

**STATEMENT**  
**LUCCWA Leadership Summit of Heads of Churches and Delegates held at the**  
**Lutheran Guest House in Monrovia, Liberia**  
**22-24 September 2017**

The Lutheran Communion in Central and Western Africa (LUCCWA) held a three-day leadership Summit that took place at the Lutheran Guest House in Monrovia, Liberia, from 22 to 24 September 2017.

We, the church leaders and delegates met and deliberated and participated in the breaking of bread and a joint commemoration service of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, which took place at the Antoinette Tubman Stadium on the 24 September.

We are very grateful for the visit and support of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary Rev. Dr Martin Junge, who was our guest speaker at the commemoration worship service, the Africa region Vice-President Rev. Dr Jeannette Ada Maina, the area secretary for Africa Rev. Dr Elieshi Mungure, and Rev. Dr Andrea Walker representing the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We thank the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria for its support although unable to participate in person. We also appreciate the solidarity and participation of the ecumenical sisters and brothers in Liberia at the commemoration of the 500 years of the Reformation.

And finally, we thank our President Rt Rev. Dr D. Jensen Seyenkulo and all members of the Lutheran Church in Liberia.

Following our discussions and collaboration during the Summit we agreed on the following:

1. We reaffirm our commitment to the communion in LUCCWA and to the LWF in order to foster both spiritual growth and physical development among our member churches.
2. Having listened to the problems of poverty, conflict, insurgency and the intimidation of our people in various countries like Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, we decided to call on the member churches, our partners and the LWF to:
  - a. Support poverty reduction programs as ways to improve our member churches to boost and create wealth among our member communities.
  - b. Increase level of awareness and education on gender-based violence, women and youth empowerment, as without the empowerment of women they will continue to be vulnerable especially in the face of unhealthy cultural practices. Most of our member churches have the challenge of getting proper and functional education.

- c. Today the church is faced with the growing economic challenges especially among the youth. We are calling upon our member churches to seek ways to address, empower and support especially our young people as they face challenges that might compromise their faith.
3. Boko Haram and other armed conflicts are still ongoing in the region. Due to such conflicts, farmers who depend on crop cultivation cannot effectively engage in agricultural production. There are a lot of orphans and widows who are being exploited today in the affected areas. There is a serious communication breakdown in the sub-region especially between Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and the Central African Republic. There are also issues of armed militia by the insurgents where our youth and children are being abducted and forced to partake in unwholesome practices.  
We therefore call for the following actions:
    - a. Continue trauma healing programs in the affected areas
    - b. Empowerment of youth and women to achieve settlement and reintegration
    - c. Provision of food and other relief materials
    - d. Reconstruction of places of worship where such facilities have been destroyed.
  4. As a result of the conflicts and insurgencies, the mutual trust and relationship that existed among Christians and Muslims in these parts in the sub-region have been seriously threatened. Therefore the Summit considers that:
    - a. The communion be intentional about interfaith dialogue and communications
    - b. There should be more cordial relationship with other faiths to strengthen trust and confidence in one another. And the church must seek ways to dialogue on various issues of common interest.
  5. To expand the Gospel in the sub-region, we agreed that we would identify new and smaller Lutheran churches in our sub-region and support them to grow.
  6. We agreed to seek ways to help arrest the increasing irregular migration among young people in the sub-region and address ourselves to the issues of displaced persons, namely:
    - a. Youth leaving in search of greener pastures. The church must rise to enlighten them about the need to follow the right process of migration and also to find ways to engage the youth meaningfully in order to keep them at home.
    - b. Women and children displaced are the most vulnerable group. They are exposed to violence and rape; they are still being abducted and/or kidnapped. We call on individuals and church partners to give support to help to cushion the effect of this menace.

## **Conclusion**

We thank God Almighty for giving us the opportunity to come together and discuss matters that will bring progress to the Luccwa sub-region and for the opportunity to jointly celebrate the anniversary of the Reformation in Monrovia.