

Terms of Reference

LWF Action for Justice (AFJ) Forum

I. Background

Action for Justice (AFJ) is the expression of the Lutheran World Federation's advocacy, where the witness, voice, and decades of experience and work of our member churches, country programmes and communities at local and national level, inform and influence policies, legislation and decisions. Our advocacy begins with the communities we serve, connects to national and regional levels, links to global policy processes, and then effectively channels back to the national and local contexts in order to transform those realities.

As a communion of churches, our Christian faith informs our work for justice, peace and reconciliation. Our Christian values shape our understanding of people as bearers of the image of God and the whole of creation as a gift of which we must take care. This is the theological underpinning for our deep engagement in the humanitarian and development sectors. This is also the key value added to LWF advocacy work as we aim to be a reliable and effective voice to uphold human dignity. Action for Justice lifts up the human rights of all people, in particular the vulnerable and oppressed, to ensure that their concerns are heard and addressed.

We integrate analysis and actions in the light of legal frameworks such as international human rights and humanitarian law, and the interlinkages between them. To coordinate and support the engagement of LWF member churches in the work of Action for Justice on *climate justice* and on *interfaith and peace*, two respective AFJ Forums will be established. AFJ unit will support as appropriate the existing networks: Gender justice and women's empowerment, the young church leaders' network, and the Global Young Reformers Network.

II. Purpose of AFJ Forums

The main purpose of AFJ Forum is to convene LWF constituencies, specifically Member Churches and where appropriate country programmes and relevant stakeholders in order to facilitate joint discussions, strategizing and engagement on policy, advocacy and programmatic work of AFJ at national, regional and global levels. AFJ Forums will be organized at global and regional levels.

Objectives for the Regional AFJ Forum

1. Facilitate sharing and mutual learning among relevant stakeholders within and outside of the LWF
2. Provide a platform for mutual exchange¹ dialogue, learning, and common understanding among LWF Member Churches and Country Programs.
3. Provide a platform for joint LWF advocacy campaigns and projects.
4. Provide a platform to convene LWF Member Churches, Country Programs, relevant regional/national institutions, inter-governmental and governmental actors, academic institutions, ecumenical and faith-based organizations, civil society actors in order to analyse contexts and mapping needs to strategically plan for AFJ themes beginning with climate justice, gender justice, human rights, and peace and interfaith actions.
5. Promote interactive and long-term partnership for advocacy among LWF Member Churches, Country Programs and, relevant stakeholders.

¹ Sharing lesson learnt, promoting best practices on related AfJ themes and advocacy

6. Strengthen LWF Advocacy work with Member churches.

III. Composition of the AFJ Forum

There will be a call for participation based on the following criteria and objectives:

- Member Churches will propose members for the AFJ Forum.
- Members are defined as representatives of LWF Member Churches as a collective rather than representing their own church.
- Members must demonstrate a motivation to work on promoting the work in the respective thematic areas (initially, climate justice, and peace and interfaith) and receive the support of their Church to commit themselves to the activities that the network promotes.
- Members must have the endorsement of their own church.
- LWF Country Programs will be invited to participate.

For the establishment of a **Regional AFJ Forum**, the following process and framework will guide:

- The AFJ unit will call Member Churches to propose members in the respective thematic areas mentioned above. The Member Church should commit for at least a two-year period.
- The regional AFJ forums will be made up of no less than 5 member churches.
- They must ensure youth participation of at least 20%.
- There must be a gender balance of at least 40%.
- All participants must be endorsed by a Member Church.

For the establishment of a **Global AFJ Forum**, the following process and framework will guide:

- The global AFJ network will be comprised of representatives of the Regional AFJ Forums.
- Where respective regional forums have been established, the AFJ Global Forum will include the facilitators of the Regional AFJ Forums and will maintain a regional balance.
- They must ensure youth participation of at least 20%.
- There must be a gender balance of at least 40%.
- All participants must be endorsed by a Member Church.

(a) Role of the Facilitator and co-facilitator

Global and regional facilitators and co-facilitators will be appointed by the members of the global and regional forums respectively for a period of two years.

The facilitators and co-facilitators are voluntary positions and should ideally be set up with gender and regional balance.

The roles of the facilitators and a co-facilitators will include:

1. Encourage active participation of all members of the regional/global forum.
2. Facilitate discussion within the group.
3. Assist in planning and facilitating the virtual meetings of the forum.
4. Participate actively developing the agenda, follow up the commitments and responsibilities of the members to meet the forum plan.

(b) Working Methodology

The AFJ Forums will meet in the following ways:

- (a) Regular on-line session for regional and global AFJ Forums. Participants will meet for the first time on-line and will decide how often they will meet (E.g., bimonthly)

- (b) One joint physical meeting every two years for regional and global forums, which will convene the facilitators/ co-facilitators of each regional forums.

Participants of the AFJ forums may choose to form thematic groups to work on particular aspects of the work as appropriate.

The AFJ Forums will develop a 2 years plan to respond to their specific regional work, linked to the LWF strategy, decisions made by the LWF assembly and council and the relevant regional and global contexts.

IV. Connection to the Regional Conference/Councils

The AFJ Forum will maintain a link with the LWF regional expressions of communion through its facilitator, and/or Regional Secretaries thus promoting the relevant agenda.

V. Linking between AFJ Forums and existing networks

The AFJ team will facilitate as appropriate continuous connection between AFJ Forums and other networks within LWF to promote sharing and collaborative work.

VI. Role of the LWF Communion Office

The AFJ Team shall support the AFJ Forums in the following ways:

- (a) Assist in the setting up of the AFJ Forums.
- (b) Facilitate virtual meetings and/or conferences of the AFJ Forums.
- (c) Ensure that the AFJ forums are updated on the overall work of LWF, functions and general activities of the AFJ Unit.
- (d) Promote effective coordination and connectivity among participants and across forums.
- (e) Explore opportunities to mobilize financial resources for joint action.
- (f) Promote the work of the regional forums and build ownership throughout LWF Communion Office.
- (g) Connect the forums in their endeavours regarding the respective themes through the AFJ Team to the General Secretary.