



THE AFRICAN PULSE

Voice of the African Ecumenical Movement



A publication of The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)

Presbyterian Church of Nigeria Celebrating 175 years of Christian Ministry...Pg 13



IN THIS ISSUE

- 3** From The General Secretary
Vaccines are God's Gift to Humanity

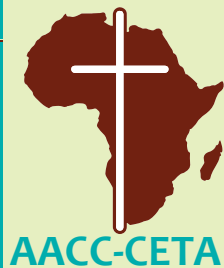
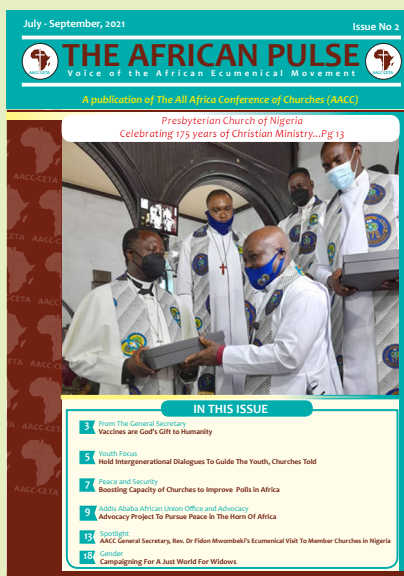
- 5** Youth Focus
Hold Intergenerational Dialogues To Guide The Youth, Churches Told

- 7** Peace and Security
Boosting Capacity of Churches to Improve Polls in Africa

- 9** Addis Ababa African Union Office and Advocacy
Advocacy Project To Pursue Peace in The Horn Of Africa

- 13** Spotlight
AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki's Ecumenical Visit To Member Churches in Nigeria

- 18** Gender
Campaigning For A Just World For Widows



EDITORIAL

ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

Cover picture: Celebrating 175 years of Christian Ministry (See spotlight on page 13)

Publisher

All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)

The African Pulse Working Group

Rev. Prof. Bosela Eale

Evelyn Okunda

Minoo Kyalo

Daisy Yator

Geoffrey Alemba

Patrick Mwangi

Editorial Consultant

Patrick Mwangi

Design & Layout

Apollo Obiero

Distribution

All Africa Conference of Churches

Contacts

ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

General Secretariat, Waiyaki Way,

Opposite Safaricom House

P. O. Box 14205 - 00800, Westlands, Nairobi

Tel: +254 20 4441483, 44441338

Email: secretariat@aacc-ceta.org

Website: www.aacc-ceta.org

The African Pulse is published quarterly by the All Africa Conference of Churches as an information, educational and advocacy platform for the ecumenical movement in Africa. The Editor welcomes articles for publication without any obligation whatsoever. Scripts must bear author's full names, occupation email address and daytime telephone contact. Articles may be edited for clarity or space.

To send articles or feedback, use the following email address -: secretariat@aacc-ceta.org

AACC is a continental ecumenical body that accounts for over 140 million Christians across the continent. AACC is the largest association of Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox and Indigenous churches in Africa and is a member of the worldwide ecumenical network. AACC is a fellowship of 204 members comprising of Churches, National Councils of Churches (NCCs), theological and lay training institutions and other Christian organizations in 42 African countries.



Vaccines are God's Gift to Humanity



By Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki

This year has been a nightmare for most countries, worse than 2020 due to the scourge of Covid-19. So many people have fallen sick, lost their jobs and livelihoods. Violence, particularly against women and children, has increased exponentially.

So far, there is no known treatment for Covid-19. Vaccines, however, are now giving hope, and bringing life back to normal in communities which have access to them. Unfortunately, the availability of the vaccines is showing how unjust and unequal the world is, and how ideals of global life together and the reality can be at variance.

Africa is lagging behind in vaccines availability, acceptability and uptake. There are several issues I would like to touch on.

First, let me start with vaccine hesitancy. It is heartbreaking that so many people in Africa are saying that even if vaccines were available, they will not take them. There are so many conspiracy theories, some based on false theological apocalyptic positions. People are following what they hear from the so-called conservative Christians in some developed countries, who also reject vaccines on faith grounds.

Honestly, these positions are appalling. These claims range from vaccines being Satan's agents, to their containing materials from ethically unacceptable sources, and that they are designed to bring an end to the world as in the book of Daniel or Revelation, etc. All these are ridiculous. If indeed someone wanted to harm Africa, it would have been much easier to use already accepted vaccines, which we have plenty of over so many decades. Why use one which is not yet accepted?

The other line fueling hesitancy is political, that vaccines have been created to finish Africa by killing the fertility of its people so that the whites will come and take over. It is difficult to understand how anyone can believe this. Africa has so far received about 1% of all vaccines because we do not have the resources to buy them. To imagine that all the other countries which have vaccinated in excess of half of their populations were an afterthought but the target is Africa, is ludicrous. The reality is that Africa's share of the vaccines is very tiny from well-wishers who simply give us what is remaining from their stocks, some just because

they will expire. So we get the leftovers.

Second, we need to address the issue of availability. We are appalled by vaccine nationalism. Every country seems to be trying to keep enough for its population before they share with others. The global compact which we thought existed has shown to be ineffective. The WHO initiative of COVAX has not received sufficient donations. Some of these donations are given because they were rejected in countries with more options or oversupply. The AU, through its systems, seems to be also ineffective because it does not have its own sufficient resources to procure vaccines. The production capacity in Africa is only in a few countries with low output levels. Worsening the situation is that India halted all exports and decided to supply its own people first, leaving out the vulnerability of Africa. We must support African countries which are trying to build local production capacity, so that we can also stop being beggars all the time.

