



The African Christian Pulse

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Members of the AACC General Committee

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Contents:

- 3. Towards Africa With Hope And Dignity**
- 3. The AACC 2009 General Committee**
- 4. The New AACC Organogram**
- 5. The Rationale of the New Structure**
- 7. AACC has a Deputy General Secretary**
- 8. Peace in the Great Lakes Region**
- 8. Gender Audit in the Church**
- 9. Forthcoming Events**

TOWARDS AFRICA WITH HOPE AND DIGNITY

The theme of Hope and Dignity emerged from all the reports, speeches and expressions which were shared in the 9th AACC General Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique.

What comes to mind immediately when you consider all the stories and statements is a reminder of how the vitality of various categories of populations in the continent is undermined by the lack of hope and certainty about the future. But one may ask, why is this the case?

In many parts of the continent, interesting initiatives are being undertaken and are being implemented successfully. We know places where women, as pillars of peace, are challenging big and fundamental obstacles in their bid to get out of heartless

humiliation that they have to face day after day.

At the same time, we have noticed an increase in the involvement of church and religious leaders in peace building and reconciliation in the continent. This is indeed part of the new trend that African solutions are being explored for solving the crisis in the continent. We are convinced beyond doubt that Africans are capable of doing more if only they commit to work together.

But one question remains, where can our hope come from? God is indeed the foundation of hope for Africa. This is the same God who inspired the founding fathers of the Pan-African Movement who defied and challenged big powers that took advantage of us and deprived us of

our freedom and dignity. It is indeed this God who will lead us, men and women, young and old, towards African solutions that will translate into overcoming indignity and therefore restoring hope and creating a future for our people.

This God is willing to lead us, only if we listen to His voice that is calling the church and the people of Africa into unity of focus, will and commitment around our common vital interest from which we can be a blessing for humanity as a whole.

Rev. Dr. André Karamaga
General Secretary ■

THE AACC 2009 GENERAL COMMITTEE

The General Committee is made up of 42 members among them 35 persons elected by the General Assembly, six members of the Presidium and the General Secretary of the AACC. This highest organ working on behalf of the General Assembly meets every 18 months.

After the Maputo Assembly a short session of this body met briefly in order to allow members to know one another, but time did not allow to get

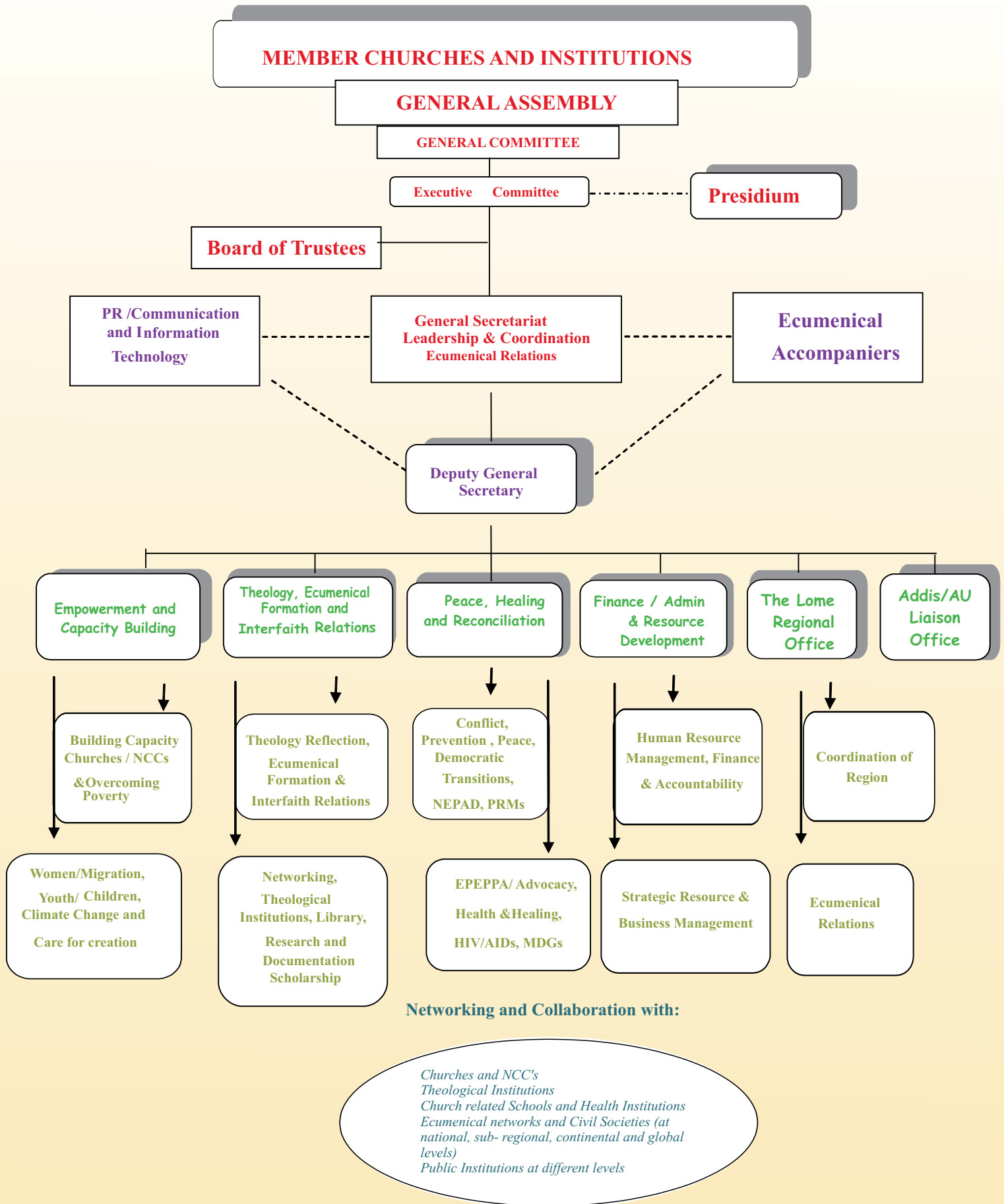
into other business. Therefore the session which took place from 24-27 March 2009 is the first General Committee meeting after the 9th Assembly.

