



World Council of Churches

General Secretariat

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Members of the
WCC Central Committee

Geneva, 28 February 2020

Re: WCC Central Committee Meeting 2020

Dear members of our central committee,

Grace and peace to you!

I write to let you know that, in light of concerns about and implications of the current international spread of COVID 19, the coronavirus, the leadership of the WCC central committee *has decided to postpone our upcoming central committee meeting, currently slated for 18-24 March, along with the executive committee that was to precede it.*

The decision is a prudential one, taking into account all relevant information and assessing the total risks for the participants, the WCC as an organization, the integrity of a meeting of the governing bodies under these circumstances, and for the health of all involved in such a gathering, directly or indirectly. The decision reflects an abundance of caution about the possible difficulties members would encounter in travelling safely abroad and ensuring a quorum for decision-making, as well as ensuring the health of attendees and other participants.

The decision also reflects careful consideration of the abilities of all nations to cope with not only the virus itself but the accompanying fears of what has quickly become a major concern for global health and a steep pastoral challenge for our churches.

The central committee leadership has for a while assessed the situation in regard of our scheduled meetings in March, also consulting closely with staff of the World Health Organization monitoring the global health situation in light of the viral epidemic. While WHO has not, at this time, directly advised us to cancel or postpone the meeting, it is clear that the virus is already having a wide-reaching effect on international travel, necessitating extensive precautions in large international meetings, and contingency plans for international organizations of all kinds.

Therefore, postponing the meetings incurs its own costs, both institutional and financial.

On the financial side, postponement of the meetings of the governing bodies will mean cancelling contracts for the lodging of the meeting's several hundred participants, as well as some travel costs. We have agreed with the Crown Plaza hotel new dates for our Central Committee so that this can be done without any penalty for the WCC.

It was decided that the new dates for the Executive Committee meeting will be held in Geneva from June 15 (arrival) - 22 (departure), 2020.

The new dates for the Central Committee are August 18 (arrival)-25 (departure), 2020. A meeting of the Executive Committee is also planned from August 17 (arrival) – 18.

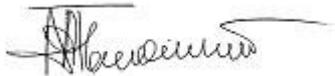
The executive committee must appoint an acting general secretary, according to the rules, to fill the vacant position from April 1 to the next August Central Committee meeting.

Therefore, the leadership decided to appoint the Deputy General Secretary Rev. Professor Dr Ioan Sauca as acting General Secretary for the period from April 1, 2020 till the Executive Committee meets in June.

Arriving at this decision of postponement of the meetings, we will continue to work closely with you, staff, and relevant authorities to monitor the situation, manage its consequences for our fellowship, for the other plans for meetings and activities for staff and other groups in the organizations, and keep you informed of all related developments.

With heartfelt thanks to all who have worked so hard on these meetings, and with prayers for the health of our whole fellowship, I remain

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Agnes Abuom', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Agnes Abuom
Moderator