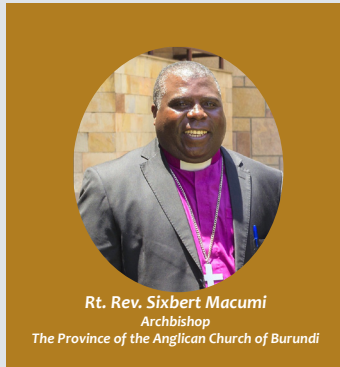
Third and last, I urge church leaders across the continent to first of all dispel all the rumors and conspiracy theories against vaccines. We see that countries which have successfully vaccinated their people are opening up, and their lives are back to normal. People are going back to work. Social distancing restrictions are easing up. Sports are starting again. Tourism is back.

Just as God has used other vaccines to treat many diseases and wipe them out of the face of the world, including the five major infant killers and maiming illnesses, and we are getting around Ebola more quickly even when it keeps popping up, let us encourage our people to accept the Covid-19 vaccines. Let us put pressure on our government to allocate enough resources to acquire them for our people. Let us press those with more to be more generous to Africa.

It is through vaccines availability and accessibility that we can have hope to also turn the page on Covid-19.¹

Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki is the General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches. He can be reached at secretariat@aacc-ceta.org

New faces at the helm



AACC Appointments



Ms Caroline Nechitima-Jeche is the new Director of Finance and Administration at the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC).

Caroline replaces Dr Bright Mawudor, the Deputy General Secretary in charge of Finance and Administration, whose contract comes to an end in March 2022.

Caroline, a national of Zimbabwe, is currently serving as the Director of Finance and Organisational Sustainability for the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. She has 10 years' financial management experience in both the private and NGO sectors.

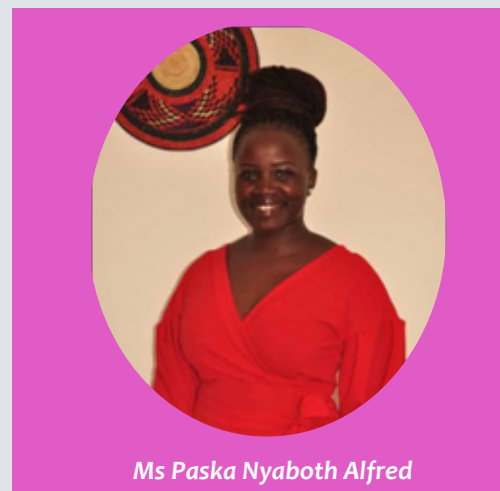
Caroline is a qualified Chartered Accountant, and holds a Post-Graduate Diploma in Accounting Sciences from UNISA and a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Africa University.

Ms Paska Nyaboth Alfred has been appointed as the Program Associate for the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Horn of Africa Peace Project. Ms. Nyaboth will be AACC/African Union focal person for the new three-year project, whose objective is "Transforming Lives in the East and Horn of Africa through evidence-based advocacy and campaigning for peaceful change."

Paska, 27, a national of South Sudan, served as a Technical Expert with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Mediation Support Unit (MSU), providing technical support to mediators and mediation processes in the Horn of Africa.

Paska has also previously served as Advocacy Coordinator with South Sudan Council of Churches. She has supported different conflict resolution and peace processes including the South Sudan R-ARCSS, Sudan Peace process and Track 3 of mediation processes.

Paska is a member of Femwise-Africa, a network of African women mediators and peacebuilders, a One Young World Ambassador, and Young Women Mediation Ambassador.



Hold Intergenerational Dialogues To Guide The Youth, Churches Told



By Collins Shava

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Youth hosted an Intergenerational Dialogue (IGD) on Population and Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) on 29 March 2021. This followed a recommendation from the youth forums organized by AACC in 2020.

Although the youth are eager to have a dialogue with Church leaders on the broad notion of sex education as it relates to issues of population and sustainable development, they lack forums to do so.

The first Intergenerational online dialogue featured four speakers from different generations. The main speaker was the Rt Rev Fonki Forba Samuel, the moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroun. The Right Reverend Fonki said “Sexual Reproductive Health Rights” is sensitive and hardly discussed in the Church in Africa.

He further lamented that if the Church continues to be silent on issues of sexuality and reproductive health, the young people will resort to the secular World and the Internet in search of answers the Church has decided not to speak frankly about. He urged the Church leaders in Africa to take up, as part of their mandate, increasing access to reproductive and population health, by designing health packages and programmes that respond to the needs of the target women and youth.

A panelist, Evelyn Chirwa of the Council of Churches in Zambia, said that there are strong links between rapid population growth, high fertility and poverty. Poorer countries are more likely to have demographic regimes marked by high fertility, resulting in large youth populations.

On the other hand, we know that the poorest people

have the highest fertility and the largest families, he said. What is less widely understood is that this is because they have the least access to education (Sexual Reproductive health and rights knowledge) and health care.

Ms Faustina Nillan from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania said harmful traditional practices, poor infrastructure, and contradictory legal frameworks have led to the low uptake of sexual reproductive health services in her country.

Emmanuel Magar Yayoune from Togo, a member of the All Africa Youth Network, stated that the lack of knowledge of the concepts of SRHR, especially family planning and contraceptive methods, is partly the reason the parents are increasingly young.

Issues that emerge around sexual reproductive health and rights are pertinent to the lives of the youth today. The youth in Africa feel the Church is not doing enough to provide information and teaching around SRHR issues, he added.

It is, therefore, important that such intergenerational dialogues will cascade from continental level. It is how the church can be relevant to the young people in terms of this topic. The AACC has no particular position on this matter, but it will continue to play a central role to provide platforms for such inclusive dialogues and conversations, the meeting heard.

Collins Shava is the AACC Executive Secretary for Youth. He can be reached at cshava@aacc-ceta.org

“Church is not doing enough to provide information and teaching around SRHR issues...”

Weighing “My Home, My Future,” youth in Africa see the promise

PLO Lumumba talks to youth in webinar

More than 100 young people attended a 16 June webinar, “My Home, My Future,” hosted by the All Africa Conference of Churches, finding both inspiration and determination from speakers and from each other.

Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki, general secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches, explained the deep meaning of the theme.

“Africa is our home and Africa is our future,” he said. “There is no better place.”

That means youth will need to make that future work, urged Mwombeki.

“When, in your home, your roof is leaking, you don’t go to your neighbor’s—but rather you fix the roof,” he said. “Ultimately, you have to fix the roof because that is your house. Africa is our house.”

Mwombeki deeply believes that young people have the capacity to bring about transformation in many ways. “This is the time for the youth to think about how Africa will be in 20 or 30 years, when all these young people will be 50 or 60 years old, and progressing,” he said. “This is the task.”

Keynote speaker, Prof. PLO Lumumba noted that the 16 June is a very important day because it is a day of commemorating the African child.

“This commemoration is born out of the events that commenced on the 16th day of June in the year 1976



Prof. PLO Lumumba

in Soweto in South Africa,” he said, referring to the Soweto uprising, a series of demonstrations and protests led by 20,000 students in South Africa. They were met with police brutality and many were killed.

“I think it was the most dramatic demonstration of man’s inhumanity to man,” said Lumumba. “But yet there is a sense in which Africa continues to be promising and disturbing at the same time”

The All Africa Conference of Churches is organizing a series of webinars to promote the campaign “Africa: My Home. My Future” in the run-up to the All Africa Youth Congress scheduled for 2022 in Ghana.

Reprinted from the World Council of Churches (WCC) news service.



AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki (left), accompanied by the Director of Programmes, Rev. Dr Lesmore Gibson Ezekiel(right), paid a visit to Prof. PLO Lumumba in Nairobi. During the visit, Rev. Mwombeki appreciated Prof. Lumumba for being a keynote speaker, as well as a mentor for the youth, during the webinar #AfricaMyHomeMyFuture#.

Rev. Dr. Mwombeki shared plans about the upcoming AACC Youth Congress, which will be held in Ghana in 2022 following its postponement in 2020 due to COVID-19 (See story above)

Boosting Capacity of Churches to Improve Polls in Africa



By Rev. Charles Berahino



Participants at the workshop in Congo Brazzaville in March 2021 to train church leaders in election monitoring in preparation for the Presidential polls.

Since its creation in April 1963, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) has been working alongside African churches through accompanying them, building their capacity, and strengthening them to effectively play and be outspoken on their prophetic role.

African churches need to effectively act as a moral authority in the continent.

Towards this end, the AACC works alongside the Church of Africa in addressing many challenges that beset the continent. One of the key tasks it undertakes is supporting its member churches to engage in electoral processes in their respective countries to enhance peace and respect of human rights in the pre and post election periods.

Congo Brazzaville

At the invitation of the Eglise Evangélique du Congo (Evangelical Church of Congo) in Congo Brazzaville, the AACC organized a civic and sensitisation workshop that was attended by 30 religious leaders from the Evangelical Church of Congo, the Catholic Church in Congo, the Orthodox Church in Congo, the Lutheran Church in the Congo and the Adventist Church on the 7th day of the Congo.

The leaders were taken through training on the role of religious bodies in public life, involvement of religious leaders in the monitoring and observation of elections, and how to detect and reduce electoral fraud.

The workshop was facilitated by two AACC staff members, Prof. Bosela Eale and Rev. Angele Dogbe, alongside local facilitators from the churches from 16 to 18 March, 2021.

Unfortunately, the Conference of the Catholic bishops' application for the accreditation of faith actors was denied four days to the election on March 21, 2021, even as AACC fulfilled all the requirements to send its election observers.

Rev. Juste Gonard Bakoua, President of the Eglise Evangelique du Congo, commended AACC for supporting the churches in the Congo.

Benin

Although Benin has historically had peaceful electoral processes, the AACC Churches still deployed an observation mission to Benin's presidential elections in April 2021.

The objective was to support the Protestant Methodist Church of Benin (EPMB), one of AACC's member churches, who works in synergy with the National Ecumenical Council of Churches of Benin (CONEB), of which she is a member.

Hence, ahead of the observation mission, the AACC organized a one-day consultation of religious leaders on the electoral process and the observation of the elections, on April 8, 2021, at the Christian Center for Reception and Training (CCAF) in Porto-Novo, Benin. Participants were trained on the role of religious leaders in peaceful elections, and election observance.

The 34 participants were drawn from the Methodist, Orthodox, Catholic and Presbyterian churches respectively, as well as heads of the Bodawa Indigenous Church. Also included were regional leaders or General Superintendents, men and women from different church movements and associations.

The sessions were co-facilitated by Rev. Angele Wilson-Dogbe, Regional Coordinator of the AACC in the Lomé, and Prof Dossou, former special envoy of the AACC in the Lomé office. The AACC delegation also met the Minister of Interior Affairs and National Security, H.E. Sacca Lafia. A call on political leaders to cherish peace in all that they do as well as respect of human dignity was issued.

On the election day, the group was divided into two. The first group was made up of people who went out to observe the voting process. They went to Cotonou while the others stayed in Porto-Novo. According to the reports, the voting process was peaceful in the zone that were covered. All polling station opened on time with all the materials in place awaiting voters.

Some hiccups observed included missing names of voters or names having been moved to a different polling stations. In addition, voter turn out was very low.

Due to Covid-19, ECOWAS did not send out observers, but rather put health personnel with masks and hydro-alcoholic gel in each polling station, to ensure compliance with health protocols for the safety of voters.

The second group stayed at the venue of the consultation where a listening room was set, to receive feedback from those in the field. The listening room was connected to the office of the National Electoral Commission (CENA), to facilitate feedback and quick response.