The March 2009 meeting was timely because it came after two months of intensive work done by the staff to interpret the Assembly mandate and translate recommendations into the new programmatic structure and the programmatic plan for the period

2009-2013. The structured plan has indeed been presented and adopted by the committee.

Another task of the March General Committee meeting was to elect the Finance and Personnel Committee and the Executive Committee which will meet every six months ■

THE NEW AACC ORGANOGRAM



THE RATIONALE OF THE NEW STRUCTURE

The institutional structures and programmatic strategies of the AACC are intended to enhance the life of the churches and the people of God in the continent. In the following sub-sections both institutional and programmatic configurations are highlighted.

General Secretariat

The General Secretariat is intended to discern and focus the general and the specific mandates of the organisation. Specifically, the Secretariat is expected to undertake initiatives which strengthen the ecumenical life of member churches engaged in Africa's spiritual renewal and to coordinate common activities undertaken by the Churches. The Secretariat serves as the nexus between the national, regional, continental, and global agenda of the ecumenical community, fully informed by and imbued with Gospel values. To these ends, it is mandated to utilise all the available tools of modern communication.

Empowerment and Capacity Building



Mr Arthur Shoo, Empowerment and Capacity Building Programme Director

The imperative to build institutional and individual capacity, especially the administrative management of the Churches and NCC's, has been recognized as a priority. Moreover, the AACC is called to accompany member churches in issue-based empowerment and capacity-

building, creating conditions for dignified life, lasting peace and justice for the people of God in Africa. The AACC provides leadership in addressing issues related to children, young people, and women as well as global issues such as climate change and migration. The AACC's mandate is anchored in the preferential option for the poor, the oppressed and the marginalised in the continent.

Theology, Ecumenical Formation and Interfaith Relations

The AACC wants to be deeply rooted in a theological self understanding and hence the commitment to a vision of life expressed through the mission and calling of the Churches in Africa. Its theological programme will be engaged with broad networks of theologians and theological institutions, giving particular attention to ecumenical formation of younger theologians. The AACC provides space for reflective ecumenical and inter-faith discourse, fostering new understanding and speaking with a common voice on issues of concern to the continent. Amidst dynamics such as 'war-on-terror', religious-based conflicts or rampant poverty there is need for the African Church and ecumenical leaders to foster interfaith relationships and peaceful co-existence.

Peace, Healing and Reconciliation

When the trees in the forest are breaking, there is much noise, but when the forest is growing there is no noise. (African Proverb)

This programme theme is central to all AACC undertakings. Indeed, there can be no peace when people are hungry, displaced, poor, ignorant, lacking basic social services, and excluded from the

affairs of their respective nations. Hence the 'breaking trees' all over Africa, expressed in restlessness, conflict and war. When African people participate in due processes, in equitable wealth distribution, in gender equality, in good governance and in responsible stewardship of resources, then communities throughout the continent will grow like the forest, healthy with light, water and soil.

Amidst 'breaking trees', the AACC is called to enable churches and nation-states in Africa to face the challenges of transition. The AACC must inspire churches to promote a new consciousness of nationhood, shun negative ethnicity, social fragmentation, war and conflict.

