
World Council of Churches

United Nations Advocacy Week

Annex to 2009 Report
Section II: Speaker Presentations

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World Council of Churches
Fifth Annual United Nations Advocacy Week
Monday November 16, 2010
Keynote II: Charge and Challenge to the Churches the Churches
Lois McCullough Dauway

I have been praying around the continued existence of a high degree of impatience in my DNA. It makes me “testy” sometimes. I must admit that in preparing for this brief presentation, the perpetual impatience – testiness – bubbled-up.

In the United States we have been focused on the struggle to reform our healthcare system. It is astounding that some 47 million Americans are without health insurance and, therefore, have limited or no access for medical treatment, never mind, preventative medical care. I am not surprised by the greed and the apparent ruthlessness of the medical establishment – pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies and professional associations – which prompt them to try to maintain the presently lucrative and dysfunctional system. What puzzles me is the reaction of many grass-roots people who parrot the rhetoric of the medical establishment even though the establishment is acting against their best interest. It makes me testy! But what makes me more upset is the relative silence of the churches on the topic. The question before the churches in this matter is “How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help?” and I hope that we would agree that for the followers of Christ there is but one answer, “... let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.” 1 John 3: 17 and 18

This morning we are meeting across the street from a powerful institution which clearly accomplishes good things, but is also in need of reform. The United Nations has a rich history. It also has a promise that it has not yet achieved. The desire to foster international cooperation, the end to war, the alleviation of poverty, the attainment of human rights and dignity for the world’s population, however, seems often to get bogged down in diplomatic maneuverings, bureaucratic structures, incomprehensible documents and needless technicalities.

The need for reform or perhaps reformation is not relegated to the healthcare system and the United Nations. I would assert that the churches – my church, amongst them – church structures, ecumenical organizations, etc. already have the theological wherewithal to dismantle global injustice. We simply do not have the will. We are good with words in the church, we are good with documents. Let me be clear, I do not have problems with either words or documents; however, I am seeking more action on the part of churches and religious organizations. Clearly we have done good works over the years. My remarks are not intended to chastise the churches. This is a challenge to the churches to do more.

So this morning, I invite you to join a new school of theology. I must admit that it is a new school that I have been calling for the creation of for some years now. I call it the Nike School of Theology – yes, I am speaking of Nike, Inc. which makes sneakers – what is their slogan? JUST DO IT!

My hope and prayer is that the Nike School of Theology will provide the response to some of the global issues that need to be addressed. JUST DO IT! And let me be clear, although the United Nations is a secular organization, I would admonish it to at least enroll in some classes!

An important first step in this process of dismantling global injustice and violence is for the churches to hear and heed those most impacted by exploitation and war... Two passages come to me... you will have many more. The first is from Jeremiah 8:11

They have treated the wound of my people carelessly [one translation says “lightly”], Saying “Peace, peace when there is no peace”.

I am struck by the million and one times I have heard “Been there, done that” when it comes to admonitions for the churches to aggressively address those principalities and powers, the perpetrators of violence and oppression who wield so much influence on the world stage. The truth, of course, is that we have not been there and done that. We have *dabbled* at addressing these issues, but I would contend often lightly

The other passage is from an interesting source. I was reading Job the other day – I will not comment on my mindset at that time – and came across Job’s frustrated response in Chapter 12, verses 2-3, to his so-called friends or colleagues who are telling Job, the one who is in pain in this story, how and what he should be feeling and what he should do about it. I like Job’s response

No doubt you are the people, and wisdom will die with you, but I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you. Who does not know such things as these?

If we in the churches are truly going to make a change in this world we must realize that it takes more than eloquent resolutions and sermons on peace and justice. We in the churches, particularly those in positions of authority, need to learn to hear and heed what people are saying. We must listen to those who hurt, stand with them, sometimes lead, sometimes follow, but actively engage in those things that will help bring peace on earth. JUST DO IT!

Yes, I am feeling testy this morning. I think about the awesome resources represented in most individual denominations. My own communion has power and influence, access, extensive resources, congregants and mission personnel located around the world. Multiply the impact of just one communion times the number of member communions represented within the World Council of Churches – tens of millions of members, churches located in most countries in the world, political and business leaders occupying our pews, the offerings gathered on any given Sunday would rival the GNP of many nations. We recognize that religion, spirituality and belief can contribute to the promotion of the inherent dignity and worth of the human person and to the eradication of oppression and war. We could indeed “turn the world upside down” in the name of Jesus. Lord knows we have power! Let’s JUST DO IT!

