



THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

A COMMUNION OF CHURCHES – EINE KIRCHENGEMEINSCHAFT – UNA COMUNIÓN DE IGLESIAS – UNE COMMUNION D'ÉGLISES

LUTHERISCHER WELTBUND – FEDERACIÓN LUTERANA MUNDIAL – FÉDÉRATION LUTHÉRIENNE MONDIALE

Office of the General Secretary

Statement by Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko LWF General Secretary

2009 Nobel Peace Prize

The Lutheran World Federation welcomes the award of the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize to President Barack Hussein Obama. His inauguration as 44th President of the United States of America was, as the LWF noted at the time, a transformative event for society in the USA. Elected to an office that inherently carries a global dimension, President Obama also demonstrates a very deep understanding of the responsibility of global leadership in a world experiencing an unprecedented constellation of crises – humanitarian, environmental, economic and political.

President Obama has helped generate a tidal wave of hope around the world. He has acknowledged that the fundamental aspirations of nations and peoples are shared aspirations, and has affirmed the importance of international cooperation in achieving them. He has begun to restore broken relationships, including across faith boundaries. These are very significant contributions to progress towards peace and security, and important foundations for facing the global crises we must face.

We also greatly appreciate the resolve President Obama has shown in addressing some of the fundamental obstacles to the search for peace in the Holy Land. His leadership in this matter deserves the active support of all people of good will, for the sake of both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, and for the sake of peace with justice in the land of Christ's birth.

Though President Obama's contributions to peace already warrant the award of the Nobel Prize, there is so much more ahead for him – and for all of us – to do in the search for peace in this world. I pray that he will be strengthened and guided to face the many challenges ahead, and that those whom he encounters on this path will receive him as the man of peace he has now been recognized to be. And I pray that this award to a political leader of the new generation will serve to inspire a whole new generation of 'bridge-builders' for understanding and reconciliation between people and nations.

We reflect especially on the fact that this award comes on the 20th anniversary of the peaceful revolution in the former German Democratic Republic, which culminated on 9 October 1989 when 70,000 people took to the streets after prayers in the churches of Leipzig. These events demonstrated the power of ordinary people coming together to achieve freedom through non-violent means, bearing candles against guns and the threat of violence, and the importance of the church's role in that context. This anniversary gives us inspiration for the challenges that lie ahead for the churches and for all of us on the path towards peace – the path on which Christ leads us.

9 October 2009

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LWF Eleventh Assembly
Stuttgart, Germany
20–27 July 2010

