is available on the LWF web site at: www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/LWF-2009_Dhaka_Consultation_on_Diapraxis-EN.pdf

15 October 2009

African Interfaith Body Receives Global Interreligious Award

The Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA), which brings together seven faith traditions on the continent, received the Paul Carus Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Interreligious Movement.

The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions gives the award in memory of Dr Paul Carus, a world-renowned scholar, writer and publisher in the fields of religion, philosophy and science. He was a key figure in the introduction of Buddhism to the West and a prominent organizer of the first Parliament of the World's Religions in 1893 in Chicago, USA.



Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko (third from right) joins a procession of religious leaders at the 2005 IFAPA summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. © LWF/A. Vlachakis

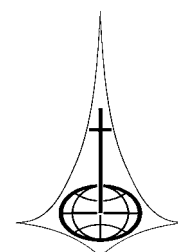
“I received the news of the Carus Award to IFAPA with humility and gratitude,” remarked IFAPA President Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, who is also general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation.

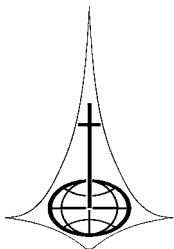
“IFAPA models in a creative way, the peace-making potential of the growing interreligious movement,” said Rev. Dr William E. Leshner, Chair of the Council's Board of Trustees. “The organization is comprehensive, representing the major religions of Africa and also geographically significant with a continent-wide reach and concern,” he said.

Founded in 2002, IFAPA brings together representatives of African Traditional Religions (ATR), Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Jews.

Noko and four other IFAPA officials—Mr Robert Hounon (ATR), Ms Lucretia Warren (Baha'i), Mr Prabhundas Pattni (Hindu) and Dr Faroug El Bushra Abdel Gadir (Muslim) jointly received the award on 5 December during the 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions meeting in Melbourne, Australia.

“IFAPA's commitment to the search for peace in Africa is certainly strengthened and upheld by means of this recognition. IFAPA envisions an Africa where the religious beliefs and traditions of every community are fully respected; where children and youth must be formed through positive information about each other's religion; where current educational textbooks ought to be revised to ensure that they do not contribute to religious intolerance and conflict,” Noko stated.





TEN YEARS OF THE JDDJ
 Augsburg, Germany, 30-31 October 2009

Dialogue between Lutherans and Roman Catholics Has Paid Off

Tribute to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

“It was one of the most moving days in my life.” With these words, the Presiding Bishop of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) Bishop Dr Johannes Friedrich (Munich, Germany) recalled the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) between the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Roman Catholic Church ten years ago in Augsburg, Germany.



VELKD Presiding Bishop Dr Johannes Friedrich
 © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch

In his greeting at a festive ceremony on 30 October in the Golden Hall of Augsburg town hall, Friedrich said, “Today we are celebrating the fact that the decades of patient dialogue between Lutherans and Catholics have paid off and we can now together subscribe to a differentiated consensus in the doctrine on justification. There are thus no longer any church-dividing differences regarding what is for Lutherans the central core of the biblical message.”

On Reformation Day in 1999 the LWF and the Vatican affirmed—in a festive act of worship in Augsburg—that the mutual condemnations on the crucial question of justification, repeated for centuries, were no longer the subject of present teaching in the respective churches. The World Methodist Council affirmed the JDDJ at its 2006 assembly in Seoul, South Korea.



Augsburg's Lord Mayor Dr Kurt Gribl
 © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch

Going beyond theological dialogue, the VELKD presiding bishop affirmed spiritual ecumenism. “All that is already possible in the broad field of spirituality, prayer and worship must be done together to the praise and glory of God.” Friedrich underlined that “with the Joint Declaration we can say together that it is an indispensable criterion seeking to focus all the church’s teaching and practice on Christ.” He added that the festive cer-

emony was an opportunity for “committing ourselves” to open up the message of justification again and again for the present day. “I am grateful for the opportunity together to recall the importance of the Joint Declaration and to soak up new motivation for ongoing work on the questions it raises.”

