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IN AFRICA

MESSAGE FROM THE AFRICA LUTHERAN CHURCH LEADERSHIP CONSULTATION

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

27 June - 1 July 2022

Preamble

We, the delegates of the Africa Lutheran Church Leadership Consultation (ALCLC), met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the theme 'LORD, to whom shall we go: You have the words of eternal life' (John 6:68). We are grateful to God that we are able to meet as ALCLC after the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are grateful to the ALCLC host churches, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon (ELCC). We stand in solidarity with the EECMY and the ELCC and affirm their witness and ministries in their communities and countries. We are encouraged by the solidarity and support that the Mekane Yesus Seminary received following the floods of 2021. We thank God for the recovery and reconstruction efforts, even as we appreciate the hospitality accorded to us during our consultation's keynote address.

We thank the General Secretary and the President of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) for their presence and rich contribution to our consultation through their messages. We are also thankful for the presence and contributions of our keynote speaker Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki, the General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches; LWF Council members, partners in mission, and invited guests.

We shared our reflections and discernment on global and regional contexts, addressing misleading theologies, affirming the prophetic role of the church, intergenerational perspectives, transformative leadership and theological education and formation.

We were deeply inspired and encouraged by the Bible studies, devotions and prayers that drew from the theme of our consultation and reaffirmed our commitment to remain steadfast in our LORD Jesus Christ, for in Him are words of eternal life.

We were reminded of our calling to being church in such a time as this when Africa is facing many challenges, including: humanitarian crises; conflicts; poverty and economic

injustice; the effects of COVID-19; the imminent hunger crisis; massive displacement of people; xenophobia; the impacts of climate change; unemployment; gender-based violence and discrimination; and poor governance in many countries. We affirm the importance of unity within our communion in Africa and globally.

We received with appreciation the report from the Regional Secretary for Africa and acknowledge the work and positive developments in our communion. We also received the report of the Confronting Poverty and Economic Injustice in Africa initiative and reiterate its relevance as an agenda set by the leaders of the Lutheran Communion in Africa.

KEY MESSAGES

1. We are deeply concerned about the continued spread of false teaching and misleading theologies across our continent and its negative influence on our churches and our communities. We note the pervasive and abusive nature of these theologies and their proponents and recognize the urgent need for us as Lutheran churches in Africa to address them, particularly through sound and transformative theological education and formation of our congregations and churches.
2. We reaffirm the importance of peace and stability on our continent and decry the ongoing wars, conflicts and violence in different countries including Ethiopia, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Nigeria, among others. As we pray for these countries and for Africa, we call on our churches, and particularly our leaders to boldly speak out and work for peace and justice.
3. We note with great concern the impact of the war in Ukraine on global peace and security, food security in Africa, and development and humanitarian aid. We stand in solidarity with the people and communities affected by this war and call for an end to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We are particularly grieved by the reports of racism, mistreatment and discrimination of Africans who were seeking protection and refuge from the war. We recognize the important role of the LWF member church in Poland and other churches in Ukraine and neighboring countries in supporting the affected people.
4. We appreciate the strong presence of youth in the ALCLC and in our churches and recognize their role in leading intergenerational dialogue, inspiring change, and the sustainability of our global communion. We recommit ourselves to accompanying our youth, creating spaces for them and opening opportunities for decision-making and leadership at all levels within our churches and communities.
5. We reaffirm our commitment to gender justice and denounce all forms of discrimination and violence against women and children especially the girl child.
6. We recognize the dire impacts of climate change on communities in Africa and reiterate our commitment to climate justice as we call for greater action from our churches, governments, the international community, and other stakeholders to address it.
7. We reaffirm the advocacy role and the prophetic voice of the church in Africa as a foundational part of our holistic mission. We commit ourselves to use our prophetic voice and our diaconal ministries to address the root causes of the challenges

affecting our continent. We receive the LWF Advocacy Framework and through its implementation, we commit to contribute to advocacy of The Lutheran World Federation. In this regard, we recognize the need for capacity strengthening and accompaniment of our churches in their advocacy work.

8. We affirm the increasingly critical role of transformative leadership and accountability within our churches and our global communion and commit to work towards strengthening this part of our ministries.
9. We acknowledge the growth in membership in our Lutheran churches within the African region and note the increasing need for adequate representation within LWF structures including in governance and decision-making processes.

Concluding remarks

We thank God for the ministry and service of Rev. Dr Elieshi Mungure (Mama Africa) in her capacity as the Regional Secretary for Africa at the LWF Communion Office. We appreciate her commitment and support she has given to Lutheran churches in Africa during her more than ten years of service. We wish her God's blessing in the next chapter of her ministry. We welcome the new Regional Secretary for Africa, Rev. Dr Samuel Dawai and commit him to God as he takes up his responsibilities.

We appreciate the warm welcome and hospitality of the EECMY who have received and hosted us in Addis Ababa. We also appreciate and applaud the LWF Communication Office staff for their support and accompaniment towards organizing our consultation.