Meeting with the Benin Minister of Internal Affairs



Rev. Angele addressing the media



Rev. Angele and Emmanuel Yayoune, AACC International Observers

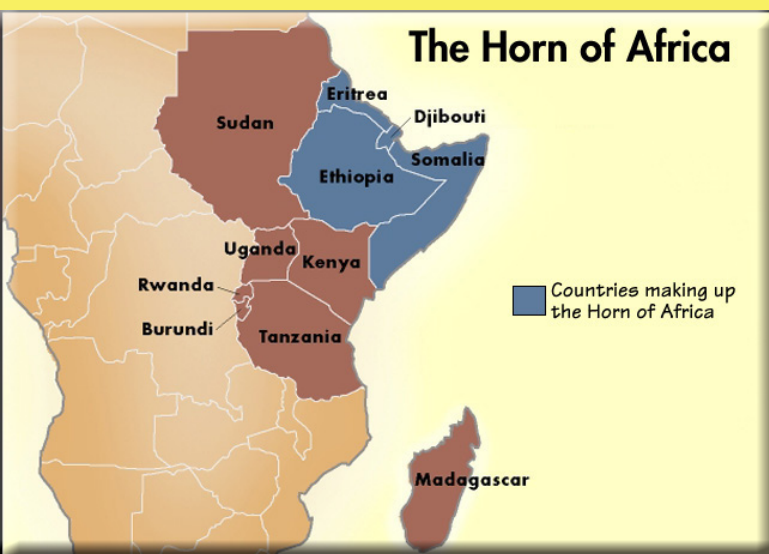
Rev. Charles Berahino is the AACC Executive Secretary for Peace and Diakonia. He can be reached at cberahino@aacc-ceta.org

Scaling up efforts to Bring Peace to The Horn Of Africa



By Paska Nyaboth

AACC Advocacy Project Lays Ground For Amicable Co-existence



“It is absolutely possible to have a sustainable peace in the Horn of Africa through collective implementations of policies!” he says.

This project aims to equip constituents and civil society institutions to advocate towards power centers and decision makers, so as to influence policy making process in the Horn of Africa. The target countries for this project include Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya.

The project will support the enhancement of the capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the East and Horn of Africa region, and it will build on existing networks.

The direct beneficiaries of this project include community-based organizations (CBOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), and grassroots associations. More specifically for AACC, this project will work with its member churches and associate members, including other CSOs that are members of joint civil society structures in the Horn of Africa.

AACC is the consortium member that will coordinate the advocacy initiatives towards Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the East African Community (EAC), and the African Union Commission.

Over Two Hundred and Seventy people will benefit directly from this advocacy work, and Nine Hundred and Ten indirectly.

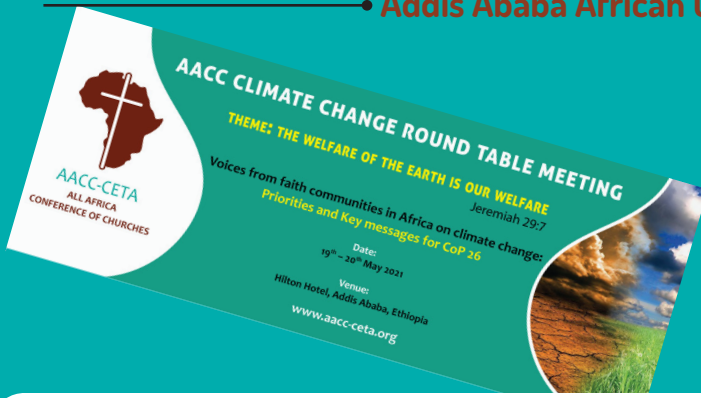
Ms Paska Nyaboth is the AACC Programme Associate for the Horn of Africa Peace Project. She can be reached at paska@aacc-ceta.org

The Horn of Africa has always been portrayed in the media as unstable, where peace is elusive.

However, a coalition bringing together the ecumenical movement in Africa, through the AACC, and other partners who are heavily involved in peacebuilding in the continent, believes that if such parties work together, a lasting peace can be realized.

The three-year project dubbed “Transforming lives in the East and Horn of Africa through Evidence-based advocacy and Campaigning for Peaceful Change,” brings together the AACC in a consortium with American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and Europe External Program with Africa (EEPA).

The project has been generously supported by Bread for the World (BFTW). The project will be managed from the AACC’s African Union Liaison Office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Director of the office, Mr Gorden Simango is enthusiastic about the project.



African Faith Leaders Issue Communique On Climate Change



Archbishop Dr. Abba Aregawi, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, blesses participants at the Roundtable.



Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, AACC General Secretary addresses the Roundtable



Proceedings at the Faith Leaders Climate Change Roundtable

African faith leaders have called on the organisers of the Conference of Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland, to restore confidence in the negotiations to facilitate preventive action on the climate change crisis.

In a communique issued at the end of a two-day Roundtable in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 18-21, May 2021, the faith leaders, drawn from across Africa, also demanded that the COP Presidency facilitates meaningful and effective engagement of faith communities in the COP processes as required in the Paris Agreement.

The Roundtable was convened by the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), to discuss the effects of climate change in their communities, and what faith leaders can do to stem the crisis. The meeting was also aimed at finding a common position by African churches which they will present at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) that will be held in Glasgow, United Kingdom, in November 2021.

In the communique, the faith leaders said that African governments should mainstream climate change in development planning to achieve Paris Agreement commitments, and enact and enforce laws and policies responsive to climate change. They asked the African Union (AU) not only to develop mechanisms of mutual accountability among governments, but also to collaborate with faith organization to reach out to the grassroots levels.

The faith leaders committed themselves to create awareness amongst their communities to respond to effects of climate change, as well as advocate for, and promote initiatives that are resilient to climate change such as tree planting, technology transfer, capacity building and innovation.

Turn to Page 11 to read the communique.

“The Welfare of the Earth is our Welfare” Jeremiah 29:7

An AACC position paper towards the UN COP 26

Preamble

The All Africa Conference of Churches, a continental ecumenical organization with membership in 43 countries convened a roundtable of faith leaders drawn from major religious communities with expressions in the continent met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from the 18-21 May 2021 under the theme “*The Welfare of the Earth is our Welfare*” Jeremiah 29:7.

