



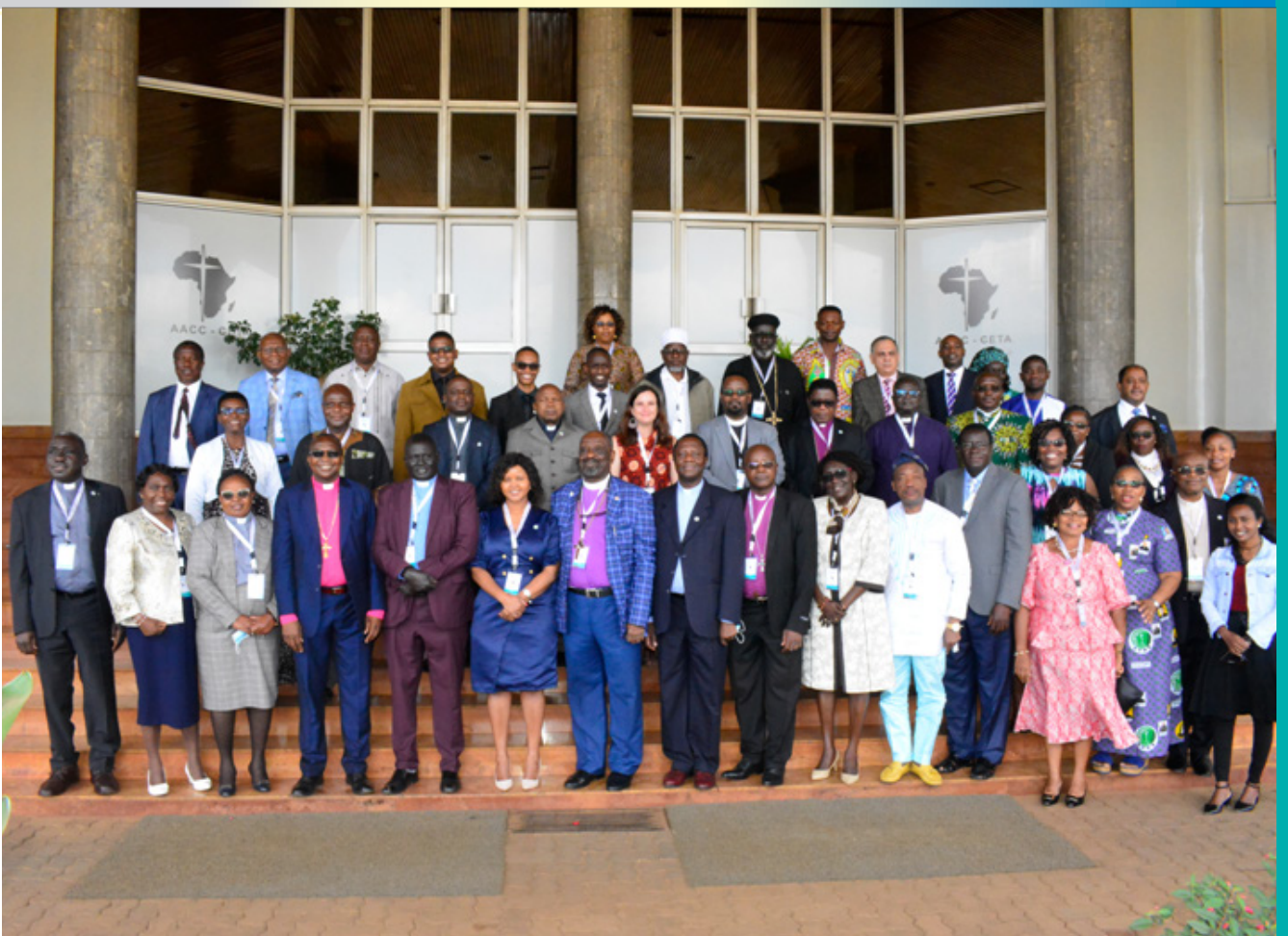
THE AFRICAN PULSE

Voice of the African Ecumenical Movement



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

The General Committee decides on the General Assembly



On The Way to The All Africa Youth Congress

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EDITORIAL

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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.

From The General Secretary



By Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki

I write these thoughts at the time when All Africa Conference of Churches is planning three major things ahead of us. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you these major events, which you will be able to also read in this issue of *The African Pulse*.

The General Committee of AACC has made significant decisions concerning the forthcoming 12th General Assembly, which will take place next year in Abuja, Nigeria. The decision to hold the assembly in Nigeria was not difficult, as we want to go where the AACC was conceived, at the Africa Church Conference in Ibadan, Nigeria, in 1958, hosted by the Christian Council of Nigeria under the leadership of Dr. Akanu Ibiam of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria. The CCN has accepted also to coordinate the hosting of this assembly and churches are in high spirit, once again to welcome their African sisters and brothers in the great country of Nigeria. So, we ask you to mark the date: **AACC 12th Assembly, Abuja: November 19-23, 2023**. The theme has been chosen: “The love of Christ compels us” (2 Cor 5:14).

The second event will be to celebrate the 60th anniversary of AACC, which was born officially in Kampala in 1963. It will be held also in Abuja, on **18th November, 2023**. We want to look back at how the Lord has led the African Churches in their ecumenical journey. So many things have changed and the thematic engagement of AACC has been evolving around the contextual needs of Africa. We want to praise God, to also envision the future, where the landscape of global Christianity is changing, and theological foci are converging to the extent that we can sometimes hardly distinguish differences between several strands of Protestantism as we used to do before.

The third major event comes this year: the **All Africa Youth Congress, in Accra, Ghana:**This was planned for 2020, but was cancelled because of Covid 19. Our member churches in Ghana, coordinated by the Christian Council of Ghana, have been willing to host up to 5000 young people from across the continent, to focus on the theme: “**Africa. My home. My future.**” This is a unique event, even though the number of expected participants have been reduced to 2000 due to the impact of Covid 19 and the unpredictability of the situation so far. On this one, I want to call upon churches to prepare to send their youth to this Congress. The youth need to come and contemplate how to make what is green in Africa greener, rather than thinking of leaving to seek greener pastures anywhere else. There is no other place an African feels respected, dignified and loved than at home. While we know not all is rosy in Africa, when your house is leaking, you do not move to the neighbour. You fix the roof.

Let me end by thanking God for the way Africa has been spared from the worst of Covid 19 effects. Because of our admittedly less developed health facilities, inability to vaccinate most of the people, infeasibility of locking ourselves down like others with better economic structures, all projections by scientists were simply doom for Africa, with bodies on the streets. These predictions simply did not happen. And we have no explanation. We just thank God.

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

The General Committee decides on the General Assembly



AACC General Secretary Rev Dr Fidon Mwombeki and AACC President Rev. Arnold Temple following the proceedings of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly is the Supreme Legislative Authority of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) that meets every 5 years. Since its formation in 1963, the AACC has gathered 204 member churches and Christian Councils in 43 African countries into a dynamic fellowship. Through its vision “Churches in Africa together for Life, Peace, Justice and Dignity”, the vocation of the organization is to foster and sustain fellowship and unity among the Churches in Africa for common witness and service to help people of Africa.

The forthcoming 12th General Assembly, which will also mark the 60 years anniversary of the AACC, will be held in Nigeria in 2023 and it will represent a new milestone of the ecumenical movement in Africa. Nigeria is very significant as it is the home of the

historic Ibadan Conference, which conceived this continental body.

The Ibadan conference featured 200 delegates from 25 countries, eager to discuss the possibility of sustained ecumenical action in Africa. The Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) hosted the Conference under the leadership of Sir Francis Akanu Ibiam, a Presbyterian educationist, physician, and ecumenist and then President of CCN.