Finally, if we achieve the goals being posited at this conference, it means that we will by default, and out of necessity, have to dismantle, re-imagine and reconstitute the structures of the denominations/communions and ecumenical organizations that we are part of – like it or not. The make-up of our boards and committees will need to include significant presence of those on the margin. We will need to examine how our resources are currently being used – do they maintain present power dynamics? Are our resources invested in systems and companies that perpetuate poverty and war? This morning a report from the United Nations indicated that some one billion people are hungry around the world. Are we complicit in that reality? We must establish measurable goals for addressing global injustice and be accountable to those goals. We will need to make the choice of where we will err on the side of justice or is compromise the order of the day

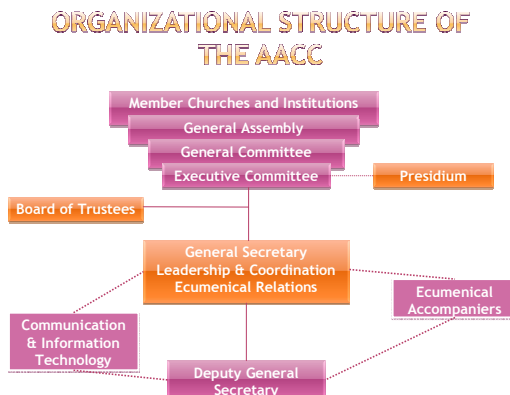
What will be the promise of this week – United Nations Advocacy Week – we will spend together? Because of what happens here will the nations of the Pacific no longer be known as the “fluid continent” or will they simply be enveloped by climate change and an inadequate response to the crisis? Can we, will we help make Indigenous Peoples’ rights a reality? My fervent prayer is that this week-end’s Global Platform for Theological Reflection will be recast as the Global Platform for Theological Reflection and ACTION! I look forward to seeing the action plan which accompanies the theological reflection.

I do not know what the new structures – healthcare, the United Nations, within the churches and the World Council of Churches -- will look like. I envision that there will be enough space, listening space, learning space, the promise that “no more will the sound of weeping be heard”, justice will roll, there will be equitable distribution of resources, power dynamics

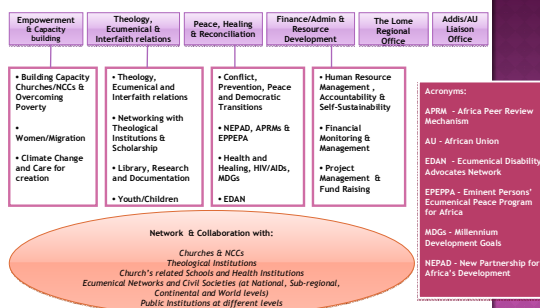
will shift, histories will be recognized and respected, the images and icons will be richly diverse, and when confronted by injustice, we will not just talk about what should be done...we will JUST DO IT!

World Council of Churches
Fifth Annual United Nations Advocacy Week
Tuesday November 17, 2010
Climate Displaced Peoples Session 2
Mbari Kioni

PRESENTATION ON STRUCTURE OF AACC



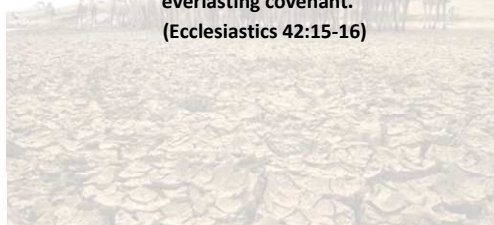
AACC PROGRAMMES



CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS RESPONSE TO CLIMATE DISPLACED PEOPLE



The earth is mourning, pining away, the pick of earth's people are withering away. The earth is defiled by the feet of its inhabitants, for they have transgressed the laws, violated the decree, broken the everlasting covenant."
(Ecclesiastics 42:15-16)



CREATING AWARENESS

- AACC has actively been involved in climate change debate under its programme of **Climate Change and Care for Creation**. The primary focus has been to create awareness of the issues within its constituency of member churches. This has been done through consultations:
 - June 2008 - Eastern and Southern Africa region.
 - June 2009 - West Africa
 - September 2009 - Central Africa region.

AACC COLLABORATION NETWORK

- For AACC to be a credible voice at continental level and to assist members in awareness creation and capacity building for climate change adaptation and mitigation. We have joined hands with:
 - Ecumenical actors - WCC, APRODEV and CARITAS
 - Civil society networks and resource organizations like Pan-African Climate Justice Network (PACJA) - hosted at AACC, and the Alliance for Religion and Conservation (ARC).
- The collaboration has strengthened the link with civil society networks in Africa and has contributed to the influence of the African Agenda towards Copenhagen in December.



THE AACC ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTATIONS

- To develop a common framework for African Ecumenical Action on climate change;
- To mobilize Churches and help them understand and respond to climate change;
- To create awareness on the causes, consequences and mitigation mechanisms for climate change among the churches;
- To increase appreciation of the role of the church in advocacy for continental and international response to the issues of climate change.

CONCERNS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA

The following are critical concerns for Africa in this discourse:

- (a) **Agricultural sector:** heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture may see African countries have their agricultural productivity reduced by as much as 50% by 2020 due to changing climate patterns, and 75-250 million people exposed to extreme water stress.
- (b) **Health:** Changes in rainfall will affect the presence and absence of vector- and waterborne pathogens, increasing the categories of populations vulnerable to meningitis and malaria.

- We have new strains of drug-resistant malaria in Africa.

(c) Migration and conflicts over natural resources:

There are increased cases of conflicts linked to climate change, especially depletion of water resources and grazing land for nomadic communities. Climate induced migration of cattle and nomadic populations is also fast becoming a reality.