Symbol of Unity

At the ceremony on 30 October, Bishop Dr Walter Mixa of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Augsburg stated in his greeting: “Of course, Augsburg also stands for an eventful history with respect to church unity. The year 1530, with the Augs-

burg Confession (*Confessio Augustana*), marked a final attempt to avoid church division between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Unfortunately this attempt failed. Nevertheless, Augsburg does not just stand there as a city of division but also as a symbol of successful efforts to bring Christians of different denominations closer to one another again.”

In his greeting at the ceremony, Augsburg’s Lord Mayor Dr Kurt Gribl emphasized that the day on which the JDDJ was signed ten years ago had been a day of hope for many Christians the world over. This day in 1999 had not represented an ecumenism of the lowest common



Bishop Dr Walter Mixa of the Diocese of Augsburg
 © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch

denominator, but the endeavor to perceive and recognize other confessions in their full form and uniqueness. Not all hopes had been fulfilled since then or “could be fulfilled in one decade after centuries of separation,” said Gribl. Yet “many doors have opened,” he added.

Happiness and Blessedness

Prof. em. Eberhard Jüngel (Tübingen) delivered the keynote lecture on “What Does Our Happiness Have to Do with Our Blessedness?” He emphasized that “for Christian theology—seen from its core, i.e. the articles on justification—the issue of human happiness is unavoidable.”

For Martin Luther, the meaning of “God’s incarnation was to make true human beings from unhappy, proud

gods, to people who recognize that they are sinners dependent on God's grace," stated Jüngel. "The gospel of God's becoming human leads the person wanting to be like God back to the humanity of the *homo humanus*," Jüngel explained.



Prof. em. Eberhard Jüngel (Tübingen)
© LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

He pointed out that "the content of happi-

ness cannot be pinned down. It is indefinable. Feeling happy is not just another experience, it is one we have along with other experiences—thus an experience with experience."

"Anyone who has found their home in truth," Jüngel continued, "will no longer ask questions

about something like the meaning of life. For the happy ones, there is no point in asking about meaning."

For Jüngel, "human happiness consists of being able to say an unqualified yes: to oneself and to all that is. Human blessedness, however, consists in still being able to say yes even when you have reason to complain: Ach ja—you then sigh. The Ach [alas] does not detract from the yes. It does not make it a less absolute yes, but gives it depth."

1 November 2009

Call for a Spiritual Ecumenism at Joint Declaration's Tenth Anniversary

Continued from p. 1

God and with one another." Noko went on to say that, "As citizens of Christ's kingdom rooted in God's forgiveness we are brought into life in communion with God in Christ and with one another. Walls of separation, isolation and imprisonment are broken down." Both Noko and Kasper were among the JDDJ signatories on 31 October 1999.

Timeless Significance

In his greeting, Augsburg's Roman Catholic Bishop Dr Walter Mixa, praised what had been achieved, expressing his conviction that, "The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification is a milestone on this path of growing consensus. A milestone is an important marker but not the goal. To be honest, we have to admit that we still have a long way to go until all differences in faith have been worked through. Let's get moving. Today is also an opportunity to pray: *Ut unum sint.*"

Earlier, Dr Walter Klaiber, former bishop of the Evangelical Methodist Church in Germany and Karl Cardinal Lehmann, former chair-

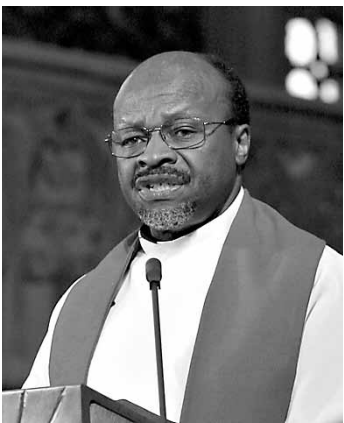
person the German Bishops' Conference, paid tribute to the Joint Declaration.

