



REPORT OF THE AFRICA COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES (ACRC) TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES

INTRODUCTION

The ACRC is a live entity of the WCRC, responsible to and for the member churches in Africa, while—at the same time—encouraging the churches to make the communion work by implementing the resolutions and programmes of the WCRC. The ACRC has held its General Assembly successfully, where the elections for the new leadership were held. It has also held some activities that are aimed at enhancing and developing capacity. This report covers the leadership of the ACRC, highlights of the General Assembly, the youth capacity development workshop and the Executive Committee meeting of the ACRC. The challenges that are faced by Africa are also cited.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE ACRC

The leadership of the ACRC, as elected at its General Assembly in June 2018, is as follows:

President: Rev. Dr. Uma Agwu Onwunta - Nigeria
Vice President: Rev. Pauline Kanuthu Mwaura - Kenya
Secretary: Rev. Lungile Mpetsheni - South Africa
Treasurer: Mr. Koku Mawulikplimi AMEGA - Togo

Sub-regional Coordinators:

Central Africa: Rev. Isaac Kalonji - Democratic Republic of Congo
East Africa: Rev. Martin Wanjala - Kenya
Southern Africa: Rev. Dr Gustav Claassen - South Africa
West Africa: Mrs. Paulina Afful-Arthur - Ghana

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ACRC

The General Assembly was held at Kalonji, Rwanda, in June 2018. It was attended by approximately 53 participants. Part of the Assembly was a workshop on Conflict Management, which was well conducted by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Ayete-Nyampong. Rwanda was an ideal country to hold a workshop on this subject in, considering its genocide story. As such, the leadership of the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda enhanced the quality and relevance of the workshop through sharing firsthand information on how the conflict resolution processes were handled in the country. In addition to Rwanda, there were stories shared from Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Cameroon and South Africa. It was made clear that Africa still has a lot to do in the field of conflict management.

The General Assembly had been attended, supported and addressed by WCRC General Secretary Chris Ferguson. He presented the strategic plan of the WCRC, and the Assembly made a commitment to support

the WCRC strategic foci. That was evidenced by the presentation of the ACRC strategic plan, which is summarized below:

- a. **GENDER JUSTICE:** The plan provides the setting up of a Gender Desk. Prof. Christine Landman to work with Mrs. Veronica Muchiri as coordinators. The issues of human sexuality to the activities will be considered by the same desk. They will link up with TUMEKUTANA—the organization that was established by Reformed/Presbyterian women more than 11 years ago. They will also interact with a similar organization was established in 2016 for men—Pan African Presbyterian Men Fellowship (PAPMF). Each sub-region should identify a person for the Gender Desk.
- b. **PEACE MAKING AND OVERCOMING VIOLENCE:** To be coordinated by Rev. Dr. Benebo Fubara-Manuel. Each sub-region is meant to spearhead an area. The region should identify who should lead.
- c. **ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE:** Rev. Prof. Jerry Pillay and Rev. Dr. Gustav Claassen to coordinate.
- d. **OVERCOMING RACISM AND AFFIRMING THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE:** This is to be centred in Southern Africa and to be coordinated by Rev. Dr. Buhle Mpofu.
- e. **REFUGEES:** East Africa will be the centre of this and will be coordinated by Mrs. Veronica Muchiri and Rev. Omwero SC Knony Halema of Uganda.
- f. **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:** Central Africa to lead and Adv. Tibonge Namwayi Ng'ambi will coordinate in conjunction with the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. The activities will involve empowerment.
- g. **THEOLOGY:** Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi, assisted by Rev. Cornelis Janse van Rensburg to lead the initiative.

Another area of importance that the Assembly worked on is the revision of the constitution for the ACRC. This is still at an elementary stage and, once the draft is concluded, it will be submitted to the general secretary of the WCRC for comment.

Towards the actualization of the Gender Desk and Youth Development, there was a session where men, women and youth formed the respective discussion groups and the reports confirmed the need to concentrate on the works of gender justice and youth capacity development. As a result, it was agreed that the next meeting would focus on youth capacity development.

YOUTH CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

The youth capacity development workshop was scheduled to be held in Cameroon. Due to the unrest in Cameroon, which, as it was reported, would pose a risk to the participants and make it difficult for the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon to host, the workshop was moved to South Africa where it was held on 18–20 February 2019. The workshop focused on gender justice and ecological justice from the perspective of the youth. Two young guest speakers from Zambia and Tanzania, respectively addressed the two areas. The workshop provided a platform for the youth to network and to come up with ways of contributing to the liberation and development of Africa, especially in the light of the fourth industrial revolution. It was resolved that youth capacity development will be an ongoing programme for the ACRC. The sub-regions were urged to continue with the work.

ACRC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The ACRC Executive Committee meeting was held on 21 February 2019 in South Africa, immediately after the youth capacity development workshop. The meeting reiterated the commitment to support the strategic plan of the WCRC by all means possible. The lead people for each of the ACRC strategic plan will be activated and in their pursuit, they will link the activities to the positions taken by the WCRC Council. The focus of area in the next event of the areas will be the promotion of theologies from below, especially theologies from Africa. This will be done in the context of marking the fifteenth anniversary of the Accra Confession.

The sub-regional coordinators will assist as much as possible to reach out to the members churches in their respective sub-regions, so as to ensure that the ACRC journeys together with all the member churches to strengthen communion.

CHALLENGES

The major challenges in Africa, arising from Africa's vastness, are communication and travelling to the member churches and to the regional events. We are struggling to keep in touch with all the member churches. Members struggle to reach out to the member churches and/or to venues of the regional events. This makes it difficult to get affiliation fees from the churches. Efforts are being put in place to address the challenges.

CONCLUSION

The ACRC strives to keep in sync with the WCRC. The resolutions of the 2017 WCRC General Council are being incorporated in the life and work of the ACRC. The ACRC strives to arrest the challenges that Africa faces. Where there is communion, there is a way. We continue to express profound gratitude to the WCRC office in Hannover, for care and support, without which, it would be difficult or impossible to hold the events that are cited in this report. We are also grateful to the five members from Africa who serve in the Executive Committee of the WCRC for the wise guidance, as and when necessary.

Rev Dr Uma Agwu Onwunta
ACRC PRESIDENT

Rev Lungile Mpetsheni
ACRC GENERAL SECRETARY