

THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

Meeting of Council

Geneva, Switzerland

13 - 18 June 2013

RESOLUTIONS



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

REPORT OF AD-HOC NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Transfer of Committee of Ms Anastasiya Poddybskaya

It is voted:

- to ratify the decision taken by the Meeting of Officers to transfer Ms Anastasiya Poddybskaya from the Finance Committee to the Committee for Mission and Development and to its Sub-Committee.

Replacement of Ms Anastasiya Poddybskaya in the Finance Committee

The Nominations Committee does not as yet have a recommendation for a new member of the Finance Committee.

Election of Council member in replacement of Ms Dipti Bormon

It is voted:

- to elect Ms Evabithi Kisku (female, youth, lay) from the Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church as Council member in replacement of Ms Dipti Bormon.

Appointment of Ms Evabithi Kisku to the Committee for Mission and Development

It is voted:

- to appoint Ms Evabithi Kisku to the Committee for Mission and Development.

Election of Council member in replacement of Rev. Frauke Eiben

It is voted:

- to elect Pröpstin Astrid Kleist (female, ordained) from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Northern Germany as Council member in replacement of Rev. Frauke Eiben.

Appointment of Pröpstin Astrid Kleist to the Committee for Mission and Development

It is voted:

- to appoint Pröpstin Astrid Kleist to the Committee for Mission and Development and to its Sub-Committee.

Appointment of a member of the Lutheran – Roman Catholic Commission on Unity

It is voted:

- to appoint Rev. Dr. Dirk Lange of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as member of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity.

Replacement of Ms Lita B. Johnson as CWS member

Upon request of the Council at its meeting in the year 2011 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) appointed Ms Lita B. Johnson as ELCA representative on the Committee for World Service. In view of Ms Johnson's retirement, the LWF Council is informed that the ELCA has appointed Dr Carl Stecker as her replacement on the Committee for World Service.

Appointment of chair for the Subcommittee for Mission and Development

It is voted:

- to appoint Ms Daniëlle Dokman of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname as chair of the Subcommittee for Mission and Development.

Appointment of members of the Assembly Planning Committee

It is voted:

- to appoint eight members of the Assembly Planning Committee, plus two consultants,
- **Africa:**
Bishop Dr Zephania KAMEETA, Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (male, ordained)

Ms Mami Brunah ARO SANDANIAINA, Malagasy Lutheran Church (female, lay, youth)
- **Asia:**
Bishop Dr Nicolas TAI, The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong (male, ordained)
- **Latin America & the Caribbean:**
Rev. Dr Gloria ROJAS VARGAS, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (female, ordained)
- **North America:**
Ms Mikka McCracken, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (female, lay, youth)
- **Central Eastern Europe:**

Rev. Agnes PÁNGYÁNSZKY, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary
(female, ordained)

- **Nordic Countries:**

Rev. Dr Kjell NORDSTOKKE, Church of Norway (male, ordained), proposed
chairperson

- **Central Western Europe:**

Superintendent Olivier DANTINE, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg
Confession in Austria (male, ordained)

At this stage, it is proposed that the Assembly Planning Committee includes two
consultants:

Rev. Dr Chandran Paul MARTIN, Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church
(Assembly Planning Coordinator Communion Office, Eleventh LWF Assembly
in Stuttgart, 2010)

Rev. Klaus RIETH, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Württemberg (Assembly
Planning Coordinator for the host church, Eleventh LWF Assembly in
Stuttgart, 2010)

TRANSFER OF FUNDRAISING PORTFOLIO

It is voted:

- to transfer the fundraising portfolio from the Standing Committee for
Communication and Fundraising to the Finance Committee;
- to name the committee “Standing Committee for Communications”.

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE “LUTHER 2017: 500 YEARS OF REFORMATION”

It is voted:

- to receive the Report of the Special Committee „Luther 2017: 500 Years of
Reformation” with appreciation;
- to request the General Secretary to base the further planning of the
Reformation anniversary in 2017 on this report;
- to request the General Secretary to share the report with member churches
and encourage their participation in the LWF programs for the Reformation
anniversary.

Note: Member Churches and National Committees will receive the Report of the
Special Committee “Luther 2017: 500 Years of Reformation” in a separate letter.