In his paper, Klaiber underscored the timeless significance of the message of justification. "It frees people from the destructive compulsion to have to justify



Karl Cardinal Lehmann
© LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

their own lives through success, performance or possessions, and from the fatal despair of thinking that for lack of such self-justification, their life is a failure and without value and meaning," he said. Klaiber stressed, "We must thus spell out—



LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko
© LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

with the successful and the unsuccessful, with the self-satisfied and those doubting and despairing of themselves - what God's Yes to their life means for them: liberation for a dignified life that does not lie in the 'product' of our action or fail for lack

of achievement, but is founded in God's love." The Methodist World Council affirmed the JDDJ in 2006.

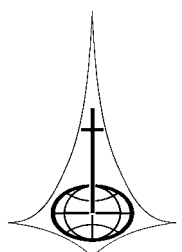
Cardinal Lehmann emphasized the need to continue the ecumenical dialogue on the basis of the JDDJ. "Even if open questions still remain, the Joint Declaration is a very important step by the two churches toward removing the tension from the divisive core area when it comes to the way the churches understand the message of justification. The wording 'consensus in basic truths of the doctrine of justification' aptly describes the present [state]: it is a genuine agreement in basic truths of the doctrine of justification, not a consensus covering all issues," affirmed Lehmann.



Bishop em. Dr Walter Klaiber
© LWF/D.-M. Grötzsch

New Beginning

There were still a few areas deserving further attention in the future ecumenical conversations. In Augsburg, Lehmann expressed his regret that in some respects



the JDDJ had so far not led any further, “because it has not been further deepened, implemented and thus

made spiritually fruitful. It must thus become the sign of a new beginning. Then it can become even more fruitful

in the coming and ongoing ecumenical dialogues, particularly on the urgent topic of the Church and justification.”

LWF General Secretary Noko: New Quality in Lutheran-Catholic Relationship

When signing the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification ten years ago, “we committed ourselves to a joint ecumenical journey,” said LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko. He was speaking on 31 October during the JDDJ’s tenth anniversary celebrations, held in the Golden Hall of Augsburg’s town hall.

On 31 October 1999 “we did not doubt that we will walk together on new ways. We acted in full awareness of the remaining difficulties between us,” Noko recalled. “And yet,” he added, “we did not allow the remaining theological disagreements to keep us from taking this significant step.”

“Even when we disagree with one another, even when our remaining difficulties are irreconcilable, the very sharpness of our disappointment shows the new quality of our relationship,” Noko concluded.

No Need to Reinvent Ecumenism

For the PCPCU President Walter Cardinal Kasper, a new beginning does not mean starting all over again. “We do not need to reinvent ecumenism,” he declared. “It has been successful as consensus ecumenism and it shall remain so. It builds on

“That is not the old hat nor is it a matter of splitting theological hairs,” Kasper went on to say. “That is the Christian response to the questions about the ultimate meaning, happiness, and where we come from and where we are going in life,” he emphasized.

“Quite a few people have expressed the criticism that the Joint Declaration has had no consequences for the teaching and practice of the church,” commented Kasper. He cautioned, however, “It is simply not true that nothing has happened and that there have been no steps forward. The last joint Lutheran-Catholic document on the apostolicity of the Church, deliberately built on the Joint Declaration and made notable progress in so doing.” This document was adopted at the March 2007 LWF Council meeting in Lund, Sweden, after eight years of deliberations. “Admittedly, we have not experienced a great breakthrough to date,” Kasper conceded.

In his view, “we should soberly add that much remains to be done. We will need patience but also impatience on the rest of the way. Both are part of God’s Kingdom. There are many people—not just in Germany—who are waiting with longing and impatience for the one Church at one Lord’s Table, who pray for it and work hard that all may be one.”