They focused on climate change as both spiritual and moral concern. The faith leaders engaged in honest conversations on the climate crisis confronting our world while keeping their eyes on COP 26 being a potent space for deeper engagements and lobby for sincere and practical actions by nations of the world. During the roundtable common priorities and messages for common actions and COP 26 were agreed.

We, the faith leaders in Africa, guided by our religious teachings and in recognition that we are close to the grassroots levels that bear the brunt of the devastating impact of climate change, state unequivocally, that Climate Change remains a serious existential threat facing humanity. This is not what Creator God intended for all creation. We are obligated by our life-affirming faith to demand from State and Non-State Actors to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with a sense of urgency to respond to the effects of climate change;

Mindful of our role as faith communities, motivated by our faith foundations and doctrinal ethos to remain fervent in advocating for a world free of injustice and human suffering;

Considering the fact that the faith communities have continued to play front line role of responding to the distressed caused by climate crisis with literally no financial support from State Actors but remained undeterred knowing that Creator God require us to be intentional in our tasks of care for creation;

Cognizant of our identify as Africans, a continent that is on the receiving end of the negative impact of climate change despite contributing the least to the Green House Gases (GHGs) emissions;

Mindful of the fact that the COVID – 19 pandemic compounds the existing situations for the majority of those bearing the brunt of climate change;

Alarmed by the little attention given to the urgency presented by climate change;

Concerned by inadequate finance for climate adaptation on the African continent to support sustainable solutions;

Compelled by our calling as faith leaders to remain prophetic, we demand that the time to act more decisively is now;

Concerned by the mistrust and suspicion surrounding the climate change negotiations for the last two decades, we, therefore, call upon all stakeholders to adhere to and meet their obligations as follows: -

1. For the COP 26 Presidency

- Bring back the trust and confidence that is needed in negotiations to urgently deal with climate crisis.
- Ensure that the climate negotiations take into consideration historical climate injustices to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation (transitional justice approach).
- Facilitate meaningful and effective engagement of faith communities in the COP processes as required in Article 12 of the Paris Agreement.

2. Developed countries parties

- Should enhance their ambitions to cut down Co2 emissions.
- Realize their commitments on climate financing in accordance with Article 9 of the Paris agreement for African governments to meet their commitments (mitigation) and build their resilience to climate change (adaptation).
- Ensure meaningful technology transfer, innovation and capacity building to support a just transition system.

3. African governments

- Mainstream climate change in development planning to achieve Paris Agreement commitments.
- Develop mechanisms for domestic resources mobilization.
- Enact and enforce laws and policies that are responsive to climate change
- COVID-19 recovery strategies should be aligned with Paris Agreement commitments especially in areas that contribute to achieving the NDCs targets.
- Ensure meaningful technology transfer, innovation and capacity building to support a just transition system.

4. UNFCCC Parties

- Recognition of faith actors as being the closest to the communities that suffer / are victims of loss and damage and call upon parties to hasten the operationalization of the Warsaw mechanisms on loss and damage and ensure sufficient funding to implement the same.

5. African Union (AU)

- To develop mechanisms of mutual accountability among governments.

- To collaborate with faith organisations to reach out to the grassroots.
- Ensure coordinated harmonization of all African parties participating in COP negotiations.

Now, as faith communities in contributing to the climate change actions, we commit ourselves to the following: -

1. Mitigation: - participation to promote and advocate for universal access to renewable energy focusing on grassroots communities by 2030 as per the targets set by SDG 6 Water and sanitation, SDG 7 access to renewable energy, and Climate action SDG 13;
2. Adaptation: - advocate for and promote initiatives that are resilient to climate change (tree planting, technology transfer, capacity building, innovation etc);
3. Create awareness amongst our communities to respond to the effects of climate change effectively;
4. Support and advocate for the adherence to COVID-19 health protocols – which is a climate change threat multiplier;
5. Foster collaboration with other like-minded relevant stakeholders;
6. Ensure inclusivity in planning and decision making in matters related to climate change;
7. Promote eco-theology (*religious faith intentionally engaging on ecological discourse with the leading question, what is Creator God calling creation to do now and always regarding creation care*) and eco-Diakonia (*humanitarian/emergency response to disasters caused by climate crisis*) by mobilization of resources for joint initiatives that respond to humanitarian crisis caused by climate change; and
8. Track the utilization of climate finances to enhance accountability.

Done at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on this 20th day of May 2021 at an AACC Roundtable Consultation on Climate Change

AACC General Secretary on Ecumenical Visit To Nigeria



His Eminence Rev. Nzie Eke Nzie (3rd left) presents a gift to AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki, during the colourful celebrations commemorating the 175th Anniversary of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (PCN). Looking on is, among others, Rt. Rev. Solomon Okoro, Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly of PCN, (2nd left), and the Most Rev. Dr. Benebo Fubara-Manuel, a PCN minister and the President of the Christian Council of Nigeria. (right)

In April 2021, the General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki made an extensive ecumenical tour of member churches in Nigeria. This is part of an initiative by the AACC General Secretary to forge closer ties between the AACC Secretariat and member churches, so as to strengthen collaboration and cohesion within the ecumenical movement in Africa. The tour took place from April 23-30, 2021.

Rev. Dr. Mwombeki led a high level delegation that included Rev Dr. Lesmore Gibson Ezekiel, AACC's Director of Programs, Rev. Angele Dogbe, AACC Regional Co-ordinator for Lome office, Rev. Dr. Testimony Onifade, Ecumenical Officer, Nigerian Baptist Convention, and Deacon Kehinde Adebayo, Ecumenical Officer, Church of the Lord Aladura. The AACC delegation was hosted by the Rev. Dr. Evans Onyemara, General Secretary, Christian Council of Nigeria, who organised and co-ordinated the ecumenical visit.

