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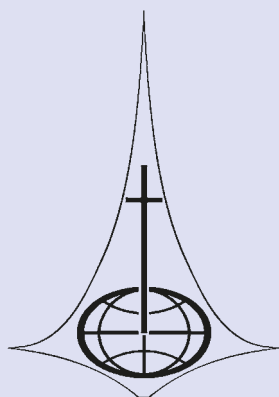
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Children play at an after-school activity program run by the IELCO Vida Nueva congregation. © LWF/P. Cuyatti

“Together for a Just, Peaceful and Reconciled World” Theme for June Meeting

GENEVA (LWI) – “Together for a just, peaceful and reconciled world” is the theme of the 2012 meeting of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council to be hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO), 15-20 June in the capital city Bogotá.

The Colombian church is very pleased to have the opportunity to welcome the Council, said IELCO Bishop Eduardo Martínez in a letter to the LWF governing body.

“We consider that our main strength is to be part of a confessional family which is so extensive, diverse and wonderful, as is the Lutheran Communion in the world. Meetings such as the Council’s are tangible signs of communion among Lutheran men and women from around the world,” he stated.

The Council is the LWF’s governing body between Assemblies. It consists of the President and 48 persons elected by the Assembly, as well as the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, who can be elected from among

the Council membership or from outside. In addition, advisers to Council Committees provide expertise for specific areas of work. The Council includes ordained and lay members, women, men and youth.

The Bogotá meeting will mark the first time an LWF governing body has met in Latin America since 1990, when the Eighth Assembly was held in Curitiba, Brazil.

Pre-Council exposure visits on 12-14 June will allow Council members to experience the life and witness of the IELCO, which is active in ministries such as work among people with disabilities and internally displaced persons; ecumenical accompaniment in conflict regions; peace and justice; education; inclusion of women and youth; and human rights of persons affected by HIV and AIDS.

The LWF Meeting of Officers and the Committee for Holistic Mission and

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South Sudan: LWF Supports Communities to Secure Sustainable Livelihoods

There is a general rule that a person can live for three minutes without air, three days without water and three weeks without food. In disasters where people have lost everything, this rule of “three” governs emergency relief priorities.

Non-food items (NFIs) such as blankets, sleeping mats, jerry cans, soap and cooking utensils won't sustain life, but they will help families get back on their feet after losing everything. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), a founding member of the ecumenical emergency network ACT Alliance, has been distributing NFI kits after the recent wave of violence in Jonglei State, South Sudan.

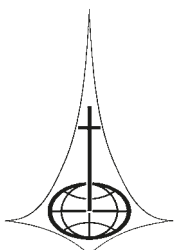
There is a lot that can go wrong when such supplies are being transported from point A to point B. Potholed roads, cumbersome bureaucracy and inclement weather can all slow down or stop aid consignments.

Through its Department for World Service (DWS), the LWF has worked alongside the people of South Sudan since the 1970s, initially taking part in emergency airlifts of food and other supplies, and refugee assistance programs in neighboring countries.

In later years, the LWF supported the so-called “lost boys and girls” in LWF-managed refugee camps and collaborated on the resettlement of refugees inside Sudan and in other countries. Current collaboration through the DWS South Sudan program includes support to communities for sustainable livelihood activities.

The feature articles starting on page 9 show the impact of conflict among communities in South Sudan, and give a perspective on LWF's response, including peace building and education in the world's youngest nation.

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| <p>The Lutheran World Federation – A Communion of Churches</p> <p>150, route de Ferney P.O. Box 2100 CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland</p> <p>Telephone +41/22-791 61 11 Fax +41/22-791 66 30 E-mail: info@lutheranworld.org</p> <p>www.lutheranworld.org</p> <p>Head of Communications Heidi Martinussen hpm@lutheranworld.org</p> | <p>English Editor Pauline Mumia pmu@lutheranworld.org</p> <p>Consulting Editor John P. Asling</p> <p>German Editor N. N.</p> <p>Layout Stéphane Gallay sga@lutheranworld.org</p> <p>Photos Helen Putsman Penet hpu@lutheranworld.org</p> | <p>Circulation/subscription Colette Muanda cmu@lutheranworld.org</p> <p>Lutheran World Information (LWI) is the information service of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).</p> <p>Unless specifically noted, material presented does not represent positions or opinions of the LWF or of its various units.</p> <p>Where the dateline of an article contains the notation (LWI), the material may be freely reproduced with acknowledgment.</p> |
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Colombian Church to Host 2012 LWF Council

Continued from p. 1

Church Relations will meet prior to the Council sessions, as will Pre-Council Women and Youth gatherings.

The Council agenda includes the President's address, and reports from the General Secretary and the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. On 17 June, participants will worship in local churches.