Further information on the celebrations marking the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification may be found at:

www.lutheranworld.org

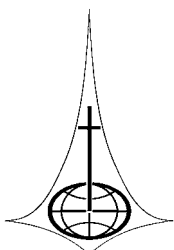


Commemorative celebrations from 30 to 31 October in the Golden Hall of the Augsburg “Rathaus” marked the tenth anniversary of one of the most significant milestones in ecumenical dialogue. © LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch

“The mutual condemnations from the past remain a part of our history; that history cannot be changed,” Noko stressed. “Ten years ago, in this city of Augsburg, we said that these memories of separation and hostility would not be the memories of our children,” he added.

the consensus that remains between our churches, despite all painful divisions: the confessing of one Lord Jesus Christ as the one Savior and Mediator between God and us human beings, as testified in Scripture and our common Apostolic Creed.

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



First Ecumenical and International Monument to the Reformation

Planting of Luther Garden in Wittenberg

WITTENBERG, Germany/GENEVA (LWI)

– The Luther Garden in Wittenberg, Germany, began to take shape in early November with the first planting of 25 trees by representatives of Christian World Communions and churches from Germany and Europe.

This is the “first ecumenical, interactive monument to the Reformation,” said Presiding Bishop Dr Johannes Friedrich (Munich) of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD). The idea is to plant in a park a total of 500 trees by 2017, the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther’s Reformation.

Friedrich remarked that the 2017 celebration would be international with a living, growing monument, while the national jubilee in Germany 100 years before had been celebrated with monuments of stone and bronze. “That is wonderful,” he said. The occasion for the Wittenberg project was to remember the Lutheran Reformation, which originated almost 500 years ago in Wittenberg and appraise its effects down the centuries. “That is why not just Lutheran churches but also other Christian World Communions are invited to plant a tree as a sign of reconciliation and mutual

understanding as a result of intensive dialogues.”

Church representatives participating in the tree planting event on 1 November included Walter Cardinal Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; Metropolitan Augoustinos, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople; and Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko for the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). The Anglican Communion was represented by Rev. Canon Kenneth Kearon, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) by Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi, and the World Methodist Council by Bishop emeritus Dr Walter Klaiber.

During the event Kasper remarked that it was possible today to learn from Luther. The tree planted by the Roman Catholic Church “also reminds us of the fact that Martin Luther’s call to reform the church, which was a call to penance, also concerns us today.” “We recognize with gratitude that the ecumenical movement of the 20th century seeks to overcome the spirit of denominationalism and to prepare the path for common witness to the one apostolic heritage,” he said.

The signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) ten years ago had been intended as an “expression of the agreement in central, fundamental questions of proclaiming the Good News of Christ. We are grateful for that,” added Kasper.

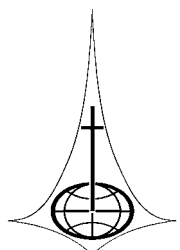
A Further Milestone

The LWF general secretary described the Luther Garden as a “further milestone” in ecumenical dialogue, which was in harmony with the vision of the JDDJ signed in Augsburg, Germany in 1999. While the ecumenical dialogue occasionally “had [its] hiccups, we are still moving forward and every step we’ve taken is a step toward ecumenism. The joint planting of the trees today is another step forward and this



Tree planting in Wittenberg: LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko (second from left) and Rev. Hans-Wilhelm Kasch (second from right), director of the LWF Center in the Reformation city.

© GNC/LWF/Udo Hahn





From left to right: Bishop em. Dr Walter Klaiber (Methodist), Bishop Dr Johannes Friedrich (VELKD) and Walter Cardinal Kasper (PCPCU) join children from the Protestant primary school of Wittenberg in the Luther Garden tree planting ceremony. © GNC/LWF/Udo Hahn

provides energy for the ecumenical movement,” stated Noko.

Children from the Protestant primary school of Wittenberg accompanied the Christian World Communion leaders during the tree planting ceremony. The children were able to see “what our ecumenical movement has done,” remarked Noko. He expressed his hope that the children “would take our work further when we are no longer there, and we thank God for that.”

