



The Omatala at the Twelfth Assembly

10 to 16 May 2017
Windhoek, Namibia

Framework and Guidelines

***Only mountains never meet.
(A Namibian proverb)***

Omatala...

... is an Oshiwambo word for “marketplace”; for the Twelfth Assembly, the Omatala is a space for encounter, creativity, transformative action, visioning and story-telling. The program of the Twelfth Assembly will devote ample time to the Omatala. This is to acknowledge the vital need for such a space where all can participate in diverse and creative ways.

Physically, the Omatala is a 20X50 meter tent that will be constructed on the conference grounds. The Omatala is also open to local churches in Windhoek.

Bringing the Omatala to life...

All member churches, related organizations and ecumenical partners are invited to contribute to fill the Omatala and bring this space to life. Here are some ways to do that:

- **Claim your space**
- **Be a storyteller**
- **Organize a workshop**
- **Advocate**
- **Express yourself creatively**
- **Connect**

Purposes and goals of the Omatala

- Provide the space for encounter, dialogue and learning
- Facilitate learning and sharing of good practices through workshops, theme-based exhibitions and advocacy activities
- Enable the sharing of stories from across the world
- Provide the space for artistic and creative expression of ideas and feelings

The Omatala is a key component of the Assembly and will play a unique role in enabling the Assembly to be transformative, joyful, forward-looking and outward-looking.

How to participate...

There are many ways to participate in the Omatala.

- **Exhibitions.** Member churches, related organizations as well as ecumenical and other partner organizations may reserve space at the Omatala. A 3x5meter space and some basic infrastructure will be made available, e.g. a table and chairs, some panels (which will serve as dividers) on which to pin photos or messages. The space and basic furniture are free of charge but additional furniture and other decorative materials may be made available at a cost. In principle, those reserving a space at the Omatala are free to decide how they make use of their space. However, it is hoped that those reserving a space at the Omatala will use it to showcase their work, network and dialogue with other Assembly participants or share their gifts to others.

- **Storytelling.** A space within the Omatala will be set-up for storytelling. The idea is to recover those narratives that reflect shared values that lead to the creation of new communities. The call for participation in the Omatala is also a call for stories and storytellers, a call to recover what is precious in our oral traditions across the world. Every day during the Omatala, Assembly participants will be invited to listen to storytellers from among the Assembly participants who have a story to tell or who have gathered stories from their own contexts to share. The themes proposed for the telling of stories are:
 - Those stories of faith, courage and adventure that are worth bequeathing the LWF communion and the next generation
 - Those that tell about the lives of women who have played valuable roles in the 500 years of Lutheran reformation (*herstories*) and , simply, those of ordinary women and men who have made a difference in their church, community or the world
 - Those stories that young people might share to older generations about how they see the world and their role in it
 - Those stories telling of the power of the Gospel that lead individuals and communities to service, solidarity and transformation for the sake of the neighbor and the entire creation

The stories should not be more than 15 minutes in length. After the storytelling, some 15 minutes will be spent for the audience to share their insights about why the story they heard resonates with their own.

- **Youth space; women's space.** Special spaces will be ensured for youth and women where they can meet, talk, pray and strengthen each other.
- **Art and creativity.** A dedicated space for artistic expression on canvas will be set-up in the Omatala. The call to Assembly participants is to respond to the challenge of an empty canvas and the temptation that a diverse array of colors and brushes could pose to such a space. One need not be an artist to pick up a brush and dip it in paint – one needs only a message and a thought worth sharing in a visually creative way and the more childlike the drawings are the better!
- **Workshops on Assembly themes.** Opportunity will be provided for organizing workshops linked to the Assembly themes. These workshops represent unique opportunities to build capacity and share knowledge and good practices related to the themes. The side events may take place at the Conference venue and not necessarily at the Omatala tent.
- **Advocacy.** A space for advocacy and transformative actions will form part of the Omatala. Member churches and partners will be invited to set-up theme-based exhibitions aimed at raising awareness, strategizing and mobilizing around issues, including those related to the Assembly themes.
- A **social space** to make friends, listen or dance to music (at specific times) will be provided.
- A **space to experience the desert** for prayer and contemplation will also be set-up in the Omatala.

Official opening and closing of the Omatala...

The Omatala will officially open with a ceremony on Friday, 12 May 2017, at 15:00 and will close with a programme on 16 May 2017 at 15:00.

Procedure...

- A call to participate in the Omatala will be sent to member churches and LWF partners
- A registration form will also be sent with a deadline for submission
- The forms will be sent to Omatala2017@lutheranworld.org
- The deadline for registrations will be 31 July 2016
- Set-up of the Omatala: 10 May, from 9:00 – 12:00; 22:00 onwards
- Breakdown: 16 May 2017 from 22:00; 17 May whole day