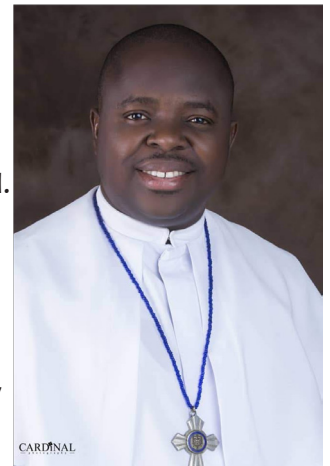
Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, Calabar.



Highlight of the Thanksgiving Celebration; Rev. Dr. Mwombeki delivers the Homily

Rev. Mwombeki, and his delegation, participated at the Thanksgiving service to celebrate the 175th Anniversary of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria on April 11, 2021. The motto of the jubilee was “From glory to glory–Happy Presbyterian.”

The great celebration was attended by hundreds of worshippers. The service took more than four hours, and the atmosphere was great. It was more like a great concert, and the mixture of traditional, historical Presbyterian, and contemporary music and worship styles were simply impressive.



Very Rev. Dr. Evans Onyemara, General Secretary of the Christian Council of Nigeria

The church leaders and the congregation were dressed in great costumes, which made the day very colourful. It was a celebration worthy of one and a quarter centuries of ministry in the continent.

The highlight of the event was the homily delivered by Rev. Dr Mwombeki. It was a great honour accorded to the visiting General Secretary.

Rev. Dr Mwombeki’s message was drawn from 2 Corinthians, verses 3:17. He preached that where the Spirit of God is, there is freedom. He noted that the Gospel indeed brought freedom from fear, from harmful traditions, and false beliefs.

He said that it was unfortunate that many Christians were dragged back into the same fears and enslaving traditions in the name of deliverance by modern preachers, who functioned like the past traditional diviners and healers!

“We need to be steadfast,” he exhorted the congregation.

AACC’s 12th General Assembly/ 60th Anniversary Organising Committee, Abuja



Rev. Dr. Israel Akanji, President of the Organizing Committee addressing the General Secretary and entourage

The 12th General Assembly, coupled with the 60th anniversary of the AACC, will be held in Abuja Nigeria, and an organizing committee is already in place. The General Secretary, together with Rev. Dr Lesmore and Rev. Dogbe, held a meeting with the organising committee in Abuja on April 16, 2021.

The Rev. Dr. Israel Akanji, President elect of the Nigeria Baptist Convention, who is also the President of the organizing committee,

hosted the AACC delegation. Rev. Dr. Akanji expressed joy that the AACC was coming back to its place of birth in Nigeria. He assured the team that as the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria, the church in Nigeria will do its best for the two events to be exceptional.



From right to left Ven. Joshua Lambert, Rt. Rev. Ini Ukpoho, Barr Ekpa Emmanuel, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, Rev. Dr. Israel Akanji, Elder Dr. Mrs. Uzoaku Williams, Dr. Mrs Mercy John, Ms. Eke Ifuoma, Very Rev. Daniel Mba Uko.

In response, the Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki said he was very delighted to meet all members of the organizing committee. He explained that it was important to meet leaders of churches so that they can appreciate what AACC is doing on the continent and beyond on their behalf.

Salvation Army Nigeria Territory

On the same day, April 17, 2021, the General Secretary’s delegation visited the Salvation Army Nigeria Territory, where they were welcomed by the Territorial Envoy, Dr. Levi C. Monanu, who expressed his appreciation that the AACC team has chosen to visit the Salvation Army Nigeria Territory.

The Territorial Commander, Colonel Victor Leslie, then made a brief presentation of Salvation Army Nigeria in terms of structure, services, witness and evangelization. He averred that with the current changes in the world, church leaders needed to make sure that their life and ministry influence, touch and impact young people in order to raise a Godly generation that will work for the dignity of all humans.



From left: Col. Leslie, Rev. Dr. Mwombeki, and Dr. Monanu



When the AACC came calling. From 2nd left; Rev. Angele Dogbe, Rev. Dr. Lesmore Gibson Ezekiel, Very Rev. Dr. Evans Onyemara, Dr. Levi Monanu, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki and Rev. Dr. Colonel Victor Leslie

In his remarks, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki termed the visit “special,” as it was AACC’s first opportunity to engage and interact with the Salvation Army directly.

And just like in all other places that were visited, the General Secretary offered his hosts a symbolic cross, sculptured with a dove in the middle and small hands all over. The cross is to symbolize that the churches are all united by the Holy Spirit.

The First African Church Mission

The AACC visited The First African Church Mission on April 17, 2021, and were welcomed by His Eminence, Most Rev. Dr. Sunday O. Matilukuro, Primate of the church. Speaking at the meeting, the Primate appreciated the AACC General Secretary, saying that for the short period of time he has been in office, his tenure has been filled with success and remarkable achievements that have made the African church proud. The primate expressed joy at the visit of the General Secretary and his delegation.

He narrated a brief history of the church which was founded in 1891 after breaking from Methodist and Anglican Churches for theological authenticity reasons. He assured the General Secretary of their readiness to fully support the growth and development of the AACC.

In response, Rev. Dr. Mwombeki thanked the primate



Most Rev. Dr. Sunday O. Matilukuro receiving a gift from Rev. Dr. Mwombeki

and his committee. He noted that the 13th General Assembly of the AACC in Nigeria will be a moment of revisiting history and drawing strength for the African church to be able to engage and talk to power to promote development, peace, justice and respect of human dignity.

Celica Church Of Christ International, Ibadan



Founder, Celica Church of Christ Worldwide, Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Adetunji Adeonigbagbe, and Rev. Dr. Mwombeki, address the media after the celebration in church.

The AACC delegation visited the Celica Church of Christ International on April 15, 2021, to an enthusiastic welcome. An elated Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Adetunji Adeonigbagbe, Founder and General Overseer of Celica Church of Christ International, who had anticipated the visit for weeks, played a genial host.