Nyomi stated he was planting WARC’s tree as “an affirmation of our Gospel’s call to do justice within the world, including taking better care of the earth and its resources.” This too was part of the legacy of the Reformation, he added.

The ceremony was also attended by Bishop Dr Christoph Klein of the

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Rumania, LWF Vice President for the Central Eastern Europe region. Other representatives from Germany included Bishop Ilse Junkermann (Magdeburg), Bishop Jan Jansen (Oldenburg), Bishop Maria Jepsen (Hamburg) and Catholic Vicar General Raimund Sternal (Magdeburg).

Oberkirchenrat Norbert Denecke, executive secretary for the LWF German National Committee (GNC) said the gathering in Wittenberg was “historical,” and praised the “excellent cooperation” with other participating persons and institutions.

Far Beyond Wittenberg

Wittenberg’s Lord Mayor Eckhard Naumann said the project reached

out far beyond the city and was backed by local people. He said he was interested in having a monument “without concrete, steel or bronze, that you can walk through,” to mark the 500th anniversary of the day Martin Luther nailed his theses to the door of the Castle Church.

The Luther Garden goes back to plans by landscape architect Dr Andreas Kipar (Milan, Italy and Duisburg, Germany). The LWF initiated the project in cooperation with the GNC and VELKD. The park’s foundation stone was laid on 20 September 2008.

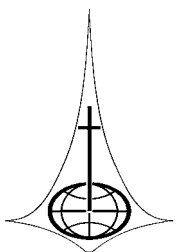
The park will be planted along the area of the old city wall in Wittenberg. Oval in shape and about 230 meters long, it allows for a total of 500 trees to be planted by 2017. The central element of the Luther Garden is a square in the form of a Luther rose. The garden will form a link between the city center and the Rive Elbe. At the same time, it will create a triangle with the Castle Church and the Luther Church.

“I am firmly convinced that one of the most significant Reformation monuments of the 21st century will grow at this place,” were the words used by GNC/LWF chairperson Bishop Friedrich in his September 2008 invitation to turn the first clod and lay the foundation stone for the Luther Garden in Wittenberg.

The ceremony was attended by LWF President Bishop Mark S. Hanson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, who emphasized that the worldwide outreach of Martin Luther’s beliefs characterized the LWF member churches to this day. The Luther Garden would enhance Wittenberg’s reputation “as a place of great historical significance.” At the same time it offered the opportunity to shed light on the importance of the Lutheran Reformation for the worldwide church fellowship, he remarked.

Further information in English and German is available at:
www.luthergarten.de

26 November 2009



LWF Welcomes Nobel Peace Prize Award to US President Barack Obama

Efforts to Restore Broken Relationships and Build Bridges Across Faiths

GENEVA (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) welcomed the award of the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize to United States President Barack Hussein Obama, a person who has inspired hope and demonstrated deep understanding of global leadership amid unprecedented crises worldwide.

Obama “has helped generate a tidal wave of hope around the world. He has acknowledged that the fundamental aspirations of nations and peoples are shared aspirations, and has affirmed the importance of international cooperation in achieving them,” said LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, in a statement issued on 9 October.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee announced Obama as this year’s Nobel laureate, citing recognition for his “extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples.”

In the LWF statement, Noko said Obama had begun “to restore broken relationships, including across faith boundaries.” He noted these are significant contributions to progress toward peace and security, and important foundations for dealing with the global crises—humanitarian, environmental, economic and political.

Noko cited Obama’s resolve especially in addressing some of the fundamental obstacles to the search for peace in the Holy Land. “His leadership in this matter deserves the active support of all people of good will, for the sake of both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, and for the sake of peace with justice in the land of Christ’s birth.”

The announcement of the peace prize winner coincided with the 20th anniversary of the peaceful revolution in the former German Democratic Republic, which culminated on 9 Oc-

tober 1989 in peaceful demonstrations after prayers in Leipzig’s churches. Noko said these events demonstrated “the power of ordinary people coming together to achieve freedom through non-violent means, bearing candles against guns and the threat of violence, and the importance of the church’s role in that context.”