Members of the Committee for World Service will visit projects of the LWF Department for World Service

(DWS) prior to and following the Council meeting. DWS has been active in Colombia since 2001 with humanitarian, human rights and sustainable development programs that address root causes of poverty, and promote just, peaceful responses to armed conflict.

LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge, a Chilean theologian, said that the Colombian context, still characterized by situations of conflict, violence and injustice, offers an excellent opportunity to explore the dimensions of what it means to be a

communion that commits to live and work together for a just, peaceful and reconciled world.

"The LWF understands its Council meeting in Colombia as a concrete contribution to the Programme of Ecumenical Accompaniment in Colombia launched by the Latin American Council of Churches [CLAI] and the World Council of Churches in October 2011," he noted.

The IELCO joined the LWF in 1966 and has 1,998 members.

15 February 2012

LWF and German Church Stress Joint Planning of 500th Reformation Anniversary

Bishop Ulrich Praises LWF's Dadaab Refugee Role during Geneva Visit

HANOVER/GENEVA (LWI) – Joint preparations for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation by The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) were highlighted during recent meetings in Geneva.

VELKD Presiding Bishop Gerhard Ulrich of Kiel, visited the LWF Communion Office on 16 January.

By making this visit only two months following his election as presiding bishop, Ulrich said he was underscoring the close relationship between VELKD and the LWF. He is also chairperson of the German National Committee of the LWF.

Ulrich presented Junge with an English-language version of the VELKD *Visitation* study to underscore collaboration between both organizations.

Junge stressed the significance of the joint preparations for the 2017 Reformation anniversary celebration, to be hosted in Germany by the internationally-oriented Luther Center in Wittenberg.

The center's seminars, taught by academics from around the world, together with the Luther Garden project give expression to the global nature of the Lutheran Communion, he said. Wittenberg was "a place of



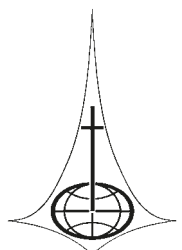
LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge (left) receives a copy of the VELKD publication "Visitation" from GNC Chairperson and VELKD Presiding Bishop Gerhard Ulrich. © LWF/T. Miller

paramount importance for Lutheran Christians worldwide," the general secretary noted.

Junge recalled that during his meeting last October with the Minister President of Saxony-Anhalt Dr Reiner Haseloff, he was also made aware of the federal state's interest in LWF's work. It was evident that in Wittenberg the LWF was involved in the work of the regions and, conversely, that the regions constituted a vital component of the LWF.

The general secretary informed the VELKD leader about preparations for an LWF consultation in Wittenberg in October 2012 with the participation of 40 representatives of Lutheran educational institutions from around the world. They will look at how to improve understanding and networking among theological training institutions, and examine current challenges in theological education.

Junge also indicated that the LWF and the Vatican's Pontifical Council



for Promoting Christian Unity will be publishing a joint document examining the Reformation, the writing of which has become a concrete expression of a “healing of memories.”

According to Junge, this was an expression of the fact that “Lutheran theology from the outset has been ecumenically focused.”

Bishop Ulrich stressed that it was important to not consider 2017 as an endpoint. “Everything that is being developed theologically at present must have an impact beyond the anniversary year,” he said. It is crucial for

Lutheran churches to provide theologically responsible interventions in society beyond the anniversary.

The two Lutheran leaders also discussed the LWF’s diaconal involvement in the Dadaab refugee camp, Kenya. “I am grateful for and greatly respect the work of the LWF Department for World Service in this region,” said Ulrich.

“In Dadaab, not only a high degree of professional organization has been demonstrated, but also the LWF’s clear choice in favor of the poor,” added the VELKD leader. In this way, the LWF

is making a visible contribution to hope for the future in crisis-stricken areas.

“Wherever relief aid is being provided such as in Dadaab, the Lutheran church is deeply involved,” Ulrich emphasized.

The refugee camp in northeastern Kenya is being managed by the LWF for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The camp currently provides shelter for over 460,000 persons.

(Written for LWI and VELKD by Oberkirchenrat Dr Eberhard Blanke, VELKD and GNC/LWF Press officer)

20 January 2012

Salvadoran Church Urges New Peace Agreement to Deal with Today’s Injustices

Twenty Years on: Insecurity, Violence and Poverty Persist

GENEVA (LWI) – The Salvadoran Lutheran Church welcomed government celebrations marking the 20th anniversary of the peace agreement that ended the country’s civil war but called for a new agreement that will return the country to peace and justice.

In an open letter to the President of El Salvador Mauricio Funes on 16 January, Lutheran Bishop Medardo E. Gómez Soto said the anniversary of the signing of the peace agreement that ended the 12-year civil in 1992 offers an opportunity for the country to focus on the insecurity, violence, poverty and injustice that prevail today.