The most important commitment from Ibadan was the formation of a provisional committee whose job was to lay the foundation of the AACC to be the prime ecumenical thinking agent and common voice of the churches in Africa. The conference happened at a time

when the continent was grappling with challenges of liberation, independence and decolonization.

The workplan for the 12th General Assembly was the key agenda during the the AACC General Committee meeting that was held in Nairobi on November 19, 2021. During the meeting, The General Secretary of AACC, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, presented the concept note of the General Assembly 2023.

Rev. Ini Ukpuho from the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria presented the interim progress report from the Nigeria Local Organizing Committee for the General Assembly 2023.

Key decisions about the forthcoming Assembly were made as follows:-

Key Facts About The Forthcoming Assembly

a.	Dates of the Assembly	Friday, November 17th 2023 - Arrivals to Thursday, 23rd 2023 – Departures
b.	Venue the Assembly	Abuja, Nigeria
c.	Theme of the Assembly	“Christ’s Love Compels us...” which is derived from 2 Corinthians 5: 14.
d.	Hosting churches	Christian Council of Nigeria and AACC Member Churches in Nigeria.
e.	Number of Delegates	550 delegates
f.	Pre - Assembly dates	Wednesday, November 15 th 2023 to Friday, November 17th 2023
g.	AACC 60th Anniversary celebrations	Saturday, November 18th 2023
h.	General Assembly Business Sessions	Monday, November 20 th 2023 to Wednesday, 22 nd 2023

THE TEAM THAT WILL MAKE IT HAPPEN

PROPOSED MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY PLANNING COMMITTEE

East Africa

1. Rev. Teshome Amenu Weldesemayat

West Africa

3. Mr. Jacob Leandre Jesucon Sovoessi
4. Mrs. Ayoko Nane Dometo Atayi Epse Toga

Central Africa

5. Mrs. Pauline Nyingone Ep Ndong Nze
6. Pastor Matou Mumonamalu Matuga

North Africa

7. Rev. Refat Fathy Roman Gergis

Southern Africa

8. Rev. Fay Clare Van Edeen
9. Mr. Simbarashe Hunzwi

Orthodox

10. Fr. Thomas Onyango Okwach

LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. Rev. Dr. Israel Akanji (CCN Vice President) - Chairman (Nigerian Baptist Convention)
2. Very Rev. Dr. Evans Onyemara- Secretary (Methodist)
3. Rev. Daniel Mba Uka- Presbyterian Church of Nigeria
4. Ven. Dr. Princewill Ireoba - Anglican Communion
5. Rt. Rev. (Dr.) S T V. Adegbite Methodist Church Nigeria
6. Rev. Dr. Testimony O. Onifade - Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC)
7. Deacon Kehinde Adebayo - Church of the Lord
8. Major Uche Anumba - The Salvation Army
9. Rev. Idoreyin James- United Evangelical Church
10. Bro. I. C. Nwachukwu-Asonye - First African Church Mission
11. Elder James Iliya - Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria 1
12. Rt. Rev. M. J. Tonyin- United African Methodist Church Org.
13. Ven. Felix A. Onifade - The African Episcopal Church in Nigeria
14. Rev. Dr. Ime Jacob - African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
15. Barr. D. D. Azura - Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria
16. Anointed Prophet Oladapo Banjo - Celica Church of Christ
17. Anointed Prophetess Tobi Abimbola - Celica Church of Christ
18. Rev. (Dr.) Juliana Uzoaku Williams - Women Wing of Christian Council of Nigeria Women representative (CCN).
19. Dr. Mrs. Mercy John- Women Wing
20. Barr. Emmanuel Ekpa - Youth wing of CCN
21. Ifuoma Eke- Youth Wing of CCN

On the way to the All Africa Youth Congress



By Daniel Orogo

Conceptualizing together

A peaceful and secure Africa requires an empowered generation of youth who are committed to the holistic transformation of their countries and continent. A campaign that will invest in the youth in Africa and to rekindle the spirit of Pan African Movement as it was in 1945 that was spearheaded by young people has become expedient, because of the existential challenges faced by young people in continent. Therefore, the AACC seeks to initiate a continental youth campaign on African patriotism that will create platforms for constructive engagements among African youth. The campaign will endeavor to deepen awareness on the potentials of and opportunities for young people in Africa. The campaign which will take the shape of movement will be institutional through convoking of Congress once in two years with the maiden to take place this year 2022.

The All Africa Youth Congress (AAYC) is an initiative of the All Africa Conference of Churches' (AACC) to facilitate continental Youth Campaign on African patriotism. The Campaign that will be mobilize under the theme **"Africa: My Home. My Future"** will endeavor to increase awareness on the tremendous potentials of and opportunities for young people in the continent, thus inspiring the young people to be patriotic to their countries and to Africa by using utilizing their talents and gifts towards building a thriving continent. The All Africa Youth Congress christened "Accra 2022" happens to be the first organized by AACC. The Congress will no doubt be a viable space for approximately **2,000 young people**, male and female alike within the age bracket of 15-35 years within the Continent, in the Diaspora and from among people of African descent.

Ghana is strategically chosen to host the first All African Youth Congress for two important reasons. Firstly, the Country is a home to one of the prominent Pan Africanist, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first

President of the Republic of Ghana. He was one of the pioneers of Pan-African Movement and a founding Father of the Organization of African Unity. Secondly, Ghana is currently rated as one of the most peaceful, democratic and hospitable nation in the continent.

The Congress will feature prominent and famous Pan Africanist, politicians, eminent persons, business men and women, renowned entrepreneurs, Africa's sports personalities, heroes, heroines and young people who are champions in different in development spheres in Africa. Some senior Pan-Africanists that have demonstrated their commitments and actions for Africa's transformation shall be special appearances at the Congress. His Excellency President Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and AU Special Envoy to Horn of Africa who has graciously accepted to serve as the Grand Patron will lead this category of eminent leaders.

No one should be left out

The African Union as a continental body is entrusted with the responsibility of facilitating platforms that will champion youth participation and inclusion in building a thriving continent. The AU as a Continental oversight unit, has a role of initiating legally binding agreements that guarantees for a peaceful and secure continent that is viable home for youth and future generations. In the spirit of collective responsibility, all the states parties and AU heads of States and Government are held to account in ratifying the legal binding agreements and other instruments that will contribute in making the continent flourishing.

For a flourishing continent that attracts and keeps the youth, the role of Heads of states and governments are critical. They are expectedly required to ratify and operationalize Agreements, Resolutions, Conventions and Protocols that facilitate youth empowerment and participation in governance with due recognition that they are guarantors of safety and conducive



environment for all peoples. Governments should put in place safety nets that protects the youth from vices of drugs and substance abuse, harmful cultural practices like female genital multination, gender-based violence, gangsterism, conflicts violence, recruitment to violent extremists, irregular migration and human trafficking.

The international organizations and development agencies complement the governments in Africa by supporting systems and programs that more often ensure socio-economic development of the continent. These organizations and agencies have the obligations to ensure that supports provided to governments are utilized for socio-economic transformation of the continent. Development plans of the different governments must clearly include the aspirations of the youth demography. The youth should be in the know of supports received and mechanisms put in place to ensure their utilization. International organizations and development agencies should ensure that youth agendas are mainstreamed into government plans that are up for support.

The faith-based communities in the continent are perceived as the moral compass in African society. Churches, mosques and other places of religious meetings have played critical roles in socializing the youth to behave in ways that are acceptable in different African Communities. The religious communities have prophetic roles to ensure accountable from duty-bearers and equitable distribution of resources that benefit all people regardless of their religious

persuasions and cultural leaning.