- In Burkina Faso, for example, residents of dry, rural areas are migrating to rural regions with greater rainfall. This is also evident in East Africa.

(d) Employment: reports show that labour markets will be negatively affected by erratic hydropower resources, diminishing fishery resources as well as problems related to pollution, waste disposal and water supply.

THE NEXUS - CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATION

- Shifts in climate will bring different changes to different regions, some areas may see greater natural resources because of increased rainfall but on balance, the poorest regions are most likely to suffer because they are least able to adjust to new conditions.

- A recently released IPCC report suggests farmers in warmer and drier conditions in the Sahelian region of Africa have already curtailed their cropping seasons.
- Yields from rain-fed agriculture are expected to fall as much as 50 percent in some poor African countries.

RURAL LIVELIHOODS AND CLIMATE VULNERABILITY

- Environmental change has immediate and direct effects on the health and well-being of millions of households that depend on natural resources for their basic livelihoods causing people to leave resource-dependent rural areas and create new migration patterns.

- Rural households tend to rely heavily on climate-sensitive resources such as:
 - local water supplies
 - agricultural land
 - arable farming
 - livestock husbandry
 - natural resources such as fuel-wood and wild herbs.

- Climate change is reducing the availability of these local natural resources, limiting the options for rural households that depend on natural resources for consumption or trade.

CHURCHES RESPONSE TO CLIMATE MIGRATION

- **Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) in conjunction with Church World Service:**

Under its Relief and Emergency Services Programme, is engaging in:

- Mitigation, precaution and adaptation of environmental friendly technology for human development.
- Awareness creation programme for the members
- Addressing effects of climate change like food security.

◉ Re-greening Africa

- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya - tree planting since 1983
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana - intends to plant 200,000 trees
- Presbyterian Church in Cameroon has already planted 1million trees since 1960s and intends to plant a further 100,000
- Northern Diocese of the Evangelical church in Tanzania intends to plant 8.5 million trees in an intensive tree planting campaign

◉ Education

- Catholic Coalition of Climate Change (a partnership of 13 national Catholic organizations worldwide) is expanding the catholic education to incorporate teachings on climate change, environment and care of creation.
- Also incorporating these components in training for priests, deacons and lay members

◉ ACT Alliance

- Has facilitated effective responses to climate displaced people in:
- Mozambique - through Ecumenical Committee for Social Development (CEDES)in humanitarian provisions.
 - Kenya - Norwegian Church Aid and 4 other ACT members are responding to the drought situation that has caused thousands of pastoralists to migrate to new areas in search of pasture.

- Madagascar - through the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM), the churches responded to the flood victims by providing humanitarian support

- ◉ **The Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa** (10 million followers in 53 countries) intends to work with secular and government groups to co-ordinate action on environmental refugees.

CALL FOR ACTION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

- ◉ The developed countries should avail funds to make poor communities and countries more resilient to climate change through:
 - investment in irrigation, making farmers less dependent on rains
 - education in agricultural practices that conserve the environment.
- ◉ Migrants from climate disasters will need new rights - those displaced by the chronic impacts of climate change will require permanent resettlement.

- ◉ To reduce the vulnerability of Least Developed Countries to the effects of climate change their governments require support to:

- Develop policy coherence at national and international levels by mainstreaming environmental climate change considerations into migration management policies and practices,
- Boost humanitarian actions,
- Minimize forced displacement and facilitate the role of migration as an adaptation strategy,
- Treat climate change as a security threat not necessarily in the traditional military sense,
- Practice good governance that prioritizes issues which are dear to human survival and uses the resources in a more beneficial and sustainable manner.

- ◉ Need for policy action to reduce climate-related migration, particularly in rural regions of less developed countries. Such policies would lessen livelihood vulnerability, ultimately reducing the need for families to migrate because of climate change.

- ◉ Ethical dimensions to the link between climate change, poverty, and migration need to be considered.

- ◉ Need to enhance and capacitate governments and the church in Africa in Disaster Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

- ◉ The church should strengthen cooperation with agencies with good capacity in Disaster Risk Reduction like Red Cross.

The growing number of disasters and conflicts linked to future climate change will push the number of migrants higher unless urgent action is taken!



Women and children migrate from the dry and insecurity-prone Samburu North District, Kenya. African governments have been urged to tackle climate change if they are to maintain economic growth.



Cattle whose herders drove them from Kajiado, Rift Valley (200km from Nairobi), into the city in search of pasture and water compete for space on a Nairobi street.



A Kenya Meat Commission worker uses a forklift to load the carcass of a cow onto a truck in a paddock at the Kenya Meat Commission factory near Athi River

A worker tries to lift up a weak cow from among the carcasses of drought-stricken cows in a paddock at the Kenya Meat Commission (KMC) factory near Athi River, 50km (31 miles) east of the capital Nairobi



'Zero-cabbaging' Maasai cattle to beat drought



Members of the Winda Council of Kenya feed cows of immigrant Maasai herders with cabbages at Mtsingo. Inset, one of the herders takes cabbages for his family's consumption. PHOTO: JONATHAN HOLMES/REUTERS

**THANK YOU
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