“Twenty years after the signing of the peace agreements, it is important to review and assess what has been achieved with a view to finding an answer to the national reality that we are now experiencing... We need a national re-conceptualization of social peace,” said Gómez in the letter.

“The past 20 years have not been in vain. There have been changes with signs of progress on the road from madness to hope. Conditions at present are favorable for renewing the commitment,” stated the Lutheran bishop.

Gómez issued the letter the same day that President Funes travelled to El Mozote in the municipal district of Meanguera, to ask forgiveness for the massacre by the army there

in December 1981, when 1,000 defenseless peasants were killed.

Dozens of children were trapped in a convent there when soldiers attacked the venue with flamethrowers and grenades. Various mass graves were later found in El Mozote but those responsible for the crimes were never brought to trial.



Salvadoran Bishop Medardo E. Gómez Soto
© LWF/DWS Central America/M. Boulogne

prophets and Jesus’ ministry to bring good news to the poor. The local churches forged a common ministry to help the victims of the civil war.

“It was a spontaneous response to the crying out of our people, whose blood was being shed, who were hungry, thirsty, persecuted, imprisoned, exiled, dying, victims of injustices amplified by war,” said the Lutheran bishop.

“Confronted with the suffering of our people, the churches learned to be ecumenical; we were able to bear witness, to travel the road together in the face of pain and hope. Responding together to the suffering of our people was more important than differences between our respective ecclesial bodies,” he noted.

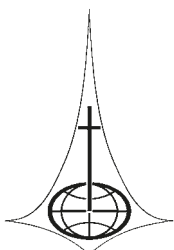
The churches organized the Permanent Committee of the National Debate for Peace, which contributed significantly to the dialogue process that ended the civil war and the signing of the peace agreements. The Lutheran church actively participated in the process, making numerous interventions.

The churches’ efforts were supported by The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the World Council of Churches and other international bodies as well as churches in Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway and Sweden.

Rev. Dr Patricia Cuyatti, LWF area secretary for Latin America

Churches Bear Witness

In his open letter marking the anniversary of the signing of the peace agreement, which was spearheaded by the country’s churches, Gómez noted the churches’ peace work was a faithful response to the call of Old Testament



and the Caribbean, said the LWF endorses the Salvadoran Lutheran church's call for a renewed agreement at this historical moment, urging the different actors in the country to re-think the notion of peace and justice.

The Salvadoran church "is contributing to the building of a social

peace that is grounded in God's grace and love, which needs to be at the foundation of any reconciling and healing process," noted Cuyatti.

"Given the history of conquest, war, militarism and the many losses, accountability and just peace become crucial to the member churches, who

together with the LWF Communion Office are working to promote actions that express peace," she added.

The 20,000-member Salvadoran Lutheran Church joined the LWF in 1986.

24 January 2012

LWF Welcomes UN Call for Protection of Human Rights Workers in Honduras

Latin American Churches Working on Human Rights Network

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras/GENEVA (LWI)

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) welcomed a preliminary United Nations report on human rights violations in Honduras that urges protection of human rights workers, who are facing death threats, extrajudicial executions, disappearances and torture.

"We welcome the UN envoy's preliminary statement," said Eva Ekelund, regional representative of the LWF Department for World Service (DWS) in Central America. "The situation is one of ongoing violations of human rights."

UN Special Rapporteur Margaret Sekaggya on 14 February in Tegucigalpa said Honduras faces serious challenges in combating violence and insecurity. "The pervasive impunity and absence of effective investigations of human rights violations undermine the administration of justice and damage the public's trust in authorities."

Those under threat include journalists, National Human Rights Commission staff, lawyers, prosecutors and judges, as well as human rights defenders and those working on environmental and land rights issues, said the UN independent expert charged with monitoring the situation of human rights defenders at the end of an eight-day mission to the country. Her final report will be issued in 2013.

In August 2011, the LWF called for the establishment of an Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Honduras in light of violence over land issues. LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge said scrutiny brought by the UN office would help deter the violence.

Ralston Deffenbaugh, LWF assistant general secretary for International Affairs and Human Rights, stressed the continuing need for a UN presence in Honduras. "Killings and other human rights abuses are carried out with impunity. There are no satisfactory investigations. There are no independent international observers," he said.

Churches and human rights organizations reported that over the past two years the killing of peasants in Bajo Aguán had become a horrifying part of daily life.

When two masked men shot Matias Valley on 20 January, he became the 45th organized peasant to be slain in the agrarian conflict in Aguán. "What happens in Honduras is attributed to organized crime and drug trafficking, but the offenders are the armed forces and police," said Diego Almedo (a pseudonym), who has risked his life to denounce human rights violations in the region.

Honduras is one of the countries with the highest rates of violence in

the world, with 82 deaths per 100,000 people, according to the National Autonomous University in Honduras.