Therefore, the AU and its member states, the international organizations and development agencies, the faith communities and all other stakeholders have a crucial role in making the continent a truly home and a future for the teeming youth demography. The Congress and many other initiatives offer viable opportunity in shaping the perception of Africa's youth to deepen their commitments and passion for the dreamed peaceful, prosperous and integrated continent, while participating as global citizens.

Congress conversations are tailored around four thematic areas:

- **Youth and African Patriotism:** this is about celebrating African arts, culture and heritage. This session will also focus on education system that decolonizes the African youth while unlocking their potential for innovation, entrepreneurship and job creation.
- **Active Citizenship;** focusing on youth meaningful participation in governance, politics and in major decision making processes. Also building a new generation of transparent and accountable Pan Africa leader advocates of anti-corruption in Africa.
- **Peace and Security;** focus on eradicating all forms of inequality and injustice that causes violence conflicts in Africa. For example, topics such as mitigation of human trafficking,

confronting climate change, silencing the guns, responding to debt crisis shall be discussed

- **African Dignity:** At the Congress, discussion under this thematic area will be on addressing inequality and discrimination against people with disabilities. Also in Overcoming xenophobia, racism, religious persecution, Afrophobia, Overcoming harmful traditional practices and Wellness (mental, physical, spiritual, financial).

Additional activities during the congress will include: Concurrent Sessions with renowned Pan Africanist, Exhibitions by Cooperates, Side Events (hosted by interested organizations), Africa Celebration Night with classic live performance from the Afro Centric Musicians and Worship and prayer sessions.

Partnership and Sponsorship

The All Africa Youth Congress creates possibilities for partnership and networking with organizations and institutions with similar agenda and programs towards a successful Congress. The partnership and networking can take form of sponsoring youth to the congress or sponsoring thematic engagements during the event. Individuals, organizations, corporate institutions, foundations and philanthropic entities are welcome to partner and network with AAYC–AACC.

Who can participate?

The participants to All African Youth Congress shall be:

- Youth within the Continent and those in the Diaspora.
- Youth of African descent
- Youth from AACC's constituencies
- Youth between age bracket of 15–35 years.
- Passionate about Pan Africanism and have demonstrated in leadership and service in various capacities.
- Demonstrate capability to mobilize resources for self-sponsorship in the categories.
- Commit to abide by the set rules and guidelines for the Congress as shall be decided by the organizers.

Dates: Arrival 29th October -
Departure 4th November, 2022

Venue: Pentecostal Convention Center Kasoa – Accra, Ghana

Registration and participation

To participate in the congress, please visit the All African Youth Congress 2022 Website and register your interest to participate in the congress <https://allafricayouthcongress.org/create-account.html>. Upon completion of the registration process, applicants will only receive confirmation of participation after the selection process. Each participant is expected to pay \$250 (USD) as registration fee.

Cost of participation

Participants are to mobilize resources to cover the following costs:

- Flight fare / vehicular transport fare
- Visa fee (where required)
- Covid 19 PCR Test

Please note that during the online registration process, participants will be required to indicate self-sponsorship category. The categories are; full (100%), partial (75%), and half (50%).

For further details and enquiries:

Please visit the All African Youth congress:

Website www.allafricanyouthcongress.org

Facebook page @aaccyouthcongress2019

Twitter @aaccyouthprog

Instagram @aaccyouth

Email All African Youth Congress Coordinator:

youthcongress@aacc-ceta.org

Tel: +254 20 4441483, 0710225967

Daniel Orogo is the All Africa Youth Congress Coordinator. He can be reached of youthcongress@aacc-ceta.org

The All Africa Youth Pre-Congress



By Collins Shava

As the clock ticks towards the All Africa Youth Congress (AAYC) in Ghana in October 2022, preparations have gone into high gear. The AAYC was initially scheduled to be held in 2020, but was put off due to the coronavirus pandemic.

As part of the road to Ghana activities, AACC hosted a pre-congress gathering, which brought 50 youth leaders from across the continent to deliberate and share ideas ahead of the 2022 gathering. The youth leaders were selected from AACC member churches across the continent. Other youth leaders outside the network of member churches were invited as facilitators and presenters.

The All Africa Youth Pre Congress Event was held from the 25th to the 29th of October 2021. The youth leaders deliberated on the important themes shaping the discourse in Africa. The event feeds into the conversations directed towards the main event the maiden AAYC. A keynote address was delivered by a young and passionate pan Africanist, Rev Damon Mkandawire from Zambia, who called upon young people to work together to build Africa.

Discussions topics ranged from climate change, debt, illicit financial flows, migration, and entrepreneurship. During the plenary sessions, the youth leaders emphasized on the need for Africa to decolonize the education system in order to reignite the pan African movement.

The youth leaders feel that this is the key to installing a software for pan Africanism in the continent. This topic will be further explored in the main All Africa Youth Congress (AAYC), which is scheduled for 29 October to 4 November 2022.



In addition, the AAYC pre congress event happened two weeks after AACC convened a roundtable for young entrepreneurs in Africa. One of the entrepreneurs who participated in the roundtable, Henry Cobbler, a tech entrepreneur from Ghana, delivered a thrilling presentation during the event. The youth leaders appreciated the work and the rise of young entrepreneurs who are leading innovative projects in the continent. Young entrepreneurs are an important piece in the transformation of the continent.

The event gave an opportunity for youth leaders to imagine the Africa: My Home. My Future. The transformation of the continent requires the unity of young people, who are willing to drive and tell the African story.

#AfricaMyHomeMyFuture

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

AACC And Compassion International Togo Strengthen Ties

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and Compassion International Togo (CITg) are Christian Organizations whose common vision and goal is to serve the Church in Africa. Both are working for the wellbeing of Africans. Looking at all that has been done by both organizations, it is clear that if put together, their joint effort will do a lot more for the protection, restoration and respect of human dignity.

It is with this understanding that on 4th February 2022, the two organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate in promoting active participation of Youth and Children in the church's life, fight gender-based violence (GBV) for the emancipation of the girl child and women, and build a sense of patriotism in the young people of Africa.



AACC General Secretary Rev Dr Fidon Mwombeki & National Director of CITg Dr Koffi A. Ahonon signing the MOU

Ghanaian Youth Hold The AAYC Pre-congress



AACC General Secretary Rev Dr Fidon Mwombeki giving his opening remarks during the Ghana Youth Congress.

The Christian Council of Ghana (CCG), in partnership with the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), held The Ghana Youth Congress at the Pentecost Convention Centre, Accra Ghana, from 8th February to 11th February 2022, under the theme **Ghana: My home: My Future.**

The Congress was officially opened by The Vice President of Ghana HE Alhaji Dr. Mahamadu Bawumia who delivered the keynote address. In his address, he mentioned some of the strides and milestones of the current government in Ghana. He also gave an outlook for the future and urged the youth to work together and take advantage of the opportunities presented by the 4th Industrial Revolution.

AACC General Secretary, Rev Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, AACC General Secretary, delivered a solidarity speech. He encouraged the youth to take advantage of opportunities presented in their countries, rather than risking their lives

illegally traveling abroad. He urged youths to take up the challenge of fixing the problems they are facing in their countries. Other key delegates who delivered speeches include the Patroness Prof. Angela Ofori Atta, Rev. Prof. J.O.Y. Mante, and the General Secretary of CCG Dr. Rev Cyril Fayose.

The two-day Congress discussed church and politics towards Agenda 2063, job creation and youth employment, gender inclusivity, illegal migration, religious and ethnic tolerance, and Africa: My Home. My Future.

Collins Shava and Rev Jehoshaphat Calys-Tagoe delivered a joint presentation on Africa: My Home. My Future, and on the upcoming All Africa Youth Congress. The presentation was to encourage and mobilize the youths to support Africa: My Home. The culmination of the 4-day congress was a cultural night to celebrate the diversity of the African culture.