The LWF general secretary expressed his prayer that the Nobel prize award to a political leader of “the new generation will serve to inspire a whole new generation of ‘bridge-builders’ for understanding and reconciliation between people and nations.”

The full text of Dr Noko’s statement is available on the LWF Web site at: www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/LWF_Statement_Obama_NobelPP.pdf

9 October 2009

LWF Congratulates Newly Elected Leader of German Protestant Church Body

Bishop Margot Kässmann Elected EKD Council Chairperson

GENEVA (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) extended warm congratulations to Bishop Dr Margot Kässmann upon her election on 28 October, as chairperson of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) Council. LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko also congratulated Präses Nikolaus Schneider of the Evangelical Church of the Rhineland who was elected council deputy chairperson.

Kässmann, 51, currently bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover, becomes the first woman to lead the umbrella body of German Protestant churches.

In his congratulatory message, Noko noted that Kässmann had established an admirable record of leadership not only in her own church but also in many international and ecumenical forums.



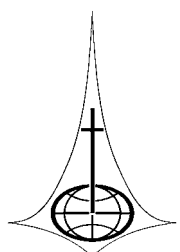
Bishop Dr Margot Kässmann
© LWF/D.-M. Grätzsch

“We have welcomed her important contributions to the work of the LWF on a number of occasions,” said Noko,

pointing out that the Hanover bishop gave the keynote address at the 2003 LWF Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada.

In March this year, she welcomed Lutheran theologians from around the world to Augsburg, Germany, where she reasserted the importance of the Bible and prayer for the German churches, said Noko, referring to the LWF international consultation under the theme “Theology in the Life of Lutheran Churches: Transformative Perspectives and Practices Today.”

The general secretary praised Kässmann for being “a provocative public spokesperson for the importance of the Christian faith in her own society and around the world. We look forward to continuing to hear her voice in her new role.”



He added, "The election sends a signal to the church worldwide that God calls us to leadership without consideration of gender, color or descent."

Welcoming Schneider's election, Noko said he had known him for many years, and was "confident that he brings a very strong ecumenical commitment into the leadership of the EKD."

Members of the EKD synod and church conference elected Kässmann

with a clear majority to succeed 67-year-old Bishop Dr Wolfgang Huber of the Evangelical Church Berlin—Brandenburg—Silesian Oberlausitz, who is retiring. She received 132 of the 142 votes cast for EKD's leadership. Schneider was elected as deputy chairperson with a vote of 137 out of a total 142.

The theme of the second session of the 11th EKD synod, held from 25 to 29 October in Ulm, southern Ger-

many, focused on the importance of voluntary commitment with respect to church and society.

The EKD brings together 22 Lutheran, Reformed and United churches with some 25.4 million members.

Kässmann has been bishop of the Hanover church since 1999. The church has around 3 million members and joined the LWF in 1947.

28 October 2009

Ecumenism Seeks Stronger Links in Brazil

A consultation of bishops and synodal pastors from the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB) and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) Brazil, marked the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ).

The Brazilian Bilateral Commission for Dialogue organized the meeting during which 34 IECLB and RCC representatives from all regions in the country discussed topics related to ecumenism in Brazil and the JDDJ's historical significance.

The IECLB coordinator for the commission, Rev. Manfredo Siegle noted that the question "What has changed in the past ten years?" was crucial "in order to guide our path from now on." Siegle, pastor of the Northern Synod of Santa Catarina, said, "What we perceived during the meeting was that there are many signs of understanding and of joint activities among workers of both churches, but they are mostly the product of each person's individual disposition."

During the 18-20 August meeting in Porto Alegre, participants pointed out the difficult questions, yet to be confronted, and issues that would help increase ecumenical work as a whole. "Real advances in theological dialogue have already led to important practical consequences, such as the mutual recognition

of baptism and the JDDJ signing. However, other issues, such as eucharistic communion and mutual recognition of ministries, have not yet come through," said IECLB President Rev. Dr Walter Altmann, moderator of the World Council of Churches.