The situation in Aguán stems from agrarian reform in 1972 when the government gave land to a big landowner. The peasants have since organized to demand their land back. In response, the government has deployed 600 police and army officers to the region.

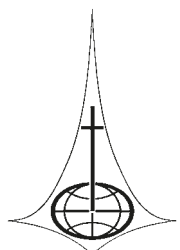
A recent DWS update on the human rights situation in the country warned that the situation in general, and especially in Bajo Aguán, was "alarming," adding, "There is cause of great concern with massive loss of life."

Ekelund said DWS continues working with existing networks to provide protection and refuge for human rights defenders.

Rev. Dr Patricia Cuyatti, LWF area secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean with the Department for Mission and Development, said the LWF member churches in the



Members of the National Executive Council of the Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras, coordinators of church work, and community leaders praying for peace at an early February meeting in Tegucigalpa. © Bessy Vargas



region are establishing a network to monitor human rights violations.

“Having a UN office in Honduras will reinforce the work of the state institutions and civil society organi-

zations, which includes the churches,” she stated.

Deffenbaugh noted that the voice of the church is particularly vital in the current situation. “Along with

other civil society actors, the church calls for respect for human rights and dignity, and for an end to impunity,” he said.

17 February 2012

LWF Congratulates Palestinian Lutheran Pastor Raheb for German Media Prize

Junge Lauds Holy Land Church Support to Peace-building Institutions

GENEVA (LWI) – The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) extended congratulations to Palestinian Lutheran pastor Rev. Dr Mitri Raheb on winning the 2011 “Deutscher Medienpreis” (German Media Prize). The award, which Raheb received on 24 February recognizes his individual and the church’s peace efforts, said LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge.

To mark the 20th anniversary of the prize this year, it recognized individuals who, in their work for peace, have quietly carried on without much media attention. The Deutscher Medienpreis jury said Raheb was being honored for building the Bethlehem congregation’s education, health care and dialogue programs.

Raheb is president of the Diyar Consortium and the ELCJHL Synod.

tolerance and mutual respect among Jews, Christians and Muslims, and between Palestinians and Israelis,” wrote the LWF general secretary.

“This prize is especially significant because it recognizes your individual contributions and it honors the values and witness of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land in which you serve,” he stated.

The LWF general secretary praised Raheb’s work among Palestinian youth and his efforts in developing high quality educational and vocational training from a Christian perspective, which focuses on compassion, love and forgiveness.

“Your work has helped shape the ELCJHL’s vision of the future for Palestinians and Israelis, where self-determination, dignity, freedom, prosperity, hope and reconciliation outshine the decades of conflict and discrimination,” noted the LWF leader.

Junge emphasized the ELCJHL’s contribution to interpreting the vision of the LWF which is embodied in its member churches “working together for a just, peaceful and reconciled world.”

The Palestinian pastor was also recognized in 2008 when he received the Aachen Peace Prize. He received the Deutscher Medienpreis alongside Dr Denis Mukwege of the Democratic Republic of Congo; Stanislav Petrow of Russia; and Dr Sakena Yacoobi of Afghanistan.

The 3,000-member ELCJHL joined the LWF in 1974. It has six congregations in Jerusalem, Ramallah and the Bethlehem area, and in Amman (Jordan), and is led by Bishop Dr Mounib A. Younan, also LWF President.

24 February 2012



ELCJHL pastor Rev. Dr Mitri Raheb, delivers his acceptance speech upon receiving the 2011 German Media Prize in Baden-Baden, Germany. © media control

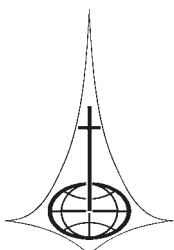
Raheb is pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem, a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). He was among four recipients of the prestigious prize awarded in Baden-Baden, Germany.

“The Deutscher Medienpreis is a recognition of not only your hard work and passion for justice, it is an affirmation of your approach, and that of the ELCJHL, to the complicated challenges of building institutions that change lives and of building relationships that strengthen prospects for a lasting peace,” wrote Junge in a congratulatory letter to Raheb.

The Bethlehem congregation and the Consortium, along with other congregational and educational ministries, reach out to thousands of individuals and families each year in Jerusalem, other parts of the West Bank and Amman, Jordan.

Junge said Raheb’s tireless service as a Lutheran leader and as a peace worker was an inspiration to those seeking a just solution to the conflict in the Middle East.

“Your efforts exemplify the ELCJHL’s nonviolent opposition to the Occupation, its uncompromising commitment to finding peaceful solutions, and its rigorous promotion of



Honduran Church Demands Inquiry into Horrific Prison Fire

LWF Supports Lutheran Advocacy for Justice

GENEVA (LWI) – The Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras (ICLH) expressed shock and sorrow over the fire tragedy at the Comayagua central jail and demanded an inquiry into the cause of the blaze that killed 350 prisoners on 14 February.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member church called on public authorities to conduct a thorough investigation into the catastrophe, while praying for wisdom on the part of the country’s leaders as they decide how to safeguard the rights of prisoners.