LWF TWELFTH ASSEMBLY

Venue of the LWF Twelfth Assembly

It is voted:

- to hold the LWF Twelfth Assembly in Windhoek, Namibia.
- to hold the LWF Twelfth Assembly on 23 - 30 May 2017

Terms of Reference for the Assembly Planning Committee

It is voted:

- to approve the Terms of Reference for the Assembly Planning Committee

COMMITTEE FOR THEOLOGY AND ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

Report of the Board of the Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research

It is voted:

- to receive the Report of the Chairperson of the Board of the Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research with appreciation;
- to thank the Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg, and its staff for its assistance to the Office for Ecumenical Relations;
- to express appreciation for the continued support by the Institute for the bilateral dialogues and for its substantial contributions to these dialogues;
- to reaffirm the strong commitment of the LWF to the work in ecumenical research to which the Institute is devoted.

Report of the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Commission, From Conflict to Communion

It is voted:

- to receive the report of the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, From Conflict to Communion, with appreciation;
- to thank the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Commission on Unity for its work, in particular the two vice-chairs, Bishop emeritus Dr Eero Huovinen (Lutheran Co-Chair), Finland, and Bishop Prof. Dr Gerhard Ludwig Müller (Roman Catholic Co-Chair until 2012), Germany, Prof. Dr Kathryn Johnson and Prof. Dr Susan K. Wood, SCL, for finalizing the document, and Rev. Prof. Dr Theodor Dieter, Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg (Lutheran) and

Prof. Dr Wolfgang Thönissen, Johann-Adam-Möhler-Institut für Ökumenik, Germany (Roman Catholic), for translating the document into German;

- to commend the report to the member churches for study.

Note: Member Churches and National Committees will receive the Report of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission “From Conflict to Communion” in a separate letter.

LWF Gender Justice Policy

The committee recommended changes in structure and wording without changing the substance of the document. These included: shifting the biblical foundation from the Gender Justice Policy Methodology to the very beginning of the Gender Justice Policy; clarifying the levels of implementation i.e., between Communion Office and member churches; clarifying the distinction between the policy and implementation. Furthermore, the committee suggested a number of editorial changes for greater clarity of the document and mandated the Communion Office staff to include these in the document. All recommendations made by the committees for Mission and Development, Advocacy and Public Voice, and World Service were taken into account and amendments will be made accordingly.

It is voted:

- to adopt the LWF Gender Justice Policy and its recommendations (pp. 1—5) as a framework to orient the implementation of gender justice commitments at all levels of the communion;
- to receive the LWF Gender Justice Policy Methodology (pp. 6—23) and recommend its implementation through the regional expressions and member churches with the expectation that the methodology be adapted to local contexts;
- to request the General Secretary to report to the Council on the progress of the implementation of the LWF Gender Justice Policy in the Communion.

Note: Member Churches and National Committees will receive the LWF Gender Justice Policy in a separate letter.

COMMITTEE FOR MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT

Sharing of Resources in the LWF Communion of Churches

Following the report of the CMD on future challenges in funding DMD’s work and in particular the member churches project work as a result of increasing tendencies by some funding partners to support member churches bilaterally,

It is voted:

- to endorse the proposal that DMD takes the initiative to research and analyse these trends within the communion (making use of tools such as surveys and

face to face dialogue) with the view that this could result in the discovery of new models for relationships and collaboration between partners and DMD, especially related to project funding.

HIV and AIDS Work in LWF

It is voted:

- to receive with appreciation the report of the LWF HIV and AIDS Campaign; and
- to ask member churches to consider the recommended future directions in their HIV and AIDS ministries; and
- to request the Communion Office through the General Secretary to review the recommendations in the document and develop concrete action plans on how the work is continued.

Theological Framework for Capacity Development: Growing Together in Capacity for Holistic Mission

It is voted:

- to receive the proposed Theological Framework for Capacity Development and to ask the Communion Office to use it as a basis for its work on capacity development with member churches.

500 years of Reformation

It is voted:

- to endorse the project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary (production of an animation film on Luther) as a project of the whole communion to be used in Lutheran churches worldwide and to encourage all member churches to contribute to the production and make use of it.

COMMITTEE FOR WORLD SERVICE

The Committee for World Service was made aware of the severe drought in Angola and Namibia. In these two countries, more than one million people are currently affected by the most severe drought in three decades and are lacking access to sufficient food and water. The government of Namibia has called for international assistance and the LWF member churches have requested the assistance of World Service to enhance their capacity to reach out to the most vulnerable that are not managing to access government food distributions in Namibia.

As this very serious situation is overshadowed by larger crises globally, it is feared that it does not get the necessary attention and support. The Committee for World Service therefore wants to bring this situation in Namibia and Angola to the attention of the council and of LWF member churches as it feels that we have an obligation to make a special effort to help the churches and the people in Namibia and Angola.