Participants recognized the need to foster an "ecumenical theological mentality" to help forge strong links among communities. "This meeting manifests a positive ecumenical restlessness and quest for continuity," said Bishop Don Remídio José Bohn, the Roman Catholic coordinator of the dialogue commission. "As it was said here, with a lot of conviction, we cannot turn our backs on the road that has been opened and prophetically walked before us. The question is how to move on."

Suggestions on how to continue included increased frequency of similar meetings, interaction between bodies that promote dialogue, and dissemination of existing documents in dioceses, church educational centers and in the communities.

The IECLB is the largest Lutheran church in Brazil, with some 717,000 members in 18 synods throughout the country. It joined the Lutheran World Federation in 1952.

(Susanne Buchweitz, press advisor for the Lutheran Diakonia Foundation, wrote this article for LWI.)

US Lutherans, Catholics, Methodists Mark Tenth Anniversary of Joint Declaration

Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Methodist church leaders were among more than 300 people attending a special worship and prayer service at Old St Patrick's Church in Chicago, Illinois, USA, to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Joint Declaration on Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ).

The President of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Mark S. Hanson, and Cardinal Francis George, president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops hosted the 1 October event.

In his homily, the Atlanta Roman Catholic Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory said scholars must continue the work of "theological reception" of the JDDJ, even as they begin new studies "that seek to remove impediments to full eucharistic communion." He said the JDDJ should be shared with new generations of church leaders "as a standard of faithful preaching of the gospel."

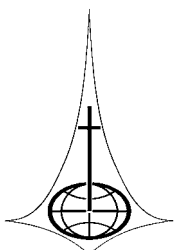
In August the ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted a social statement on human sexuality. It also adopted a series of propos-

als to change ministry policies, including a change to make it possible for Lutherans in lifelong, publicly accountable, monogamous same-gender relationships to serve as ELCA associates in ministry, clergy, deaconesses and diaconal ministers.

"The decisions taken at the ELCA [Assembly] even as they have yet to unfold in concrete procedures for their implementation within the church, pose a serious challenge to our relationship, and... a new agenda for our dialogues," said Gregory. The subject of human sexuality and the church can also be an opportunity "for deeper and more energetic engagement in the work of reconciliation," he added.

Addressing the congregation, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, said the JDDJ was about the present and future, not the past. It was a testimony to how much could be achieved when Christians work together, he noted.

Noko said the 2006 action of the World Methodist Council to affirm the JDDJ "was a decision to join in the ecumenical journey in search of unity for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." *(ELCA News Service)*



FEATURE: Don't Cry Tears Lest They Ask for Water

Lutheran Churches Urged to Protect Communities Threatened by Climate Change

KAJIADO, Kenya/GENEVA (LWI) – Safiel Kulei's simple statement goes to the heart of the plight of many of his neighbors hit by consecutive years of drought in Kenya. "I had 88 cows. I sold 50. The rest died. I have nothing at the moment. I have since moved to town," said Kulei, a farmer who is an evangelist with the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church (KELC).

Kulei is a member of the Maasai community inhabiting southern Kenya and neighboring northern Tanzania. The people's lives and economy are centered on livestock especially cattle, which are accumulated as a sign of wealth, traded or sold to settle debts, and slaughtered selectively. Before the current rains began, nearly three running years of drought decimated the community's economic mainstay and livelihoods.

"As opposed to previous years, when the clouds formed, no rains fell," Kulei said when he welcomed participants in a Lutheran World Federation (LWF) African region consultation on climate change, food security and poverty. Delegates to the LWF conference had visited the KELC Olirium mission



Kenyan farmer Mr Safiel Kulei, says the recurring drought has decimated the Maasai community's economic livelihood. © LWF/Fredrick Nzwili

area in the southern district of Kajiado. "When children cried, they were told to make sure there were no tears since people may ask, 'Where did you get the water?'" he said, emphasizing the scarcity of water.