“Once again, the prisons of Honduras have become the scene of a tragedy; we are horrified by this hellish prison catastrophe; we are overcome by a feeling of panic and indignation to learn of the unsafe conditions in which our country’s prison populations lives,” said Rev. José Martín Girón, president of the ICLH, in a communiqué following the tragedy.

The church called for international support as it continues to advocate for the rights of the Honduran people, who have had to suffer through many tragedies in addition to the problems of everyday life.

“As a church, we lift our voices in defense of the justice that is so cruelly lacking in our beloved, suffering Honduras,” Girón said.

ICLH General Secretary Rubi Flores lamented the fact that the Central American country continues to struggle from one tragedy to the next, including human rights violations and daily murders.



A woman grieves as she waits outside a morgue in Tegucigalpa to receive the body of her relative killed in the Comayagua prison fire. © Reuters/Jorge Lopez, courtesy Trust.org - AlertNet

A fire at the Comayagüela market four days after the Comayagua prison blaze destroyed the livelihoods of many people, including Lutherans, she added in a letter to partner churches and organizations.

The church was grateful for the many expressions of international solidarity, Flores remarked.

“We beg you to keep Honduras and the ICLH constantly in your prayers so that we find adequate means of accompanying our people, for, as the tragedies occur, we carry on our program of work,” she said.

Support is coming from the communion of Lutheran churches in Central America in particular. In a statement last week, the synod of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church added its voice to the call for an exhaustive

investigation into the fire tragedy and emphasized the need for integral justice.

The LWF member church said it regretted “that such a fatality has to occur to make us react to problems such as this that are enormous time bombs.”

Rev. Dr Patricia Cuyatti, area secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean with the Department for Mission and Development, emphasized that the LWF as a whole is committed to supporting the ICLH as it provides pastoral care and advocates for justice for the people of Honduras.

“Lutherans worldwide continue to pray that these situations in Honduras will change and to accompany the Honduran church as it stands with the people in such tragedies,” she stated.

28 February 2012

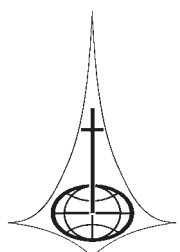
“From Potential Impoverishment to Seeds of Sustainability”

LWF Participants at UN Session Lift Up the Voices of Rural Women Worldwide

NEW YORK, USA/GENEVA (LWI) – Rural women around the world are planting seeds of hope in their

communities. That was the message from The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) women as they

gathered in New York prior to the 56th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status



of Women (UN CSW), held 27 February to 9 March.

Daniele Schmidt Peter of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB) said the goal of the Lutheran women was to connect with other women, learn from them and be strengthened by their actions.

“We need to rethink our projects of sustainable development to include women and youth. As people connected to the work of rural women, we as civil society here have great potential to take actions, discuss, organize and demonstrate to our governments,” Schmidt Peter said.

Rural women have knowledge about seeds and practicing agriculture without chemicals as it has been carried out in the past, she said. In addition, Schmidt Peter advocated education programs to help bring change to rural communities, including greater involvement of women.

Established in 1946, the UN CSW is a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council and meets annually. This year’s theme was “The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges.”

Some 300 non-governmental organizations and 4,000 participants gathered in New York to raise up the stories of women and girls worldwide. Lutheran women from Brazil, Cam-

eroon and the United States offered a program titled “From Potential Impoverishment to Seeds of Sustainability.”

Gift of the Communion

Speaking at the event, sponsored by the Lutheran Office for World Community (LOWC), a joint ministry of the LWF and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) at the UN, Jeannette Ada Maina of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (EELC) underscored the role of rural women in development.

“For me, the hope of all rural development is based on women, particularly on rural women,” Ada said. “They play an essential role in development. In addition, these rural women care for many lives. The products from their farms feed not only their families, but ours also.

“In this way, they care for our lives, and we owe it to them to make their voices heard. Some say these women are voiceless. No one is voiceless. We have to provide the place for them to express themselves,” she urged.

LWF Council member, Mikka McCracken of the ELCA, said the gathering of Lutheran women at the UN offered the organization a “living witness of our life in the LWF communion.”

McCracken added, “The gift of the communion to the UN CSW

is the gift of the life stories of rural women, who are active not only in their families and communities, but through and with the churches.”

UN Women

Michelle Bachelet, executive director of UN Women, affirmed women’s role in ending poverty and hunger, and she urged women to take up the call. “Women are at the heart of ending poverty and hunger. [...] We cannot do this alone. We depend on you.”