Rev Charles Berahino (AACC), Bishop Arkanjelo Lemi Wami, Rev Dr Fidon Mwombeki (AACC General Secretary), SSCC General Secretary Fr. James Oyet Latansio, Rev Dr Ezekiel Lesmore (AACC).

Ecumenical Mission From South Sudan Visits AACC

A courtesy call and interface with AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr Fidon Mwombeki in his office by an eminent team from South Sudan on January 17, 2022. Leading the courtesy call were Bishop Arkanjelo Lemi Wani, the chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee of South Sudan and South Sudan Council of Churches General Secretary, Fr James Oyet Latansio. AACC urges fellow christians to continue to pray and accompany sisters and brothers of South Sudan as they commit to the realization of sustainable peace in the country.

AACC Appoints Director For Finance And Administration

The Executive Committee of the All Africa Conference of Churches has appointed Ms. Phyllis Beinthimo Martha Brewah, from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone as the Director for Finance and Administration with effect from May 1st, 2022.

Ms. Brewah has more than 20 years' experience working for and in connection with churches, including her home church and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), where she currently serves as Finance Coordinator.

She holds a Bachelor of Science in Economics and Social Studies, a Post-Graduate Diploma in Business Administration and a Master's degree in Finance Accounting.



Incoming AACC Director of finance and administration, Ms. Phyllis Beinthimo Martha Brewah

AEA General Secretary Visits AACC



From left: Jim Olang (AEA), Evelyne Okunda (AACC), AEA General Secretary Rev. Dr. Master Oboletswe Matlhaope, AACC General Secretary Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, Ann Kioi (AACC), Dr. Bright Mawudor (AACC)

The Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Master Oboletswe Matlhaope, paid a courtesy call to AACC on 28th February 2022. He was received by the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki.

During the visit, the team from AACC and AEA discussed various issues affecting Christians in Africa, the various works that both AACC and AEA participate in, and areas of possible future collaborations between the two organizations.

Boosting COVID-19 Vaccination in Africa

Religious leaders, Christian Health Associations and Drug Supply Organizations call for action to boost COVID-19 vaccination in Africa

In a call to governments and development organizations, religious leaders in Africa, Christian Health Associations (CHAs) and Drug Supply Organizations (DSO) have made a wide range of recommendations to accelerate the uptake of coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination. The 'Call to Action' comes amid concerns that Africa was lagging behind in vaccinating its population, partly due to myths, misconceptions and wrong information as well as unequal distribution of vaccines.

Only six million people get vaccinated every day, across Africa, according to health experts, this needs acceleration to reach at least 36 million, the safe zone recommended by the World Health Organization.

But Church and faith leaders, Christian health organizations and drug supply organizations are moving to change this. From March 23-25 the groups held webinar, titled, COVID-19 vaccination in Africa: Faith and Science in Conversation, to take stock of COVID-19 vaccination progress in Africa.

"We believe faith leaders in Africa have a very important role to play in influencing to communities to get vaccinated," Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, the General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) told the opening of the webinar on March 23. "Therefore, we are faith leaders and scientific professionals, we need to discuss with our governments how we can influence people to take up the vaccination."

Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network (EPN) had organized the virtual conference in collaboration with the Africa Christian Health Association Platform (ACHAP) and the AACC. According to the groups, there is a need to address the existing gaps in understanding how vaccine work within faith communities and dispel myths and misconception. There is also a need to enhance direct partnership between African faith sector health systems and African governments to influence community vaccine response, according to the organizations.

"Our goal of being (coming) together was to try to improve the faith based systems in sub-Saharan Africa in covid-19 vaccination campaigns and pandemic responses. We want to be in this task together and speak the same voices, addressing the same issues as one voice," said Richard Cizungu Neci, Executive Director of the Ecumenical Pharmaceutical

Network (EPN).

While committing to continue providing health services, creating welcoming communities and respecting dignity of all people regardless of age, gender and health status, the groups recognized that the spread of vaccination was low, despite the impacts of the pandemic being felt widely in the continent.

In the call to action, the faith leaders and the organization urge African governments to partner with Church health networks and drugs supply organizations to deliver COVID-19 vaccines, provide testing, care and treatment service in government and faith institutions. They also want the governments to fund research and the development of vaccine plants in Africa and to provide care for all orphans and vulnerable populations, among other recommendations.

According to the organizations, development partners, such as UN's World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) should aid in the establishment of vaccines hub and boost research capacities of scientists and institutions in Africa, among others recommendations. The European Union member states and the US government should consider providing technology transfer and building up regional response capacity, to help beat the risk of new mutations, the groups urge, while urging support for efforts seeking to address vaccine hesitancy in local contexts.

"This is a good place we have started. We have started on the same stable as faith actors to look at issue where do we converge and what are the issue we want to work together towards," said Nkatha Njeru, the CEO, Christian Health Association Platform (ACHAP). "We will continue to think science, provide information to support one another and consult, so that we can get where we want to get as Africa. We will continue talk to each other."

Rev. Dr. Ezekiel Lesmore, the Director of Programmes at AACC told the closing that the ecumenical grouping hoped after the meeting, the organizations will deepen discussions on how to tackle vaccine hesitancy in Africa and all related issues- from myths and misconception – and from a religious perspective.

Partriach Abune Merkorios Goes Into Glory: AACC Condoles The Ethiopia Orthodox Tewahedo Church



AACC General Secretary Rev Dr Fidon Mwombeki addressing the mourners during the funeral of His Holiness Abune Merkorios.

The 4th Patriarch of the Ethiopia Orthodox Tewahedo Church, His Holiness Abune Merkorios was called into glory on 1st March 2022 in Addis Ababa. The AACC General Secretary had an honor to convey condolences to the church and attend the funeral of His Holiness on Sunday 13th March at the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Addis Ababa.

Very high tributes were paid to Patriarch Abune Merkorios by the whole leadership of his church, the leaders of state and government, in the persons of the President and Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, as well as many other dignitaries from Ethiopia and abroad. What was repeatedly highlighted was his commitment to peace and development throughout his tenure as leader of the church, both in Ethiopia and in exile, where he was forced to run due to problems in his own country.

The Ethiopia Orthodox Tewahedo Church is the largest member of the AACC.



Championing Entrepreneurship Among Women in Africa



By Ann Kioi



Group Photo of Participants

AACC Holds Exchange Programme To Strengthen Their Knowledge and Skills

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) organized a three days Exchange Program for Women Entrepreneurs, under the theme: 'Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship in Africa' -in line with its strategic focus to promote entrepreneurship and innovation in the continent.

The AACC recognizes initiatives already undertaken by African Governments in creating conducive environments for women's entrepreneurship.

African women entrepreneurs are fundamental key drivers of sustainable economic growth. While women constitute almost 50-percent of the world population and make substantial contribution to global socio-economic development, some retrogressive social norms have kept most women and girls, especially in Africa, at greater risk of poverty, violence and abuse.

The Entrepreneurship exchange program held in-person in Nairobi, Kenya, and virtually for a section of participants who could not travel to Nairobi, was attended by women entrepreneurs drawn from AACC member churches representing seventeen (17) African countries, namely; Nigeria, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Senegal, Ghana, South Africa, DRC, Uganda, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Kenya among others and was designed to provide a platform for women entrepreneurs to learn, network and exchange innovative ideas from other successful entrepreneurs and innovators in the continent; create a space for networking and role-modelling amongst the participating entrepreneurs; provide a platform for learning ethical leadership principles in business and strengthen and facilitate knowledge sharing among women on challenges and opportunities in entrepreneurship in Africa.