The Committee appreciates the joint action planned by the LWF churches in Namibia and World Service as well as the ACT Forum and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Angola.

It is voted:

- to urge the LWF member churches to support the joint actions planned by the LWF churches in Namibia and World Service as well as the ACT Forum and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Angola with prayers and financial resources.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Report of the LWF Communion Office Operational Plan 2012

It is voted:

- to receive the Report of the LWF Communion Operational Plan 2012, with appreciation.

Report of the Board of the LWF Foundation – Endowment Fund

It is voted:

- to receive the Report of the Board of the LWF Foundation – Endowment Fund with appreciation

LWF Consolidated Financial Statement as at 31 Dec 2012

It is voted:

- to receive the Report of the Auditors on the Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2012; and
- to receive and adopt the Consolidated Financial Statements and the Financial Statements of the General Secretariat & Department for Planning and Operations; the Department for Theology & Public Witness; the Department for Mission and Development; and the Department for World Service for the fiscal year 2012.

Appointment of the LWF Auditor for the Year 2013

It is voted:

- to appoint PricewaterhouseCoopers as the Auditors of the LWF Communion Office for the year ended December 31, 2013.

LWF Budget and Program Plan for 2014

It is voted:

- to approve the LWF Budget for 2014 with expenditure of EUR 87,676,868, a surplus of EUR 10,202, and a cost-of-living adjustment of 0.5% in the salaries of the Geneva and field staff;
- to charge any possible deficits against the reserves of the respective departments;
- to authorize the LWF Communion Office to raise funds for the LWF Program Plan as presented in Council Exhibit 14.1; and
- to authorize the Meeting of Officers to approve adjustments to this budget at its next meeting.

Note: Member Churches and National Committees will receive the Program Plan for 2014 in a separate letter.

COMMITTEE FOR ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC VOICE

Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders

It is voted:

- to endorse the document “Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders”, commend it to the LWF member churches for their endorsement and widespread dissemination, and urge the member churches to bring the affirmations to the councils of churches and the interfaith bodies in their respective countries.

Note: Member Churches and National Committees will receive the document “Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders” in a separate letter.

Climate Change: A Challenge to our Church

It is voted:

- to recall the Public Statement of the Tenth Assembly in 2003 on the United States and the Kyoto Protocol, the Resolution adopted by the LWF Council in 2008 on Climate Change, and the Resolution adopted by the Eleventh Assembly in 2010 on Climate Change; and
- to endorse the recommendations from the LWF Delegation to the December 2012 UN Climate Conference in Doha, calling upon the LWF and its member churches to:
 - a) Develop or update a holistic climate change strategy that addresses advocacy, carbon emissions, training and awareness raising, and humanitarian assistance;
 - b) Engage with civil society to continuously advocate and lobby governments towards increased action and ambition on mitigation and adaptation;

- c) Further explore the issue of climate change through theological reflection in Lutheran, ecumenical and interfaith frameworks;
- d) Commit to becoming carbon-neutral at the communion, national, congregational and individual level;
- e) Influence the culture to live in sustainable ways and address the negative impacts of social inequality and unsustainable consumerism;
- f) Continue to engage in United Nations processes related to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, particularly through ecumenical, interfaith and youth networks.

Note: Member Churches and National Committees will recommend “Climate Change: A Challenge to our Church” in a separate letter.

Public Statement on Freedom of Religion or Belief

It is voted:

- 1) From its founding in 1947 to the present day, the Lutheran World Federation has supported the freedom of religion or belief and been concerned about violations of it. The first resolution of the First Assembly of the LWF (Lund 1947) focused on advocacy for “homeless and displaced persons and refugees without regard to their origin, language, nationality, or status.” It included this call to national governments and to the United Nations:

... above all to defend the sacred right of refugees and minorities to conduct their Church affairs in their mother tongue and according to their own Confession.

- 2) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948. A Lutheran pastor, Frederick Nolde, represented the World Council of Churches in the deliberations that led to the Universal Declaration. He is credited as being the main drafter of Article 18, which reads as follows:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his (*sic.*) religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his (*sic.*) religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

This freedom has been elaborated in two major United Nations documents: Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981).

- 3) Over the years, LWF Assemblies and Councils have adopted numerous resolutions touching on human rights in general and freedom of religion in particular. These include:
 - a) Fourth Assembly of the LWF (Helsinki 1963), Statement of Principle on Freedom to Attend Religious Meetings:

The Lutheran World Federation believes that the right given by God to every man (*sic.*) to exercise religious freedom ought to include the right to attend an international assembly of Christian churches to which his church has designated him as a delegate.