Following her plea, a group of ELCA women agreed to consider the intersections between hunger, poverty, gender justice and advocacy. “Let us take up that call in the life of the LWF Communion and all our member churches,” added McCracken.

Christine Mangale, assistant to the director at LOWC, who is originally from the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church and part of Ecumenical Women, emphasized the importance of the presence of the LWF women at the UN meetings.

“We wait all year for these women to come and bring life and their stories to the United Nations,” Mangale said.

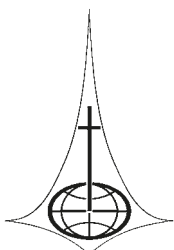
Commenting on the New York meeting, Rev. Dr Elaine Neuenfeldt, executive secretary for Women in Church and Society (WICAS) in the LWF Department for Mission and Development, noted that women’s empowerment involves a process of transforming gender power relations that create systems of privilege and oppression. She emphasized the need therefore, to develop awareness about women’s subordination then building capacity to challenge and transform these systems.

“If women are to be empowered, they must have information so that they are able to access power and transform the exclusive way land and economic rights are ordered. With the right tools, women can exercise their citizenship, no matter where they live. They are agents of their own change,” added Neuenfeldt.



Left to right: Jeannette Ada Maina (EELC), Jessica Arneson (ELCA), Daniele Schmidt Peter (IECLB) and Irma Rodríguez-León (ELCA) during a side event on rural women’s empowerment at the United Nations 56th Commission on the Status of Women in New York, USA. © ELCA/Kate Gaskill

2 March 2012



Treating the Symptoms and Causes

LWF Meets Immediate Needs while Addressing Causes of Poverty in South Sudan

JUBA, South Sudan/GENEVA (LWI) – In the heat of a hot day, staff of The Lutheran World Federation in South Sudan sit discussing what to do about a truck that is several hours late. It was supposed to arrive at the compound for another load of non-food item (NFI) kits before distribution the following day.

“If we keep waiting for it, the kits won’t get there tomorrow,” says Manyok Ajangdit, a program officer in Panyagor, Jonglei State, in the east.

Ajangdit was from the town where the distribution is happening, so he knows the area and the people well. Most of the staff based in Panyagor come from the surrounding area and are constantly gathering information about everything—from the state of the roads to the level of security.

Late in the afternoon, Ajangdit and his colleague John decide to go into town and look for another truck to transport the remaining consignment to the distribution point in Duk Padiet. If all of the kits are not there, the distribution may have to be delayed and people would have to wait another day for desperately needed supplies.

The Most Needy

When large numbers of desperate people gather during disasters, unfair aid distributions can cause riots or stampedes. Local authorities are essential in finding the people who need aid the most, but need to be well organized to make sure that it gets to these people.

The next morning, the staff is up before dawn for the three-hour drive to Duk Padiet. It is too dangerous to drive in the dark, so they leave just as the sun is rising. Breakfast is on the road—a cup of tea and fried bread. They reach Duk Padiet around 10 a.m. and find that the kits, which were kept in a guarded warehouse overnight, are all there. Once they are counted, the distribution can go ahead.



The LWF is helping those like this woman who lost her home and belongings in the recent attacks to get back on their feet. © LWF/Melany Markham

Everyone sits under the shade of a huge tree while officials call out names. Individuals then collect their kit from the warehouse and place a fingerprint next to their name by way of receipt. At around 2 p.m., most of the people have received their kits. As staff needs to get back to the compound by nightfall, they aim to be on the road again by 3 p.m.

It’s at least 40° C and, even though the staff are used to the heat, everyone drinks a lot of water on the drive back. They drive back with the windows down, but the hot wind brings little relief.

When they finally reach the compound at around 5 p.m. there is a feeling of satisfaction and relief among the staff. It’s been a ten-hour day already, but the work isn’t finished. They need to check in with the headquarters in Juba, compile reports, answer e-mails

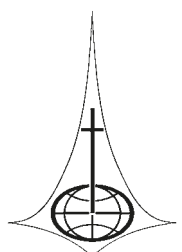
and administer ongoing development projects before the day officially ends.

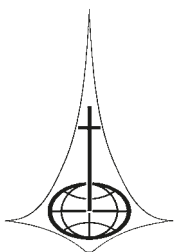
Symbol of Wealth

Ultimately, the cause of this emergency is the same that fuels violence and conflicts in many parts of the world, namely poverty and inequality. Cattle raids, during which homes were burnt, people killed and children abducted, have been occurring since December last year.

Mary Obara is from neighboring Kenya but has worked in South Sudan for three years. As the LWF program coordinator, she is familiar with Southern Sudanese cattle culture, which she says is hard to change.

She notes that cattle are a symbol of wealth in the country and attributes the current conflict to a lack of basic services. “Changing the cattle





culture goes hand-in-hand with overall development,” she emphasizes.