Climate Change

Kulei's story is similar to many others recounted at the consultation, held

from 6-10 October in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. It was attended by leaders of LWF member churches in Africa and their mission partners, and church-related development programs.

Mmeme Akpabio of the Lutheran Church of Nigeria told how 50 years ago palm oil was cultivated and produced extensively in the Akwa Ibom state.

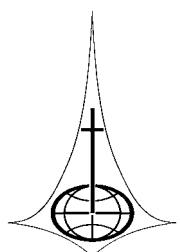
"Increased heating and adverse atmospheric conditions are leading to less palm oil productivity," said Akpabio. "Adverse climate change has led to problems with food sources due to harsh cultivating environments in northern Nigeria," she explained.

The consultation heard that indiscriminate pumping of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere by developed countries was the biggest cause of climate change.

Africa, which contributes only three percent of the gases, faces the greatest risk. The continent is less prepared for drought and floods and is already experiencing heavy rains and prolonged dry spells, leading to unreliable farming seasons, water scarcity and decreased pasture for pastoralist communities.



Participants in the LWF regional consultation visited Kajiado district, southeastern Kenya, where animal carcasses scattered across once-green pastures, confirm the severe impact of recurring drought in the country. © LWF/Fredrick Nzwili





Ms Tigist Teketel, director of the EECMY Development and Social Service Commission addresses delegates attending the LWF consultation on climate change and food security in Africa. © LWF/Fredrick Nzwili

Food Security

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warns that climate change could lead to an increased dependency on food imports by Africa, and may reduce the continent's agricultural output by up to an estimated 30 percent.

Sub-Saharan Africa, already the most food insecure region, is expected to be hit hardest in terms of decreasing agricultural incomes.

FAO says nearly 265 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa are suffering from chronic hunger. There are 20 million people in East Africa dependent on food assistance, warns the UN body, and this number may increase, especially among marginalized farmers, pastoralists and low-income people in urban areas.

The agency cautions that this problem was likely to be compounded by the El Niño meteorological phenomenon, which is currently bringing heavy rains to the region and will likely

result in flooding, destruction of crops, livestock, infrastructure and homes.

"These changes are connected to how men and women in attempts to control the universe, are also destroying it," explained Ms Gemma Akilimali, gender analyst from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. "By destroying it, [this] interrupts the natural equilibrium that governs the creation of the universe," she told participants in the LWF consultation.

Church Intervention

"The church can protect and accompany the most vulnerable," Isaiah Kipyegon, regional communications and advocacy coordinator for Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Eastern Africa, told the conference. "Dealing with climate change requires urgent concerted efforts," he said.

LWF churches are taking steps to help. Tigist Teketel, director of

the Development and Social Service Commission of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) said the church runs 40 projects dealing with food security, environmental protection and natural resource management, water supply and sanitation.

The EECMY Armacho project in northwestern Ethiopia, developed with NCA support, enables community members to grow apples, a new product to the region. The project provides food for families and increases their income.

"Households reported they had produced apples twice a year and sold them at the local market. Each of them earned four times more than what they used to earn from other crop sales. These households have managed to buy enough and invest in animal production," said Teketel.

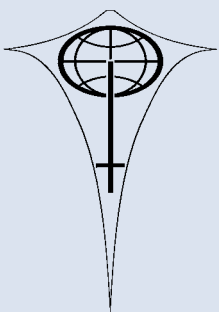
Water scarcity has its greatest impact on women and the situation is worsening. Most women in Africa must travel long distances to get water for their families, said Akilimali.

The consultation called on Lutheran churches around the world to work together to tackle climate change and ensure that the voices of the vulnerable are heard. "Climate change is an ethical and moral failure because we continue to destroy creation," the consultation concluded.

The final message from the LWF regional consultation is available on the LWF Web site at:

www.lutheranworld.org/LWF_Documents/LWF-Climate_Change_Nairobi_Statement-EN.pdf

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