In his opening remarks, the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, welcomed participants to the forum with an encouragement to women entrepreneurs to affirm themselves in the business sphere.

He underscored the importance of spotlighting both men and women in entrepreneurial engagements. "This is the reason why we have this exchange programme (for women entrepreneurs)" he said. While highlighting the significant role that women play in the socio-economic development of society, he expressed concern that despite women's immense contribution to development, many of them stayed in the backburner, while their role in wealth creation went unrecognised and unappreciated.

He noted that the African Continental

Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) – which aims to boost intra-African trade by providing a comprehensive and mutually beneficial trade agreement among African Union (AU) member states - offered immense opportunities for women in business, including opportunities in financing.

The guest speaker, Commissioner Njoki Kahiga – Chairperson, Women Enterprise Fund gave an overview of the global status of women in entrepreneurship, highlighting women's contribution to the global economy and how the global enterprise impacts families and nations.

Describing women entrepreneurship as a growing global phenomenon, she said the African Union's Agenda 2063 recognises women as a key driver in sustainable growth.

"African women entrepreneurs are fundamentally key drivers of sustainable economic growth and widespread and inclusive prosperity", she said.

She noted, however, that women can only excel if emancipated from the shackles of culture and regulation, which has stifled their active participation in various sectors of the economy.

She stated that the Women's Enterprise Fund, established to enable women access to affordable credit, has to date disbursed Kenya shillings 22.8b to 1.9m women entrepreneurs across Kenya.

"We must work with all stakeholders, specifically our governments, to emphasize the importance of eliminating all barriers hindering women economic entrepreneurship."

Ann Kioi is the AACC Programmes Development and Fundraising Officer

Theological Reflections on Women and Entrepreneurship



By Rev. Dr. Lydia Mwaniki (PhD)

An Inspiration for Women Entrepreneurs in Africa and Quest for Achievement of SDGs and AU Agenda 2063

Sustainable development cannot be achieved or sustained in Africa (and in the world) if half of the population of the continent is excluded from the development processes. Ngone DIOP, Senior Gender Affairs Advisor, UNECA

Introduction

Promoting women entrepreneurial skills for wealth creation is one of the programmatic goals in the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Strategy 2019-2023, where one of the interventions is to create a forum for women entrepreneurs to share ideas and showcase success stories for inspiration of other women. Although several success stories have been shared and showcased, it has also been evident that women entrepreneurs in Africa face several challenges, which if not addressed, might deter achievement of African Union (AU) Agenda 2063- *The Africa we Want*, in particular Aspiration 6; “An Africa Whose Development is people driven, relying on the potential offered by African People, especially its Women...” and Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) on achieving gender equality by the year 2030. This article highlights some of the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Africa and offers Theological basis for women and entrepreneurship as a motivation to enhance women’s entrepreneurial engagement in the continent and to facilitate the achievement of the Global and Continental Development Goals.

Women and Entrepreneurship in Africa

Participation of women in economic activity has increased over the past years. Compared to other regions of the world, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest number of female entrepreneurs at 27% in 2017.

This reshapes the incorrect perception that African women have marginal input in overall economic output.

Nevertheless, women entrepreneurs still continue to experience gender gaps.

While 61% of African women are working, they still face economic exclusion as their jobs are underpaid and undervalued whereby women’s role is accorded lower status and social importance. Many women are also mostly in the informal sector.

Deeply-rooted structural obstacles such as unequal distribution of resources, power and wealth, combined with social institutions and norms that sustain inequality are holding African women, and the rest of the continent, back.

Social norms are a clear obstacle to African women’s progress, limiting the time women can spend in education and paid work, and access to economic and financial assets.

African women's health is severely affected by overworking, harmful practices such as under-age marriage, sexual and physical violence, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in some communities, and high maternal mortality - the most at-risk women being those of childbearing age.

So, how can Theology be of use in addressing these challenges? The section below gives a general view of women and entrepreneurship in the Bible, after which theological reflections of the role of theology in enhancing women's full participation in entrepreneurship is offered.

Biblical and Theological Reflections on Women in Entrepreneurship

(a) Women and Entrepreneurship in the Bible

The Bible, as well as other extra-biblical materials, offers much information about women in entrepreneurship especially in the New Testament. The New Testament was written during the time of the Roman Empire.

Legally, although a Roman woman was subordinated to man in many ways, she was entitled to property ownership, even within marriage. She may have acquired property through widowhood, inheritance and even business deals. Some influential women operated personal businesses, initiated legal action and defense in court, while others assumed public roles as patronesses.

(b) Role of Theology in enhancing women's engagement in entrepreneurship in Africa

There are several biblical and theological basis of gender equality, which can be applied to enhance gender equality in all areas of life, thus eliminating gender gaps in economic development, which hinder full participation of women in the achievement of SDGs and AU Agenda 2063. Some of them are:

(i) Theology of creation of male and female in the Image of God (Gen 1:27). This is the first egalitarian biblical text, which teaches that although male and female are different in sex, they are equal before God. They are of equal

value and dignity, they have equal rights and privileges including the privilege to multiply and to be stewards of God's creation (Genesis 1:28).

(ii) Jesus' liberating approach to women and the marginalized-Jesus defied religion and culture to accord dignity to women and other social misfits in Jewish and Gentile communities.

(iii) Women's participation in the development process in the Bible e.g. Queen of Sheba (1 Kgs 10), "wise woman" of Proverbs 31 and Lydia (Acts 16) and other examples of women entrepreneurs mentioned above, should inspire the Church to address barriers to women's full participation in entrepreneurship in Africa

(iv) Paul's image of the Church as the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12)-each and every part of the body is important and adds value to the whole body when its fully functional. Dysfunctional parts of the body weaken it and make it less productive. So is economic development when women, who constitute half of human population are less functional.

Nevertheless, the Church also needs to offer life-giving interpretation of gender-biased biblical passages, which construct woman as inferior to man in the light of the above egalitarian texts. These passages include: 1 Cor 11:3,7; Eph 5:22 and 1 Tim 2:8-15 among others.

Conclusion

Bible and theology offer a firm foundation for women in entrepreneurship and gender equality which, if taken up, can tremendously improve women's participation in entrepreneurship in the continent. Gender relations and the power relationships inherent in them are socially constructed. They are therefore not static and can be transformed, especially through theological reflections on Scriptural basis for gender Justice.

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

AACC commemorates International Women's Day, launches an advocacy toolkit for widows' justice

Africa's top ecumenical grouping, the All Africa Conference of Churches, joined the global commemoration of International Women's Day, with a call to involve women and girls in climate change adaptation, mitigation and response.

Church leaders, clergy and women in charge of gender desks, converged at the headquarters of the organization in Nairobi for the hybrid event, alongside AACC Male Champions for Gender Justice, youth, widows, persons with disabilities, officials from disability organizations, and climate and development organizations. Officials also unveiled an advocacy toolkit for widows' justice.

"When the society is moving to acknowledge and give women responsibility in leadership, the church is lagging far behind," Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, the General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches told the gathering. "On climate change, we also need to call churches to task to also allow women leadership."

AACC theme for the event was; "Break the Bias Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow: Role of the Church in Promoting Gender Equality in Adaptation, Mitigation and Response to Climate Change".

This resonated with the increasing calls to include women in the efforts to solve the climate change crisis since it is the category most impacted by the challenge. Women's livelihoods, who constitute the majority of the world's poor, are dependent on natural resources such as water and firewood. These resources are now threatened by climate change. For example, when rains fail, women are hardest hit as many of them are in agriculture, food production and food security. Increases in food prices affect the poor, the majority of who are women.

Moreover, according to Church officials and other experts, without increasing gender equality, it may be difficult to achieve climate justice as well as sustainable development.