This is the main reason why the LWF has had education, food security and water programs in South Sudan for a number of years—to bring development to impoverished rural communities where cattle raiding is rife. To provide the people in Jonglei with alternatives to cattle herding, the LWF will begin large-scale agricultural projects this year.

Although cultural change happens slowly, it is possible. Pastoralism used to be prevalent throughout the country. Olaa Augstin is from Eastern Equatoria, bordering Uganda, and his grandfather used to herd cattle. He says that violence caused them to give it up. Both he and his father pursued an education and have worked for a number of years in Juba.

Violence is not the only reason for Southern Sudanese to switch from cattle herding to other forms of agricul-



Employees of LWF South Sudan in Bor load kits containing emergency supplies onto a truck bound for Duk Padiet, where many people sought safety after their homes were destroyed by cattle raiders. © LWF/Melany Markham

ture. Diseases such as foot and mouth kill cattle in large numbers. Obara adds that if the climate changes drastically, the farmers will lose a lot of their herds.

The conflict that has resulted in the most recent emergency has ancient

causes that will not be resolved by any amount of emergency aid. In the long-term, however, LWF programs help to provide those living in Jonglei and other states with a way out of poverty and a different way of life.

LWF Worker Coordinates Relief Operations in Jonglei State

Michael Mading reported back to work at the LWF office in Juba on 4 January after spending Christmas with his family.

A wave of cattle raids in Jonglei State had left hundreds of people dead and thousands more homeless. The LWF response to those affected by the violence was in full swing, and Mading left Juba the next day for Bor, Jonglei’s capital, to help coordinate emergency operations on behalf of the ACT Alliance, of which the LWF is a founding member.

Immediate deployment like this is typical during an emergency. As LWF South Sudan’s emergency coordinator, Mading needs to be ready to go almost anywhere in the country at a moment’s notice.

When he arrived in Bor, he went immediately to meet with representatives of the United Nations and other agencies responding to the attacks.

“When an emergency happens, the first thing you have to do is coordinate so that you understand who the other agencies are that are willing to respond,” said Mading.

After agreeing on how to coordinate the work, getting staff on the ground

is the next most important thing. In Jonglei, attacks were still occurring after emergency operations began, so security was—and still is—a major issue.

“It was volatile because some of the attackers were on the ground in Pibor,” said Mading. “We agreed to move into the county and on 10 January, I got myself to Pibor.”



Michael Mading, emergency coordinator for the LWF South Sudan program. © LWF/Melany Markham

Basic Conditions

Originally from Bor, Mading’s knowledge of the area helped him prepare

and cope with the conditions which were basic, at best. “I bought food in Bor before I went to the field. We all lived in the same compound, and we pooled our money and food and hired someone to cook for us,” he said.

“It’s hard,” he commented, noting that one day he was out working and didn’t have any lunch. When he came back from the field, there was no one at the compound to cook a meal. “So I didn’t have supper either.”

Accommodation was just as difficult as one of the largest non-governmental organizational compounds in Pibor had been looted by the attackers. For the first week, Mading had to share a tent with another aid worker. Afterwards he was able to live in his own tent, provided by the LWF, for the next month.

“There are only 32 houses in the whole of the town and most of the people ran to the bush. It was a ghost town,” said Mading. This meant that to get aid to the majority of the people, the agencies needed to work outside the town.

Mading and a group of aid workers went to Likongole, where conditions

were even more difficult than in Pibor. With no pit latrines, the workers had to dig their own holes and fill them in after they were finished. Likongole was also very insecure at the time.

Despite the conditions, the group Mading was with managed to make an assessment of the situation and convey this information to aid agencies based in Pibor and elsewhere in the country.

Helping, Not Harming

But talking to people who had experienced the violent attacks wasn't always easy.

"Some people did not want to share what had happened to them with other people, but a few were very open," said Mading. "There

were those who felt that by sharing, maybe they could recover what they had lost, but there were those who would rather forget the horror of the situation."

Mading can understand their reaction because he fled himself from violence in Jonglei in 1997. When he went to Pibor this time, he saw the river that he had crossed on the way to Ethiopia. He was nine at the time and with a group of children who took more than 15 days to walk to their final destination.

Returning to South Sudan 13 years later, Mading drew on his own experiences as a refugee to help people rather than getting caught up in the conflict.

"I went to that place with the strong belief that I have to save life.

People don't want to know which tribe you are from, they need to be served. I did not feel insecure," he said.

The LWF is one of over 20 organizations working in Pibor. The emergency phase is now completed and the focus has shifted to rebuilding. But there are many other places in South Sudan that will still need Mading's expertise since cattle raiding and tension with the North mean that violence can easily be ignited.