- b) Sixth Assembly of the LWF (Dar es Salaam 1977), Statement on Human Rights, contains this paragraph:

We affirm that it is our task as Christians to promote, together with those who have different beliefs, the realization of full freedom of thought, conscience and religion; and we emphasize the right to practice the community of faith across national borders. We explicitly declare that freedom of conscience includes the right not to adhere to any religion.

- c) Seventh Assembly of the LWF (Budapest 1984), Statement on Human Rights. The first observation in that broad statement was the following:

In recent years, the world community has been especially concerned about ... The denial of religious freedom, be it in the form of private or public worship, open witness to the faith, the education of the young, or the right to live according to one's conscience ...

- d) Eighth Assembly of the LWF (Curitiba, 1990). The Assembly Message contains this paragraph:

This fostering of respect for and tolerance of religious beliefs different from our own is possible only if we are willing to listen and share in the hopes and aspirations of others. This does not mean watering down our own faith but rather, by listening to the faith and convictions of others, we have the opportunity to deepen our own commitments and to define our identity in relation to others and not over against them.

- e) Ninth Assembly of the LWF (Hong Kong 1997), Statement on Freedom of Religion. The Assembly called upon member churches (and in the first case, the ecumenical community):

to redouble their efforts and to cooperate widely in promoting and defending religious freedom in their own societies and internationally.

... to focus on religious freedom in the context of their economic, social, cultural, civil and political human rights:

- through prayers and intercessions, Bible studies and worship;
- through educational materials, seminars and public manifestations;
- by participating in programs of cooperation with people of other faiths; and
- by interceding with state authorities and religious authorities wherever necessary in defense of individuals or groups whose rightful religious freedoms are being curtailed or denied.

- f) LWF Council (Turku 2000) received a report on "The Involvement of LWF Member Churches in Promoting and Defending Religious Freedom." This report concluded in part:

Religious intolerance has been a source of untold violence and immeasurable human suffering over the ages, up to this very day. It is, in one form or another, a feature of the day-to-day experience of many member churches of the LWF. The right to religious freedom, on the other hand, provides a source and basis for peaceful co-existence. It also mirrors a respect for the dignity of every human person, which the churches are committed to promote.

- g) Tenth Assembly of the LWF (Winnipeg 2003), the Assembly Message stated in regard to The Mission of the Church in Multifaith Contexts:

With the world mission conferences in San Antonio (USA) and Salvador (Brazil), we affirm that “we cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot set limits to the saving power of God.” In light of this, we must continue to ... affirm religious freedom ...

- 4) Since 1986, the United Nations has had a Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief. (This mandate was at first entitled, “on the Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.”) The Special Rapporteur makes thoughtful and very helpful reports to the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly. These reports address current critical issues relating to freedom of religion. The Special Rapporteur also makes country visits and communicates to the relevant countries urgent concerns relating to the violation of the right to freedom of religion or belief.
- 5) Current scholarship¹ as well as the reports of the Special Rapporteur, finds that “to the extent that governments deny religious freedoms, violent religious persecution and conflict will increase.”² And, “when social and government restrictions on religion are reduced, violent religious persecution is reduced.”³ Evidence of these assertions is found in many places in the world today. For example, in Indonesia, the government fails to enforce national laws which guarantee freedom of religion with the result that church buildings have been forcibly closed or even destroyed (including from the Huria Kristen Batak Protestan / Batak Christian Protestant Church) following the demands of extremist Muslim groups. In Iran and Syria we hear reports of the imprisonment and abuse of Christian clergy. In Pakistan the laws of blasphemy are used by some to take revenge on their enemies or to exploit weak persons and communities. In Tanzania we note with concern the burning of several houses of worship in the aftermath of violent riots, including one church building of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. In Nigeria, we grieve the many deaths caused by continuing violence that is clothed in religion, especially attacks on churches and other houses of worship.
- 6) The LWF Council:
- 6.1 Reaffirms the strong support of The Lutheran World Federation for the universal right of all persons to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

1 See, e.g., Grim and Finke, *The Price of Freedom Denied: Religious Persecution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century* (2011)

2 Op. cit., p. 212.

3 Op. cit., p. 210.

- 6.2 Calls upon member churches and the ecumenical community to redouble their efforts and to cooperate widely in promoting and defending religious freedom in their own societies and internationally, including the freedom of public and private worship in the form and language of their choice.
- 6.3 Calls upon the LWF and its member churches to intercede with state authorities and religious authorities wherever necessary in defense of individuals or groups whose rightful religious freedoms are being curtailed or denied, including the right to change religions and the right to wear or display religious symbols.
- 6.4 Pledges the cooperation and support of the LWF for the United Nations mechanisms that promote and protect religious freedom, and in particular the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief.
- 6.5 Calls upon Lutherans and other people of faith around the world to pray for all people who suffer because of the lack of freedom of religion or belief.