In his remarks read on his behalf by the Church’s Head of Administration, Prophet Olukunle Abimbola, the General Overseer narrated the history, meaning and mission of Celica, especially its great people-oriented commission and unrelenting forthrightness

about injustice, mal-administration, poor governance and insecurity.

He implored Christians to be united in spirit and pray to the Lord Almighty to lead them out of the Nigerian crisis, and into peace and development.

He stated further that Celica joined the AACC due to its belief “that Jesus Christ is better propagated through the promotion of understanding, peace and unity of believers in Jesus Christ,” and thanked the visitors for reaching out to the churches across Africa without prejudice to size and age

In his response, Dr. Mwombeki expressed his joy at the great welcome and display by the hosts. He said that AACC shared the vision and belief of Celica in the independence of churches and the urgent need to take the gospel to those who had never believed, or those who stopped believing.

Expressing the readiness of AACC to always be in solidarity with the struggle for peace in Nigeria, especially the battle to restore religious freedom in the North, Dr. Mwombeki promised to address the suggestions of Celica.

While responding, the founder and General Overseer of the Celica Church of Christ International, Rev Dr. Adetunji Adeonigbagbe promised to always put his power and strength to the progress of AACC.

This is an abridged version, reprinted from thelagosiannng.

Church of the Lord Worldwide-Ogere-Remo



Courtesy visit: From left; Rev. Dr. Onyemara, the Most Rev. Dr. Ositelu, Rev. Dr. Mwombeki, and Rev. Dr. Lesmore.

The AACC delegation made a visit to The Church of the Lord Worldwide on April 15, 2021. They were received by the Primate, the Most Rev. Dr. Rufus Okikiola Ositelu, at the Spiritual and International Headquarters of the Church in Ogere-Remo in Ogun State.

The Primate gave welcoming remarks before handing over some gifts to the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki. The gifts included the poster of an emblem of the Church which explained its ethos and fundamental theological grounding, and a book written by the Primate himself.

RT. REV. DR. NYANSAKO-NI-NKU, FORMER PRESIDENT, AACC

Former President of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), the Rt. Rev. Dr. Nyansako-ni-Nku, passed on in April 2021 in Douala, Cameroon, after a short illness.

The late cleric was a member of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC).

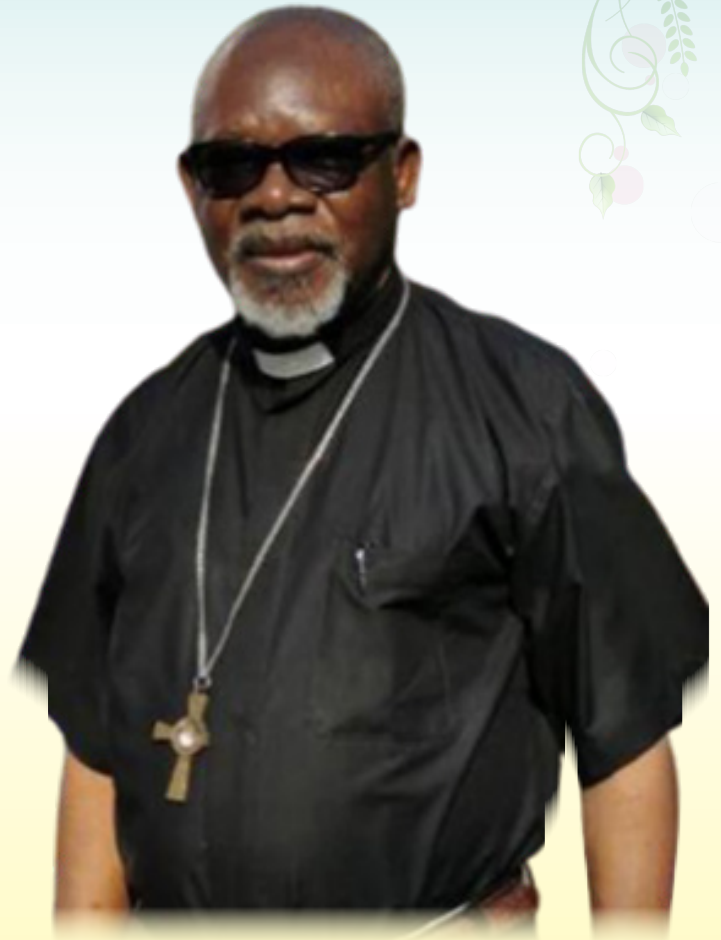
Rt. Rev. Dr Nyansako had a strong association with the AACC, having served as its President between 2003-2008. He was elected President at the AACC's 8th General Assembly in 2003. He held various positions of responsibility in his church, PCC, which culminated in his being elected as its moderator in 1999, a position he held until 2009.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Nyansako will be remembered as a theological giant who came in at a difficult time during the AACC, where he teamed up with the then General Secretary, Bishop Dr. Mvume Dandala.

One of the most important tasks he accomplished was fundraising for the 8th General Assembly, where AACC dispatched him to Europe to look for funds. AACC partners at the time were unwilling to offer support, and he was sent to Europe as part of a delegation of two. They were very successful in their mission. Further, he led the AACC delegation to Glasgow, Scotland, during the ultimately successful Jubilee 2000 campaign for debt forgiveness for highly indebted African countries.

Those who listened to him at the pulpit, acknowledge Rt. Rev. Dr. Nyansako as a great preacher, who was not afraid to speak out forcefully, even against the failings of the Church. His most impactful words were said during a press conference he held after he was elected AACC President.

He spoke out against churches being paralysed by fear, and refusing to criticize their governments for failing their people. He called on Africans to be full participants in reconstruction of the continent. He also spoke against greed, calling it one of the greatest poisons of our time.