At the commemoration, the achievements of women and girls in response to the climate change crisis were highlighted and opportunities, gaps, and challenges the women and girls face due to the occurrence underlined. Speakers also issued recommendations on how churches, governments, policy makers and

stakeholders, can ensure gender equality in climate change actions.

"The outcome will strengthen AACC's voice in her regional and global engagement crucial agenda of climate change," Rev. Dr Lydia Mwaniki, the Director for Gender and Women at the All Africa Conference of Churches.

Augustine Njamnshi, an official from the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) in Cameroon, said climate change started as far back as 1830, but all the way, the impacts were felt most by people living in countries that are not responsible for the crisis.

"Climate change affects women (in Africa) more. It is the women who should be at the fore front. They should be part of the solution," said Njamnshi in a keynote address.

Key church leaders in Africa delivered goodwill messages at the event. A panel discussion titled, amplifying our voices to break the gender bias today for sustainable tomorrow, was also held.

"Women with disability are disadvantaged three times; as women, as persons with disabilities and as victims of climate change," said Grace Achieng', the programme officer at the National Federation of Women with Disabilities in the panel discussion. "I appeal to the churches to include us in their committees on climate justice and discussions. We can bring something to the table as part of the solution. We know where the shoe pinch."

Meanwhile, the Advocacy Toolkit for Justice for Widows unveiled at the celebrations also responds to the question of climate justice.

"AACC recognizes that widows in Africa experience more than double the violation of a married woman because of some cultural norms and beliefs, which subject them to dehumanizing practices that rob them of their rights and dignity. Widows are exposed to poverty, making the impact of climate change even more hostile to them," said the celebration's concept document.

Religious Leaders Can Influence Reversal Of The Climate Change Crisis



By Patricia Kombo

AACC Leads African Churches to COP 26 in Glasgow

In trying times, faith-based organizations have always shown unity in responding to crisis. They have offered humanitarian aid to the most affected, and lobbied for a climate resilient world.

During the just concluded UN climate summit (COP26) held in Glasgow, Scotland in November 2021, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) called on world leaders to commit to addressing loss and damage caused by climate crisis, and to recognize the role of faith actors who are close to the communities that suffer as a result.

Africa remains vulnerable to climate crisis caused by climate change. Irreversible losses and damages have continued to impact livelihoods, health, food and water availability, fueling violence and displacing communities.

For the first time, the AACC closely followed the UN climate summit through in-person participation at the Green Zone, on the role of faith-based organizations in mitigating effects of climate change.

The AACC had a strong delegation led by the General Secretary, Dr Fidon Mwombeki. It included the AACC Director of Programmes, Rev. Dr. Lesomore Ezekiel, Director of Gordon Simango, and the Executive Secretary of Youth, Collins Shava.

Concerned by mistrust and empty promises issued in the past climate COP negotiations, AACC submitted 'Key Asks' to the COP26 presidency, developed countries parties', the African Union, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) parties and African governments. One of the 'key asks' was to facilitate meaningful engagement of faith communities in COP processes as required in Article 12 of the Paris Agreement.

At COP26, AACC interacted with like-minded organizations in deliberating how to strengthen the voice of faith-based organizations. The discussion, which was hosted by the Salvation Army and Christian Aid, showcased the importance of religious leaders in

caring for the planet.

In a joint service at Sherbrooke Mossspark Parish Church, AACC's representative gave insights into how climate was impacting livelihoods. He called upon the people of faith to lobby and remain united in advocating for environmental justice and demand action from their governments.

'When it floods, it does not bypass a Christian, a Muslim or a Hindu, the whole community is affected. Through watching nature, we all learn that no matter our religious beliefs it's a collective responsibility to protect the earth,' said.....

Under the four main goals of the conference, namely securing global net-zero by mid-century and keeping 1.5 degrees Celsius within reach; adapting to protect communities and natural habitats from the devastating impacts of climate change; mobilizing climate finance and galvanizing international cooperation from all countries to deliver on commitments made, the AACC through its member churches, committed to prompt eco-theology, mitigation, adaptation and tracking the utilization of climate finances to enhance accountability.

Although loss and damage attributed to climate earned more recognition compared to other COPs, faith based organizations felt that rich countries failed to secure a dedicated 'new' loss and damage fund. From the turn of events at COP26, AACC has embarked on advocating and promoting initiatives that are resilient to climate change including tree planting, technology transfer, capacity building, innovation and eco-theology ahead of COP27 in Egypt this year.

Patricia Kombo is an environmental journalist. She was a delegate from Africa to COP 26.

There's Hope The Loss And Damage Can Be Reversed

A personal Reflection on COP 26

As a climate activist from the Global South, COP 26 was not inclusive of all voices, especially from the communities that face the real climate crisis.

Listening to the negotiations and especially on financing loss and damage, I felt nervous and frustrated about the many innocent people who will have to suffer and bear the brunt of mistakes of other nations who neither willing to cut their emissions, nor pay for the loss and damage. I had a lot of hope that the 26th session of COP would deliver what COP 25 in Paris (France), promised.

However, there is still hope. From listening and interacting with various leaders from faith based organizations on our role as stewards in protecting our planet, I was content that we can reverse the negative impact.

The Unity of religious leaders and the youth in addressing climate change during the global march in Glasgow gave me hope that we are able to influence policies and hold our governments accountable for their actions.

The welfare of the earth is our welfare was one of key take away from the COP 26. By protecting the earth, we are taking care of my welfare.



Gorden Simango and Patricia Kombo during the COP 26

Picture Gallery of the AACC at COP26



The Church Must Be Concerned About Irregular Migration



By Rev. Angele WILSON-DOGBE

From time immemorial, humans have been on the move for legitimate reasons. Humans migrate from one place to the other for a variety of reasons.

Biblical history is replete with migrations that were inspired by God. Abraham was asked by God Himself to move and migrate to an unknown place where he would be blessed, (Gn12: 1ff). But when faced with drought later, Abraham decided to move without consulting God and that did not go well with God. It also did not work out for Abraham himself, for he almost lost his wife (Gn 12:10-20).

So, it is clear that migration is biblical and legitimate, for God can demand or authorize a person to migrate for a particular reason. All the heroes of the Old Testament regularly moved for one reason or the other. Some were even sold into slavery, an act which today could be described as human trafficking. God Himself was on the move alongside His people (through the Arche). And finally, God even made provision in the Israelite law to protect and accommodate sojourners or strangers (Exodus 22:21; Leviticus 19:3, 10, 34; 23:22; Deuteronomy 14:27-29; 16:11, 14; 24:17-21; 26:12-13; 27:19; Jeremiah 7:6; 22:3).

Likewise, human mobility was expressed in the New Testament as well. Indeed, Jesus was not born where his parents were living, given that they were on the move going to their home town to get themselves enrolled as ordered by Caesar Augustus. So one can then assume that Jesus' parents were also migrants in another land.

Consequently, it should be understood that migration is a normal phenomenon approved by God which can yield so much benefit to humans.

Unfortunately, the phenomenon has evolved today with new trends which in many cases, are very dangerous, dehumanizing and violation of people's human rights. The generators of those new trends are, among others, hard living conditions due to bad governance which result to poverty, lack of health security and conflict; harmful socio-cultural practices, and natural disasters.

These reasons are pushing people to migrate without respect to any measures put in place and due process. This is what is described as irregular migration. An irregular migrant is a vulnerable person, and as a result risks being smuggled and trafficked with risks of dire consequences.

In fact, the smugglers stand to make huge amounts of money out of smuggling people. These traffickers use exploitation in its various forms such as forced labour, sexual exploitation and organs removal.

Irregular migration deprives people of their rights and dignity. What should the church then do about this crime?