Public Statement on Central America

It is voted:

The Council of The Lutheran World Federation expresses its deep concern about the continuing situation of violence and violations of human rights in Central America, especially in Honduras and Guatemala. These are countries with exceptional social insecurity—the homicide rate in Honduras is the highest in the world, and Guatemala is in the top ten. These crimes are mainly associated with gangs and organized crime, but they affect all people, especially those who are the poor and weak.

We believe it is urgent to seek peace, and that it is our duty as churches to be supportive of the peace initiatives that are being attempted in response to the cries of the people of Guatemala and Honduras. They ask for our prayers and expressions of love and solidarity.

The LWF Council:

Calls for concrete actions to help bring calm to the region--actions to address the continuing situation of violations of human rights and the high levels of violence. In particular, the Council:

- a) Repeats the LWF's appeal for the establishment of a Honduras Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), to complement the OHCHR's existing Guatemala Office, and urges both these offices to redouble the UN's efforts to overcome the current impunity of those who commit murders and who attack human rights defenders.
- b) Gives thanks for the peace processes that have started in Honduras and El Salvador between the gangs and the government authorities, with the important participation of the churches and civil society. We call upon the international community to redouble efforts in support of these processes, with an aim to consolidate a lasting peace for the benefit of all citizens.
- c) Welcomes the upcoming visit of the LWF General Secretary to the Central American region in October, with the hope that he can make the respective governments aware of the concerns of the Communion about the violations of human rights and urge them to take immediate action to manage an end to the violence.
- d) On behalf of the Communion, we extend our prayers and solidarity with the churches and people of Central America. May they be encouraged in their

continuing struggle for peace and for the defense of the human rights of the weak and the most vulnerable in society.

Resolution on Syria

It is voted:

The Apostle Paul taught that if one member of the body suffers, all suffer together and that if one member is honored, all rejoice together. As the Council of the Lutheran World Federation meets in Geneva, Switzerland, 13–18 June 2013, the people of Syria are again in our thoughts and prayers.

We grieve for the suffering the people of Syria are enduring. Recent estimates have placed the number of people killed during the past two years of fighting at 93,000. Of this dreadful number, more than 1300 have been children under the age of 10. The tragedy of this violence is matched only by the humanitarian disaster that has touched the lives of all Syrians. 1.5 million refugees have fled the country, while another 4.5 million people are displaced internally.

As a global communion of churches, we grieve that religion also is being used as a weapon to perpetuate the conflict in Syria. We reject violence perpetrated in the name of God and call on all parties to the fighting to do the same.

We have a special concern for our Christian sisters and brothers of all traditions in this land where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. At the same time, we pay heed to their reminder that they are part of the fabric of Syrian history and society, with a desire to live in peace with all their neighbors. The rich religious and ethnic tapestry that has characterized Syria for centuries is at risk of fraying beyond repair. We have already seen the conflict spill over into neighboring countries, exporting misery to other civilian populations.

The LWF Council recalls its 2012 resolution on Syria and

- 1) Continues to join with the United Nations in appealing for an end to the violence and all forms of human rights abuses,
- 2) Reiterates its call upon all parties to urgently protect all Syrian populations and to take steps to alleviate rather than inflame violence;
- 3) Calls upon all outside parties to refrain from supplying combatants and weapons;
- 4) Appeals to the Syrian government and opposition forces to allow immediate international humanitarian access to all persons in need in the wake of the increasing violence;
- 5) With our LWF Member Churches and with the World Council of Churches, we raise our voice to appeal for the release and safe return of the two Orthodox bishops kidnapped near Aleppo in April of this year, as well as the priests who have also been abducted.
- 6) Urges the international community to offer generous assistance to internally displaced persons and refugees from the Syrian conflict;
- 7) Renews its support for those who seek dialogue instead of further fighting, for the good of all people in Syria as well as its neighbors; and
- 8) Continues to stand in solidarity with the Christian churches in the Middle East and many of their neighbors as they yearn for the nurturing of modern civil

societies which respect human rights, including women's rights, the freedom of speech and expression, freedom of religion, and the rights of all religious and ethnic minorities.

