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Office of the  
General Secretary

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## Rev. Dr. Martin Junge General Secretary, The Lutheran World Federation

Rev. Dr Martin Junge is the first Latin American general secretary of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF). He was elected by the LWF Council in 2009 and assumed office on 1 November 2010.

Junge was born in Chile in 1961 and completed his primary and secondary education in Concepción. He studied theology at Georg-August University in Göttingen, Germany, from 1980 to 1986. He returned to Chile in 1987 to complete his internship and was ordained in 1989. From 1989 to 2000 he served as pastor of two congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) in Santiago with very different social and cultural backgrounds.

In 1996, Rev. Junge was elected president of the IELCH. One of his most significant achievements as church president was to stabilize the IELCH after a severe leadership crisis, especially by launching, in 1999, a ten-year strategic plan called “Ten Years to Grow.” He also participated in ecumenical dialogues at the national level that led to the signature of the “Mutual Recognition of Baptism” in 1999 by the Roman Catholic Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Anglican Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Reformed churches, the Methodist Church and several Pentecostal churches.

Under his leadership, the IELCH played a decisive role in the 1999 passing of the act granting equal legal status to religious organizations in Chile.

In 2000, Rev. Junge was appointed LWF Area Secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean at the Department for Mission and Development. In his nine years as area secretary, he greatly strengthened regional processes and relationships between LWF member churches in Latin America and developed a planning tool for sketching future processes in the region. He also took up the crucial issues of neoliberal globalization and illegitimate external debt. He was instrumental in the publication of a seminal work in 2008 titled *Not Just Numbers – Examining the Legitimacy of Foreign Debts* – (LWF *Documentation 53*), which was presented at the International Symposium on Illegitimate Debt held in Oslo, Norway, in October 2008.



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LUTHERISCHER WELTBUND  
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His constructive role as an adviser in processes of mediation and institutional strengthening has received the recognition of both churches and agencies not only in Latin America but also in other LWF regions.

Under his leadership the Lutheran World Federation:

- Adopted and is implementing its first ever LWF Strategy outlining the identity of the Lutheran World Federation and the programmatic areas of engagement. This has consolidated a shared vision of the 145 member churches of the LWF, deepened their relationships and fostered their joint witness in the world.
- Expanded its operations by almost doubling its budget and outreach to serve poor and marginalized populations worldwide and uphold their rights. LWF is currently serving 2.3 million refugees globally, responding to all the 2014 level-3 emergencies in South Sudan, Syria, the Central African Republic (CAR) and Iraq.
- Adopted a “Gender Justice Policy”, with a mandate to contextualize and implement it locally. The LWF is the first Christian World Communion with such a policy, which grounds the concept of gender justice in Bible and theology.
- Supported the UNHCR’s dialogue process on “Faith and Protection” which led to the interfaith statement “Welcoming the Stranger”. As a direct follow up, the LWF signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2014 with Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW), which is being implemented in joint projects in operations in Nepal and Jordan.
- Involvement on issues related to Climate Justice. Giving the leadership to the LWF Youth to shape this commitment, the LWF decided in 2015 not to invest in fossil fuels.
- Prepared programs and activities to commemorate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lutheran Reformation (1517 – 2017). The pledge to approach the anniversary in a spirit of ecumenical accountability has led to:
  - Adoption of the Catholic – Lutheran Report “From Conflict to Communion”.
  - Joint Catholic – Lutheran Commemoration of the Reformation in Lund / Malmö (Sweden), involving Pope Francis and LWF leaders as co-hosts of the commemoration.
  - Initiation of the International Lutheran – Pentecostal theological dialogue.
  - A process within the Anglican Communion and the World Communion of Reformed Churches to adhere to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, signed in 1999 between the Catholic Church and the LWF.

Rev. Junge has written many articles included in books and magazines covering items of mission, advocacy and ecumenism. He is a recognized preacher and public speaker.

In June 2015 Rev. Junge received an Honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree from Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. In May 2017 he received an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree from the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, USA.

Martin Junge and his wife Marietta Ruhland have two children.

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