In the African cultural setting, reconciliation is covenantal, sealed ritually when victim and offender eat from the same calabash. There is no reconciliation without truth, without transformative justice and without forgiveness and repentance. The Church is a reconciling and healing community; it mediates, resolves and heals social conflicts. Forces of fragmentation, such as politically manipulated ethnicity, endanger national cohesion and the security of the African state. The AACC must therefore facilitate the engagement of Churches in the mitigation of complex social realities such as multiple identities within the body of politics.

In Africa, individual churches and the ecumenical movement have over the years been engaged in peace building and conflict transformation. The AACC fosters accountable governance, peaceful democratic transitions, human rights, public security and preventive diplomacy as means toward peace and harmony in



Mrs Mbari Kioni, Peace, Healing and Reconciliation Programme Director

Africa. In this regard the participation of the Churches in the formulation of public policy, especially in matters concerning health, wholeness and economic well-being of the people in the continent, remain imperative. For these purposes and to these ends, the institutional and social memory of the AACC is informed by the values of Truth, Justice and Peace (John 10:10).

The AACC perceives peace as a gift freely offered by our Lord Jesus, a gift which we must receive. As a Christian community, we cannot receive Jesus Christ without receiving the peace which he gives and which must characterize our life and work together.

Finance, Administration and Resource Mobilization

The AACC is a custodian of resources bequeathed by member churches, by people of good will throughout the continent, and by the ecumenical partners. Careful stewardship of material and technical resources must serve as the guiding strategy toward self-financing and sustainability for the AACC.

The primary function of the Finance, Administration and Resource Development Department is to acquire, protect and manage AACC's fixed and current assets; to

support other sectors within AACC for the implementation of the organizational mandate. This department's long-term goal is financial autonomy. Strategies for achieving this goal include the astute management of assets and investments, ensuring meanwhile that service delivery to member churches and other key constituencies is sustained at a high level. Plans are in place for the education of member bodies with regard to resource development, thus enabling them to become more self-sufficient.

For many years the AACC has made efforts to improve the level of AACC's material and financial sustainability. Since its establishment, the AACC has been surrounded and accompanied by friends and ecumenical partners. The time for a reality check has come because the current conditions can not be sustained in future.

In its quest for sustainability, the AACC engages in reflection at three levels. Firstly, the AACC's viability as an organization calls for investments and other business strategies to ensure that the core functions of the AACC become self-sustaining in future. Secondly, AACC's programme work should be owned by and relevant to churches and NCCs. Thirdly, member churches and national councils must be assisted in their quest to become self-sustaining.

Obviously, if member churches and member organisations are not empowered materially and financially, the AACC will experience decline. Therefore, the AACC aims to facilitate exchange and mutual learning of successful experiences in Africa and elsewhere that ensures increased sustainability of the membership in terms of

human and financial resources, including infrastructure.

A key resource mobilization strategy is the AACC fund which is intended to facilitate economic autonomy and the self-reliance of the organization in coming years, raised through sustainable investments with the support of Churches in the continent.

The Lome Regional Office

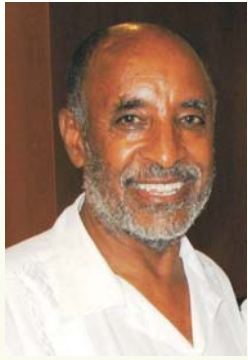


Dr Prosper Deh, The Lomé Regional Office Director

This Regional Office was created in 1974 by a decision made in the AACC General Assembly held in Lusaka, Zambia. The Lome Regional Office was hosted by the Eglise Evangélique du Togo from 1974 to 1978 and officially launched in 1978 when the Togolese Government granted the office diplomatic status. Its *raison d'être* at the time of the launch was to facilitate a fluid and continuous flow of information between the headquarters in Nairobi and the West/Central Africa region with a special focus on AACC's Francophone constituency, thereby help to bring the AACC closer to far-flung member churches. Reporting to the General Secretariat, the Regional Office hosts designated continental programme activities.

...continued next page....

The AU Liaison Office in Addis



Mr Melaku Kifle, AU Liaison Envoyer

The AACC – AU story begun in earnest with the movement towards total liberation of Africa from the strong holds of colonial rule. There was great expectation and enthusiasm, at the time, for change

in the continent, for dignity and for the unity of Africa. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) which has since been transformed to Africa union (AU) was created in May 1963 while AACC was founded in April 1963. From that time forward, the political and prophetic messages echoed across the continent, heralding the call of Nkrumah and Sir Francis Ibiyam; *“Africa must Unite!”*

Following the welcome change from the OAU to AU in 2002, the AACC undertook an internal assessment resulting in a conscious decision to work closely with the AU. The AACC established the AU Liaison Office to enable African

Churches and ecumenical partners to develop and sustain active, consistent, coherent and critical witness to Africa's peace and security; to monitor issues of human rights, justice, democracy, good political governance and socio-economic development through active ecumenical accompaniment with the African Union and its related organs. The timely action taken by AACC in creating the office of the Ecumenical Envoy to the African Union is a significant political and diplomatic move, addressing the above objectives and justifying the activities ■

AACC HAS A DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY

The AACC General Committee has appointed Mr. Bright Gabriel Mawudor as the Deputy General Secretary in charge of Finance and Administration. Prior to his new appointment, Mr. Mawudor had been serving the AACC as the Director for Finance and Administration since 2002.