Resolution on Christian Presence and Witness in the Middle East

It is voted:

Current developments in the region place Arab and Middle Eastern Christians in an existential crisis. Some Christian communities do not know if they will be able to remain in the geographic areas their people have inhabited since the beginning of Christianity.

We recognize that Arab and Middle Eastern Christians often feel misunderstood and even abandoned by their sisters and brothers around the world.

While lesser in number than their neighbors, Christians are not less in their contribution to the countries and societies in which they live. They are, instead, part of the fabric of their societies. We especially pay heed to the reality that many Muslims share the same perspectives and concerns expressed by our Christian companions.

Arab and Middle Eastern Christians warn against western forms of Islamophobia that simply dismiss Arab and Islamic culture. The Christians in this region see their Muslim neighbors to be, like them, children of God and, therefore, reject forms of understanding the Muslim world that attempt to separate Muslims and Christians from one another as if they are not neighbors.

In this time of turmoil and change, we commit to accompanying Arab and Middle Eastern Christian sisters and brothers. We will listen carefully to their needs, even as we celebrate with them the heritage of their indigenous presence in their lands and their mission to bring life abundant for themselves and for all their neighbors.

We are impressed with the stated commitment of Arab and Middle Eastern churches to develop work among youth and women in order to engage all of the assets in their communities.

We express our solidarity with the work and witness of the Middle East Council of Churches as a vital ecumenical body in this troubled time.

The LWF Council,

- 1) Together with the World Council of Churches and the Middle East Council of Churches, affirms the long-standing commitment of Christians in the Middle East to be recognized as an integral part of their societies and joins them in upholding this tradition.
- 2) Supports the desire of those Christians in the region who want to remain in their countries with their people.
- 3) Encourages our Christian sisters and brothers as they work for peace based on justice in their respective countries.
- 4) Gives thanks for the Lutheran ministry and work being carried out in the Middle East through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and through the Lutheran World Federation; these help support the continuity of Christians in the Middle East, both in holistic mission and in diakonia.

Resolution on the LWF Gender Justice Support: 58th Session of UN Commission on the Status of Women

It is voted:

- to encourage the LWF Communion Office to develop a proactive process to encourage Member Church and agency participation, preparation and intervention for the upcoming UN CSW 58 on the theme "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls."

Resolution on Youth Unemployment

It is voted:

The LWF Council calls upon the Member Churches:

- To increase awareness on youth unemployment, to pray and to look for ways how to help unemployed young people;
- To urge the governments of their countries to promote macroeconomic policies and fiscal incentives that are just and support employment of young people; and
- To urge the private and public sectors as well as labor unions to share in the responsibility for increasing youth employment.

Resolution on Global Financial Crisis

It is voted:

The São Paulo statement "International Financial Transformation for the Economy of Life"⁴ was adopted on 5 October 2012 at a meeting held in response to and as a continuation of the decades of work around issues of economic, social and ecological justice with which the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the World Council of Churches, the Council on World Mission, and The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) have been involved.

The LWF Council commends the São Paulo statement to the member churches for their study and advocacy, and encourages the Communion Office to continue to engage in the follow-up processes.

Note: Member Churches and National Committees will receive the São Paulo statement "International Financial Transformation for the Economy of Life in a separate letter.

⁴ <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/poverty-wealth-and-ecology/finance-speculation-debt/sao-paulo-statement-international-financial-transformation-for-the-economy-of-life>

STANDING COMMITTEE FOR CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP

Statutes of the LWF Foundation

It is voted:

- to approve the amendment to the LWF Foundation Statutes, Articles 5.3, replacing “Director for Finance and Administration” with “Head of Finance”.

Terms of Reference for the LWF Meeting of Officers

It is voted:

- to amend the Terms of Reference for the LWF Meeting of Officers by adopting the text contained in Exhibit 9.3.

Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad and Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church

It is voted:

- to note with joy the merger of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad into the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and consider the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church as a founding member of the Lutheran World Federation.

United Protestant Church of France

It is voted:

- to welcome with joy the United Protestant Church of France into membership in the Lutheran World Federation.

STANDING COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNICATIONS

No resolutions were proposed.

PLACE OF COUNCIL MEETING IN 2014

It is voted:

- to hold the Council meeting on 12 – 17 June 2014 in Medan, Indonesia.