1) As prophet in the nation, therefore representing God among the people, the church **NEEDS** to work with government duty bearer on the subject matters, NGO's CSOs and other stakeholders:

- ❖ To lobby for proper migration policy to be put in place in both country of origin, of transit as well as in receiving country;
- ❖ To push policies that promote gender equality in all aspect of life including the eradication of harmful socio-cultural practices;
- ❖ To solve the issue of unemployment of youth.

2) As priest in the nation, which means presenting people's issues and concerns to God, the church **SHOULD**:

- ❖ Present all situation leading to irregular migration to God for intervention;
- ❖ Offer psychosocial support to survivors and their families;
- ❖ Stop praying for people to migrate irregularly

3) As moral authority in the nation, therefore role model, community mobiliser and voice of the voiceless, the church **MUST**:

- ❖ Provide all relevant information as regard migration (including irregular migration)
- ❖ Sensitise communities on the heavy and negative consequences of irregular migration
- ❖ Create awareness on all tricks that can stimulate in people the desire of migrating

Rev. Angèle Wilson-Dogbe is the Regional Coordinator in charge of the Lomé Regional Office and Migration

Churches Step Up Fight Against Human Trafficking In Nigeria



A group photo of the Participants of the Step Down Training on Irregular migration and Human Trafficking in South West Nigeria.

Migration is a complex phenomenon that touches on a diversity of economic, social, security and human right aspects affecting our daily lives in a world that is progressively interconnected.

Looking specifically at irregular migration which in most cases leads to smuggling in persons and human trafficking, with heavy consequences on the victims, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), with the help of governments, is assisting churches bring an end to this crime. AACC is also offering the survivors and their families the support they need.

Consequently, after series of regional consultations, workshops and training on irregular migration, human trafficking and modern slavery, a training on the subject matter was organized in collaboration with the Christian Council of Nigeria's (CCN) Institute of Church and Society (ICS) in Ibadan, Nigeria from 26th -29th October 2021.

The Training is a step down program of the agencies in south west Nigeria to address the challenges, reasons and effects of irregular migration and human

trafficking and to carve out sustainable strategies to address this issues in that particular community. This activity is a follow up of an activity which started with capacity building for faith actors in Anglophone West and Central Africa held between 12th -16th April 2021 in Lagos state Nigeria, to draw in all stakeholders and advocacy communities.

The current one gathered 32 participants who were in attendance, and it included leaders and representatives of various church communities, youth network and the media organizations as follow:

- Methodist Church Nigeria
- The Nigeria Baptist Convention
- Presbyterian Church Nigeria
- United Evangelical Church (UEC)
- Student Christian Movement of Nigeria (SCM)
- Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN, South/West Zone)
- The Church of the Lord Prayer Fellowship (TCLPF)
- Dominican University
- University of Ibadan
- Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
- Tribune Newspaper
- Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)

Shocking! Girls sold into Sexual slavery in Burkina Faso

Lydia House Provides Safe Shelter For Those Rescued

Shocking stories of girls trafficked into prostitution in Burkina Faso are what pastors Rev. Jacob and Rachel Adeniji encounter every day.

The two pastors and their children run the Lydia House, a shelter for girls who have been rescued after having been trafficked and sold into prostitution.

Rev. Jacob told a shocked audience during a training on irregular migration in Ibadan, Nigeria (see separate story) the traumatic experience these girls go through of being trafficked by people whom they trust. He further highlighted the rescue and rehabilitation program that Lydia house has been providing for the past 25years.

The process

Rev. Adeniji reported that the rate at which Nigerian girls are being trafficked into prostitution in Burkina Faso is very alarming. The cities of Cotonou and Lomé, the Republic of Benin and Togo respectively, are the ports of transit.

He explained that Ghana is intentionally avoided for the victims are English speaking people, and they could source for help at any point should they sense danger. Because victims are ushered to a location where they lack the language skills or other basic knowledge, they become vulnerable and, therefore, could be easily exploited.

Rev. Adeniji gave another path used by traffickers where victims are taken to Saki in Oyo State, from where they take a direct vehicle to Burkina Faso.

Upon arrival in Burkina Faso some of the girls are sold to madams who run close houses in remote villages,



A hut of one of the girls who is by the side waiting for customers



A hut that is closed, maybe the girl is attending to a customer.



In the Oba's palace. Lydia House working with the police and the traditional rulers

where the girls are sexually exploited. Those villages are very profitable for such businesses because there are gold mines with expatriates running the extraction companies.

The girls are hosted and run the business for which they are employed in huts built of woven and Guinea corn sticks covered with cellophanes.

Rev. Adeniji sadly narrated that the girls are supervised by native bandits, who are often their forced boyfriends. He noted that some girls died the very day they arrived in Burkina Faso as they tried to resist the traffickers, having realized that they were deceived.

Others die in their huts either for disobeying the "boyfriend" or the Madam by refusing to satisfy a particular "client" demanding for a service the girls feel is a taboo. They are found slaughtered, shot, strangled or burnt to death because the boyfriend or terrorist group set fire to the hut at night with people inside, ensuring that no one escapes.

According to the pastors, the Nigeria Community in Burkina Faso has not been able to trace the families of many victims whose corpses are still in the mortuaries, while some are buried like dogs in various villages in Burkina Faso by the madams; while their families still believe they are in Europe making money they will send to them someday.

Rev. Adeniji called on church leaders to act, for many girls are still dying because they were deceived, trafficked, and forced into prostitution. As immediate action in an attempt to rescue the

girls, Lydia House worked in collaboration with stakeholders, partners, governments and village chiefs achieve the following results:

- Between November 2018 and July 2019, over 100 victims of whom most are mid-teenage girls, have been rescued and sent back to Nigeria.
- Trafficking was shifted from Edo state to Yoruba states in Nigeria when the Oba of Benin arose to combat trafficking in Edo land
- The Oba of Benin gathered all traditional priests together and made them disannulled all the oaths they led the trafficked to swear and declared such oaths as null and void.
- The Oba of Benin also placed a curse on anyone who trafficked women, children and men from Edo land for prostitution within and outside Nigeria.

The effect of incorporating the Oba (traditional ruler) in the fight was very impactful, with great reduction in trafficking from Edo state.



Traditional priests swearing an oath to cancelled/ undo the covenant

AACC Deploys Observer Team To Gambia's Presidential Elections



By Rev. Charles Berahino



The team ready for the election observation, photo taken on December 4, 2021

A team of five international observers was deployed by the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) for a peace mission and election observation for the presidential election that took place in The Gambia on December 4, 2021. The team comprising four religious leaders and one AACC staff member, were there to accompany the Gambia Christian Council, which has been playing a big role in the social, economic, and political life of the Gambia.

The members of the delegation were Rev. Dr. Supo

Ayokunle Samson Adeniyi from Nigeria; Sheikh Abu Bakarr Conteh from Sierra Leone; Rev. Dr. Vivian Balasu Addo from Ghana; Rev. Winfred Korqu Domi from Ghana; and Rev. Charles Berahino, Executive Secretary, Peace and Diakonia at AACC.

Before starting their mission, the team met with different stakeholders including the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), as well three ministers whose ministries are closely related to the work of the Commission.



The team was received by Honorable Yankuba JN SONKO (in blue), minister of home affairs and security, photo taken on Dec 3rd, 2021.

The delegation was briefed on the Commission's preparedness, and received assurance of a transparent and peaceful election. The delegation elaborated on the mission of AACC, encouraged them, and prayed for a peaceful election.

The AACC delegation thanked the IEC for granting it accreditation, and affirmed its commitment to call for peace before, during and after the election.

The team was received by Honourable Mamadou Tangara, minister of Foreign Affairs together with the minister for Fisheries, Water Resources and National Assembly Affairs. They also met the Minister for Home Affairs and Security.

