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The Lutheran World Federation – Lutheran Communion in Central and Eastern Africa (LUCCEA)

Statement from LWF Diakonia/HRM Workshop for Lutheran Churches in Central and Eastern Africa at PCEA Guest House, Nairobi, Kenya 14-19 November 2016

Preamble

We participants of the LWF Diakonia/HRM workshop held at PCEA Guest House, Nairobi, Kenya 14-19 November 2016 are grateful for the accompaniment in diakonia and overcoming poverty and economic injustice on the continent by conducting various studies on the root causes and facilitating consultative spaces. Member churches of the sub-regional expression live and serve in challenging contexts triggered by increasing socio-economic gaps between the rich and the poor, mal-governance, conflicts, civil strife, environmental degradation and natural disasters.

About 23 delegates from 8 LUCCEA member churches comprising of HRM, Diakonia and youth focal person represented in Adult male 34.8%, Adult female 43.5%, Youths 21.7% attended the workshop. Presentations and discussions centered on diagnosing resource management issues, succession planning and effecting deployment of HR, LWF/HICD training support procedures and requirements; and engagement in Diakonia, Vulnerability and Capacities analysis.

Participants shared experiences and contexts of diakonia work enhancing advocacy capacity; and gained increased awareness on capacity and vulnerability analysis so as to identify the best participatory community approaches that can make diakonia in Action effective. There was also an opportunity to discuss Sustainable Development Goals in connection to the diaconal work areas of the churches.

Through sharing experiences, we the participants discovered gaps that hinder diakonia in action including the following:

- Inadequate transparency and accountability by member churches' leadership;
- Limited participation by targeted communities in analyzing their own situation and involvement in making decision to determine effective diaconal interventions;
- Gender gap. Masculinity is seen to play out strongly in oppressing women's voices. Land distribution and ownership remains a matter of concern among both rural and urban communities. Even among matriarchal communities, women's lack of access to land and financial resources compromises their opportunities and capacity to become economically productive. Some churches in Africa continue to curtail the participation of women in decision making by not opening space for their ordination and access to higher levels of leadership;
- Child rights are brutally compromised. The Church voice is not loud enough;
- Improper use of available resources. Even in situations of over-capacity or under-capacity churches do compromise their ability to deliver effectively in Diakonia;

- Capacity gaps-inadequate knowledge. Practical and applied knowledge is what ought to be sought by churches not education that fail to solving or improving severe situations; and,
- Selection of inappropriate resource person(s) to represent member churches in workshops and trainings. Churches are not serious in planning and utilizing doors of opportunity when called upon.

Workshop output

To that effect we participants were able to:-

- Develop follow-up action plan and enhance self-evaluation and capacity improvement;
- Strengthen our working together through networks, unity and mutual relationship and collaboration;
- Enhance our Lutheran theological perspective in diaconal understanding and practice; and,
- Pledge to increase our accountability and transparency.

Our commitment

We participants of LWF Diakonia/HRM Workshop held here in Nairobi (19th -24th November 2016) in that regard commit ourselves:

- To become catalysts for change in our families, churches and communities;
- To recognize and promote diakonia as vital component of the holistic mission of God; and,
- To ensure proper and optimum utilization of the available resources.

We encourage and support

- Adoption and deployment of theological framework (recently revised) by member churches for in diakonia;
- Member churches to prioritize and encourage organizational stability, human resources management, succession planning, and proper use of the available resources in particular periodic upgrading and alignment of the resources to the strategic priorities
- LUCCEA to reengage its sub-regional learning space in confronting poverty and economic injustice similar to LUCSA in Matsimbe under ELCMwi; and,
- Mutual efforts to effectively address poverty and economic injustice in our communities.

Our vote of thanks to the following:

We thank God for giving us an opportunity to serve in his church and specifically diakonia ministry. Our gratitude to LWF for providing moral, technical and financial support to facilitate this fruitful workshop. We also wish to express our gratitude to LUCCEA secretariat and the member churches for their sincere cooperation.

Diakonia/HRM Workshop participants