Fortunately, there are many people like him in South Sudan and similar places who have a combination of experience and education that makes them highly competent emergency workers. It is these people who are at the frontline of emergency response now and for years to come.

The Lasting Effect of Conflict on South Sudan's Education System

There is a hunger for education in South Sudan that is obvious wherever you go. Young people will travel hundreds of kilometers to attend school or university. Old people in the most impoverished areas will ask a visitor for food, but young people will ask for scholarships.

Violent conflict all but destroys education systems and leaves the resident population with the skills needed to survive, but without the knowledge needed to rebuild a country. In this way,

education is an important catalyst as a country transitions from war to peace.

But no one dies from not going to school, and other life-threatening needs—for food, water, shelter or healthcare—can seem far more urgent during an emergency. It is only in the last few decades that education has become an integral part of emergency response.

In 1996, as an expert appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General, international children's rights

advocate Graça Machel prepared a landmark study, "Impact of armed conflict on children" that described how conflict harms children not just physically, but socially and emotionally as well. The cognitive development of children suffers during war because skills such as literacy, numeracy and critical thinking are delayed.

Barriers to Schooling

Elbeah Kashemba is 26 and, against the odds, has finished secondary school and is trying to complete a degree in natural resources management.

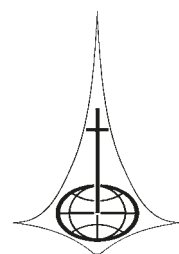
He started the course at a university close to his home in the Nuba Mountains which is in the disputed area in the north of South Sudan. He had fled to Juba after his home was bombed by the Sudanese military.

Along with approximately 40 other students, he is now living in a makeshift hut trying to make ends meet while he studies for his degree.

"There is the problem of fees, accommodation and an income. Those in the Nuba Mountains are missing out," he says. Altogether, there are 135 students like him who are trying to continue their education in Juba.



Mandi from the Nuba Mountains reads from a blackboard during an informal English class run by a group of university students in Juba. © LWF/Melany Markham



The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has helped Kashemba and his group with a one-time grant for basics—food, blankets, cooking utensils and the materials to build their huts—but they will need more help if they are to complete their university studies.

Groups like Kashemba and his friends are common. Some Southern Sudanese students travel as far as neighboring Uganda or Kenya, without their parents, to go to school. During the war, many ended up in the LWF-managed Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya, some 380 kilometers from Juba. Over a period of six months until February this year, as many as 150 refugees from South Sudan arrived every day in Kakuma.

Building Local Schools

But travelling far from home for an education is not a good solution for children and their families. Ideally schools should be located closer to towns and villages where people already live. In recent years, the LWF has built 13 schools in some of the more remote areas, which has increased the number of children attending school.

The buildings that the LWF has constructed withstand conflict better than traditional buildings which means that children can return to school soon after violent attacks. During a recent cattle raid in Duk Padiet, the concrete school building with iron-sheet roofing was not easily burnt, unlike some of the traditional grass and clay huts in the town.

Cattle raiders broke into one classroom and destroyed textbooks, exercise books and blackboards but, compared to a school, these are in-

expensive and simple to replace. In fact, they would be purchased before classes resume in mid-February.

But despite the best efforts of youth and non-governmental organizations like the LWF, there are still more than 1.3 million primary school-age children in South Sudan who are out of school.

The country is second-to-last in world rankings for net enrolment in primary school education—and at the bottom of the world league table for enrolment in secondary education, according to a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) published last year.

For girls the situation is extremely dire—a girl in her early teens in the country is three times more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than to reach grade eight.

A lack of education causes a vicious cycle. It means that there is a dearth of trained teachers to staff schools. According to the UNESCO report, in some parts of the country

a single teacher can teach up to 100 students.

Education is fundamental to South Sudan, the world's youngest nation, for more than just practical reasons. The founding father of the country, Dr John Garang, constantly stressed that education fosters self-reliance, expands choices and shares prosperity.

Education will underpin peace, and if a South Sudan, independent since July 2011, is to be Garang's lasting legacy, then the education system must continue to improve.

(All feature articles were written by Melany Markham in Juba, South Sudan.)

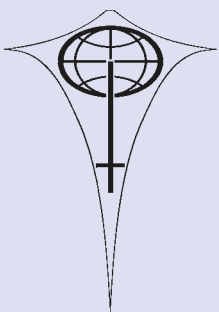
Read more about the LWF in South Sudan: www.lutheranworld.org/lwf/index.php/tag/southern-sudan

Further updates available at: <http://lwfworldservice.wordpress.com/>

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A group of university students from the Nuba Mountains sit in their Juba dormitory which accommodates nine people. © LWF/Melany Markham



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The Lutheran World Federation
150, route de Ferney
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CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland
Tel. +41/22-791 61 11
Fax +41/22-791 66 30
E-mail info@lutheranworld.org
www.lutheranworld.org