On election day, the delegation visited 10 polling stations. In The Gambia, voters cast their ballot by dropping a marble into a tub marked with their candidate's colour and photo, a practice dating back to the country's past as a British colony.

In the evening of the election day, the team was privileged to visit the situation room. They learnt that there were some issues of missing names and marbles not fitting into the ballot drums. These were explained as issues of double registration and the painting of the ballot drums which eventually

reduced the size of the holes making it difficult for the marbles to pass through.

The observation team concluded that the Presidential election in the Gambia was free and fair. The delegation commended the government and the people of the Gambia as well as the IEC for a well-organized election. All was in place in time to allow people to cast their vote in the polling stations, and the counting of votes was transparent and clear. Even if there were some small gaps, the process in itself was democratic. The results of the election were announced when the team was still in the country. The incumbent, Adama Barrow, was declared winner. His rivals challenged the results of the vote.

The AACC will continue to accompany the Gambia Christian Council in its efforts to consolidate peace in the country. In addition, given that The Gambia is a Muslim majority country, with Muslims constituting 96 per cent of the population and Christians being some 3 per cent, AACC will help in promoting interfaith dialogue and cooperation for the two to continue working together as they raise their prophetic voice.

Rev. Charles Berahino is the Executive secretary, peace and diakonia

Strengthening Capacity of Churches To Consolidate Peace in the Central African Republic

Religious leaders held a two-day consultation in Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic, on their role in the consolidation of peace in the country. The consultation was hosted by the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in partnership with the Eglise Protestante Christ Roi in the country.

Forty religious leaders drawn from Protestant Churches, the Catholic Church and Muslims attended. They came together to reflect on the best ways to continue supporting the roadmap to peace.

Overall, the purpose was to empower church leaders and practitioners to play proactive roles in deepening culture of peace and peaceful coexistence in Central African Republic. Specifically, the aim was to have participants understand conflict and conflict transformation as well as the role of the church in the prevention and transformation of conflicts and to share on ground experiences and lessons learnt.

The consultation, which was run in French, featured presentations on some thematic areas:

- ✓ Understanding of conflict: drivers and triggers
- ✓ Biblical approaches to peacebuilding
- ✓ Conflict prevention and transformation strategies
- ✓ The role of Church Leaders in Peace Building and National Reconciliation
- ✓ Interfaith cooperation and dialogue for peace in Central African Republic.

The consultation also featured a sharing of experiences and lessons learnt on what religious communities are doing on the ground in Central African Republic.

Very prominent and active religious leaders responded to the invitation by the Eglise Protestante Christ Roi. The Catholic Church was represented at high level by His Excellency Cardinal Dieudonne Nzapalainga, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Bangui.

The consultation ended with a communique and call to action. The consultation also provided an opportunity for the religious leaders to revive the Interreligious/interfaith platform, which has been dormant.



Group photo of the participants to the consultation, photo taken on October 20, 2021



Rev. Charles Berahino, Executive secretary, peace and diakonia after meeting with His Excellency Cardinal Dieudonne Nzapalainga, the Catholic metropolitan Archbishop of Bangui

African Church Leaders Trained in Leadership, Diakonia and Development



Participants to the church leaders' training in diakonia, leadership and development, Nairobi, November 9, 2021

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) jointly organized a training of Church Leaders in Africa. The training that took place at Desmond Tutu Conference Center (DTCC) in Nairobi ran from November 8-12, 2021.

The capacity building workshop that brought together church leaders from East, Central and Southern Africa greatly contributed to a raising of awareness on issues facing the life of God's people and the leaders gained knowledge to enable them to better manage and strategically think about the delivery of social care services.

The workshop explored topics including Biblical & Theological Basis of diakonia, Diakonia and Mission of the Church. SDGs and Agenda 2063: Relevance to Christian Mission, Diakonia and ecumenical movement, Transformational Leadership, human resource management, ethical investment for sustainability and strategic management.

The church leaders were empowered with knowledge based skills in the areas of leadership, diakonia and development. In caring for the people, the church has a responsibility to show a preferential option for the poor and to be a voice of the voiceless. Church leaders welcomed the meeting as a great eye-opener and wished to see diakonia work institutionalized in their different churches.

Countering Misleading Theologies In African Churches



By Prof. Bosela Eale

AACC Holds 3rd Symposium Tackling Theologies of Healing

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), through its Department of Theology, Interfaith Relations and Ecclesial Leadership Development, held its third annual theological symposium on **Misleading Theologies** from 22nd to 24th November 2021, at Desmond Tutu Conference Center Nairobi, Kenya.

Its theme was **controversies About Theologies of Health and Healing**. Misleading theologies are deep and widespread in the African Church, a reality that puts the future of the African church at stake. Health and healing are some of the misconstrued theologies in African Christianity, especially among the Charismatic Pentecostalism and Africa Independent Churches (AICs), which require a theological moderation through dialogue.

Premised on this, AACC has taken the mandate, through a series of symposia, to mediate the mitigation of these misleading theologies, so as to safeguard the future of the African church against such theological heresies. Misleading theologies endanger the economy of the Trinity and the unity of the Trinitarian Persons, in their working towards the world in accomplishing the *missio Dei* through the Church.

Similarly, they target to dismantle, threaten orthodox doctrines of the Bible, ethical practices, and the biblical thread line of the Bible. This has left innocent believers spiritually vulnerable, at the mercy of parasitic commercial preachers.

This is the third theological symposium. The AACC is committed to laying a proper theological foundation through a series of symposia to deconstruct misleading

theologies and maintain orthodox theology, by providing theological criteria and framework to determine signs and elements of misleading theologies in the Church on the African continent.

One of the methodologies is reworking theological terminologies in contextual Africa. Thus, AACC is committed to providing the right and balanced theological background in developing theological digest to address the surging controversies bedeviling theologies of Health and Healing.

AACC acknowledges a long Christian involvement in the theme of healing. However, in recent years, healing has attracted much interest in Church at all levels, which has prompted the AACC to examine it closely. There is a surge in health healers, including professed Christians who belong to either mission or African Independent Churches, or traditionalists who mostly heal through prayers, laying on of hands to patients, use of holy waters, and herbal medicines.

Faith healers operate on healing power, which they believe comes from God through an ascetic state and trance-contact with a Christian holy spirit, and to some extent ancestral spirit. AACC is cognizant of the churches that teach sound doctrine, but with limited practice on the theology of health and healing, which is a biblical relevant theme.

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Theology should contribute to Africa transformation



Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in collaboration with 14 major theological and Christian networks in Africa, held an inaugural African and Christian networks consultation at Desmond Tutu Conference Centre Nairobi Kenya from 26th-28th November 2021. The theme of the consultation was **Theological Education for Sustainable Growth in Churches and Society in Relation to Agenda 2063**.

The meeting noted the need for contextualization in theological education in order to meet the needs of the church and society in Africa. The consultation was informed by five other consultations on theological education held between 2018 and 2020.

The consultation was unique. It was the first time in the continent to bring together theological networks of different theological doctrines. The main objective of the consultation was to explore ways theological education could become relevant and contextual in responding to the needs of the growth of the church and its service to society. This aimed at enhancing the ability of the Christian Networks in Africa (AACC, AEA, OAIC etc.), Networks of theological institutions, denominations, and key theological institutions to support theological education in Africa in developing a pedagogy and curriculum that is contextual to Africa



AACC, DESMOND TUTU CONFERENCE CENTRE



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Desmond Tutu Conference Centre is an affiliate of the All Africa Conference of Churches, the ecumenical body for all churches in Africa, and the hotel prides itself in this association as it is the pillar and guidance under whose visionary leadership, value is added to hospitality.



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