

Message from the Pre-Council Youth Workshop  
Arusha, Tanzania, 20-24 June 2008

*Melting Snow on Mount Kilimanjaro - A Witness of a Suffering Creation*

A household in a remote village outside of Arusha in Olokii Parish enjoys electric lights provided by a solar panel, allowing them to finish schoolwork and household chores after dark. A woman cares for her cow, ensuring her family nourishment through its milk and economic security through selling its calves. A building nears completion, ready to house a vocational training program for young women and men to learn relevant trades such as carpentry and masonry. A woman, her son, and three grandsons express gratitude for a secure home with enough room for all. A congregation warmly welcomes a diverse group of young people from the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Germany, Hong Kong, Lithuania, Madagascar, South Africa, Tanzania, the United States of America and Zambia, offering hospitality through delicious meals, inspiration through joyous worship of our Lord and a tour of incredible diaconal work throughout the area through microcredit loans, a dairy cattle project, a homebuilding program, and a vocational training center.

These were some of the experiences enjoyed by young Council members and stewards on an exposure trip during their gathering from 19-23 June 2008 at Canossa Spirituality Center, Arusha, Tanzania. The rest of our time was spent in prayer, Bible study, and discussion around climate change, the theme of the 2008 Council meeting. Together, we contemplated God, creation, and our relationship with both. We asked ourselves what climate change means for us as agents of God's work. God entrusted the care of creation to us, but the realities of droughts, floods and the other effects of climate change indicate that we have broken that trust.

The biblical witness is clear that God our creator loves the world so much that God gave his only begotten son to save it (John 3:16). The effects of climate change are overwhelming and we need God's help. God's Word convicts us for our inaction and the destruction we have caused in creation, and it also empowers us for action.

Each and every one of us is called to care for God's good creation. We affirm the work of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and a number of member churches to address the climate change crisis. However, we urge the LWF and member churches to intensify their efforts to address it through education and action. We hope that Lutheran Christians will take every opportunity to teach about the impacts of climate change and possibilities for managing it through any available forum: Sunday school, confirmation classes, youth seminars, and Christian education for adults.

We recognize that governments play a crucial role in mediating this crisis. Governments around the world must take action to reduce greenhouse gases and mitigate the effects of climate change. They need to implement strict and contextually-appropriate legislation for environmental conservation and preservation. We are particularly concerned that one of the biggest contributors to the climate change crisis—the United States of America—has not agreed to reduce their emissions as outlined in the Kyoto Protocol. They are irresponsibly contributing to consequences felt most deeply in vulnerable communities around the globe.

**We therefore recommend** that the LWF Council affirm the following efforts and encourage member churches to:

- advocate that their government adopt legislation to reduce greenhouse gases and increase the use of carbon-neutral energy sources
- actively pursue carbon-neutral travel
- conduct energy audits for church-owned property
- install solar systems on church-owned buildings or utilize alternative energy sources
- reduce consumption, reuse and recycle resources for church activities
- plant trees locally for a visible action toward addressing climate change

We offer our deep thanksgiving for the hospitality of our hosts at the Canossa Spirituality Center and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, especially our host congregation in the Olokii parish and the diocese of the Arusha region. We are grateful to the Lutheran World Federation and all who made it possible for us to gather, to share experiences, and to learn from one another about this important global issue that impacts us all.

*List of participants:*

Mr John Ambele – Tanzania

Ms Namsifu Aminiel – Tanzania

Rev. Anza Amen Lema – Tanzania

Ms Nembris Geoffrey – Tanzania

Ms Francine Grace Yaimann – Central African Republic

Mr Parnet Evariste Mamadou – Central African Republic

Ms Hanitriniaina Nathalie Rahelimalala – Madagascar

Mr Hasiniaina Robelson Fabian Andriatiana – Madagascar

Rev. Roger Schmidt – Germany (LWF Staff – Mission and Development)

Mr Cheong Mun Chan – Hong Kong (LWF Staff- Mission and Development)

Rev. Rolita Machila – Zambia (LWF Staff – Theology and Studies)

Mr Thomas Jensch – Germany (Council Member)

Ms Sindisiwe Ndelu – South Africa (Council Member)

Mr Michel Ngoy Mulunda – Democratic Republic of Congo (Council Member)

Ms Milita Poskiene – Lithuania (Council Member)

Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman – USA (Council Member)

Rev. Simone Sinn – Germany (LWF Staff – Theology and Studies)