

# **Consultation on the role of the faith community in 'Right to food and livelihoods in the context of El Niño' in Southern Africa**

Date: 18 April 2016

Venue: World Vision South Africa Offices, Randburg, Johannesburg, South Africa

*The current 2015–16 El Niño is notable in terms of its strength and also its negative impact on crop production, livestock and agricultural livelihoods around the globe.*

*Southern Africa – an estimated 28 million people are food insecure in the region with Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland and Zimbabwe declaring drought emergencies. The forecast continues to indicate drier than normal conditions (FAO 2016).*

There is consensus on the effect of El Niño on food security in Southern Africa, with several countries categorised as High Priority by the FAO. Given that consensus, the World Council of Churches – Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (WCC-EAA) has identified the need for faith communities in the region to be actively involved in supporting El Niño-affected communities at both national and regional level. We call for a day of planning coordinated action to be held in Johannesburg, hosted by our participating organization World Vision International.

During this consultation we want to mobilise the faith community to influence the SADC discussion on El Niño response. Through improving the collaboration between different groups within the faith community in Southern Africa, we would like churches and faith-based organisations (FBOs) to increase their voice, acting as advocates for sustainable agriculture, agro-ecology and other climate-resilient methods. We see our participating organisations and WCC member churches, as well as other allies within the faith community as very important influencers in their constituencies and to governments they interact with.

## **Who we are**

The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, an ecumenical initiative of the World Council of Churches, is a global network of churches and related organizations committed to campaigning together on common concerns for justice and human dignity. The EAA was founded in 2000 on the principle that the more we can speak and act together, the stronger our impact for justice will be.

In its 2013 General Assembly, EAA organizations resolved to work together “on eradicating hunger, promoting adequate nutrition, and striving towards just and sustainable food systems, with a particular emphasis on sustainable agricultural practices and the situation of smallholder producers and their access to and control over natural resources such as land, water and seeds.” This campaign, titled Food for Life, runs from 2014-2017.

We invite to this one-day event the following groups:

- Participating organizations of the WCC-Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance
- WCC Member churches with programmes on food security
- Other faith-based organizations engaged with food security and climate change

## **Aim**

To have impact through active involvement of faith community in supporting El Niño-affected communities at national and regional level



**Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance**



**World Council of Churches**

## Objectives

1. Identify role of faith community in responding to El Niño in Southern Africa
  - a. What is the situation in SADC countries?
  - b. How is it affecting communities and vulnerable groups?
  - c. What can we do?
  - d. What are the gaps – how can we act together as a unified voice?
2. Mobilise faith community to influence SADC discussion on El Niño

## Outcomes

1. Commitment from the faith community in the region to speak prophetically about issues like food insecurity
2. Improve collaboration between different stakeholders from faith community in Southern Africa to act: possibly forming an alliance
3. Agree on action items for 2016: petition, social media campaign?

## Agenda (to be further annotated)

08:30 – 09:00 Chapel service

09:15 – 09:45 Building our community – introducing the WCC-EAA and all participants

09:45 – 10:30 First round table: Deepening our understanding of the El Niño situation for food security

10:30 – 11:00 Tea break

11:00 – 12:00 Second round table: Sharing responses on what the faith community is doing, advocacy potential

12:00 – 12:30 The WCC-EAA proposal for action

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 – 15:00 Possible responses to El Niño and food insecurity from the faith community

15:00 – 15:20 Tea

15:20 – 16:00 Planning the immediate next steps

16:00 – 16:45 Conclusion

16:45 – 17:00 Day evaluation followed by closing prayer

*Tea and a vegetarian lunch provided. Support [Meat Free Mondays](#).*

## Contact

[Manoj Kurian](#): WCC-EAA Coordinator and Food for Life Campaign Coordinator

[Anna-Marie Müller](#): Food for Life Intern - event coordination

For more information on the WCC-EAA, visit our [website](#)

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