The late Rt. Rev. Dr. Nyansako-ni-Nku

Campaigning For A Just World For Widows



By Rev. Dr. Lydia Mwaniki

Justice for Widows' Campaign is an initiative of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) to create awareness of the plight of widows in Africa. It was launched on 23rd June, 2019, in Zambia, in collaboration with the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), Anglican Cathedral of the Holy Cross, and Ruth Ministry of Widows.

It calls on churches, families, governments and other stakeholders to respond to the plight of widows by developing and adopting policies and legislation that provide them protection, as well as responding to their social and economic needs.

In cultures with strong patriarchal social norms, the loss of a husband can represent a real threat to a woman. In such cultures, women are traditionally excluded from holding power or wealth themselves, so a loss of a husband is a loss of security and exposure to different vulnerabilities.

Some of the violations suffered by widows in many countries especially in Africa include: denial of inheritance and land rights, eviction from the late husband's home, humiliating cultural rites, social exclusion and poverty.

Children of many poor widows have to often endure lack of basic needs including school fees and are vulnerable to abuse. Violence goes unreported, remaining invisible to law enforcement and policy makers.

The United Nations observes June 23 every year as International Widows' Day since 2010, to draw attention to the voices and experiences of widows and to galvanize the unique support that they need. Through *Justice for Widows Campaign*, AACC, in collaboration with member churches and with support from Partners such as Church of Sweden and Global Ministries, has undertaken several activities to advocate for the rights of widows; amplify their voices and offer incentives for economic empowerment as follows:

(a) Publication of Documentaries:

- (i) **A 20 min Documentary on the launch of Justice for Widows Campaign-**
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1evdnmoJ53vkqbw1z79vsvX-j-UPPX8Aw/view?usp=drivesdk>
- (ii) **A Documentary on Widows Experiences with COVID-19 Pandemic and AACC Incentive Grant-December, 2020 presented in French and English**

French Version https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Y9bTugo_igNeo2UbHQT-oP9AP_dIDCex/view?usp=sharing

English version: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-qY5FEmreUEchS2s-lKNmHEg-G_jr4Bk/view?usp=sharing

(b) A brochure to create awareness about the plight of widows in Africa in English and French

French Link-[Campagne "Justice pour les veuves"](#)

<http://aacc-ceta.org/en/resources?download=58:campagne-justice-pour-les-veuves>

English Link-[Justice for Widows Campaign](#)-<http://aacc-ceta.org/en/resources?download=57:justice-for-widows-campaign>

(c) Commemoration of International Widows' Day on 23rd June, 2021

AACC commemorates the International Widows Day on June 23rd every year and calls its members to find creative ways of celebrating it. On 23rd June, 2021, AACC hosted a Virtual Celebration of International Widows' day 2021. The meeting brought together about 100 participants including widows, church

leaders, focal persons in charge of gender desks and AACC Male Champions for Gender Justice. The theme was, “We are Widows: We are not less Human”: Creating Awareness about the Plight of Widows in Africa”. The voices of widows were amplified and advocacy actions recommended.

(d) Offering Small Grants as an incentive for churches to run widows’ programs

Since 2019, AACC has been giving small grants of USD 2000 to churches. The recipients spent the grant very creatively to transform the economic lives of women. Success stories were shared in a webinar between AACC and representatives of beneficiary groups in a zoom meeting held on 29th April, 2021. Below are some of the success stories.

(i) Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana

The grant enabled the widows to buy equipment for making bread. They have since been trained to make pastries, which they sell to generate income.

On 5th May, 2021, the Widows’ Project was launched as a District Project to involve the local community and other stakeholders including government, the chiefs and queen mothers.

(ii) Gatumba Anglican Parish in Rural Bunjumbura

Twenty widows in Gatumba Parish received 2 goats each bought through the grant. “The widows continue to breed the goats and after selling some, they are able to send their children to school, buy them school material and school uniforms, boost their small businesses of vegetables, tomatoes and cakes and buy some animals like chicken and pigs.

(iii) United Methodist Church Zimbabwe

From the grant, Mrs Tendai Rebecca Gurupira Coordinator, Ministry with Women, Children and Youth, carried out training of 150 widows in making sanitizers, Pine Gel, Petroleum jelly, washing powder, foam bath, cockroach killer, dishwashing liquid, perfumes and beading.

(iv) Rubirizi Widows’ Project-Rubirizi Parish, United Methodist Church Burundi

Rubirizi Widows’ Project consists of young, middle and elderly widows in rural Burundi, who meet once a week to pray together and share testimonies. The beneficiaries of the grant were 30 most vulnerable widows, who were divided among the 7 income generating projects, which were funded equally. The donation enabled them to start small businesses.



A display of some of the Rubirizi Widows projects

Rev. Dr Lydia Mwaniki is the AACC Director for Gender and Women. She can be reached on lydiamwaniki@acc-ceta.org



Some of the products enabled by the widows’ grant



DESMOND TUTU CONFERENCE CENTRE

Desmond Tutu Conference Centre (DTCC), is a facility of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC). It is located along Waiyaki Way, Westlands, within the AACC compound. It is only 30 minutes drive from Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) during low traffic.



Conference Facilities: From board room style executive meetings, conferences, product launches, corporate events or exhibitions, we cater for all events.

All our 9 conference rooms are well equipped and have helpful and experienced event managers who will help in planning and hosting your meeting or event from 10 pax to a maximum of 1000 pax

Rooms: We offer a choice of 104 tastefully furnished and cosy Standard and Superior rooms suitable for business and leisure travelers, safari and conference groups, newlyweds, couples and families.



Other services include;

Dining restaurant | Ultra modern gym | Events garden | Large free parking space | A gift shop and a Business Centre

Desmond Tutu Conference Centre | P.O. Box 14205 00800 Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: +254 20 444 0224/+254 20 444 2215 | Mob: +254 710 734 728 (office)

E-mail: reservations@aacc-ceta.org

www.desmondtutuconferencecentre.org