This appointment comes after the AACC 9th Assembly reviewed the organization's constitution following a process which took more than two years including consultations with member churches.

A Ghanaian national, Mr. Mawudor holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Manchester and is a Chartered Accountant from London School of Accountancy and Business Studies,



Mr. Bright Mawudor, Deputy General Secretary

UK.

The 56 year old Deputy General Secretary brings to his new position 25 years of experience in finance and management. Before joining the AACC, Mr. Mawudor worked as the Chief Accountant/ Financial and Administration Coordinator with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana between 1995 and 2002. He also acted as Director for Finance and Administration with the

Christian Council of Ghana in the year 2000. After his accountancy training in the UK in 1994, Mr. Mawudor served as a lecturer in accountancy at the North Thames College in Tottenham, London and later as a part-time lecturer in accounting theory and practice and other business subjects at Ho Polytechnic in Ghana between 1995 and 2002.

At the AACC, he has been instrumental in the management of organizational turn around, relations with various stakeholders including partners as well as the establishment of Strategic Business Unit for self-reliance among other achievements.

Mr. Mawudor is married to Mrs. Florence Mawudor and they have four children ■

PEACE IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

Church leaders from DRC, Rwanda and Burundi have been collaborating since November 2008 under the auspices of the AACC to broker peace in the Great Lakes region. The region has been embroiled in an unending conflict which has cost many innocent lives and the region is now beleaguered with massive displacements of people, widespread abuse of human rights and violence against women and

girls.

Over the years, the AACC - believing that peace is cheaper than war -has been working tirelessly for peaceful resolution of political conflicts guided by the biblical mandate “to be the salt and the light of the world”. In its relentless pursuit for peace, dialogue has been its mantra because wherever there is dialogue peace eventually triumphs! In this regard the purpose of the

Church leaders' involvement has been to impress upon the political leadership to work for a peaceful resolution of the crisis through dialogue. The church leaders have so far visited and held talks with the political leadership namely Presidents Kabila of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and President Kagame of Rwanda■

GENDER AUDIT IN THE CHURCH

According to Rev Esther Njeri Wainaina, a Kenyan Presbyterian minister in her reflection during a worship held in the AACC chapel on the International Women's Day, women in church are no better off than in the rest of the society. Her observation is also confirmed by a **gender audit** of the churches which was conducted in Zambia, Malawi and South Africa in 2008. The audit disclosed that violence against women is as much in the church as it is in the society. In the church the audit revealed that violence stems from among others the literal interpretation of Biblical passages.



*AACC Women and Migration
Programme Officer, Mrs Vivi Akakpo*

The gender audit further exposed that women in church are mainly put in charge of “women's affairs” or departments that are concerned with welfare matters such as catering,

accommodation, Sunday school etc. According to Rev. Wainaina this denies women an opportunity to be fully present in decisions and operations that affect the whole church. “To be an authentic voice for salvation, she added, the church must be alive to implications of the gospel for the lives of women.”

As women we should use our positions as givers and nurturers of life to ensure the children we nurture and bring up are socialised in ways that ensure respect and equal treatment of all regardless of gender. When they grow up, such children will not depart from the ways of the training and that socialization■

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

To supplement the secretariat staff, Members of the AACC General Committee have dedicatedly accepted to participate in activities that enhance the life and work of the AACC.

Engagements of Staff

1. General Secretary

The General Secretary will represent AACC in several meetings including:

i. Diaspora meeting

Which will take place in Philadelphia, USA from 17-18 April, 2009.

ii. The Africa Forum of USA Denominations

To be held in New York, USA on 20th April, 2009

iii. Africa-Canada Forum

In Ottawa, Canada on 23rd April, 2009.

2. The Global Partnerships and Strategic Impact Inter-Action

A Consortium Meeting for the Open Forum on Aid Effectiveness will be in Washington DC, USA, from 14-16 April 2009. The Deputy General Secretary, Mr. Bright Mawudor will attend.

3. International Conference on Sustainable Development and Global Justice

Organised by Church Development Service (EED) in Berlin, Germany from 27-30 April, 2009. Mr. Arthur Shoo, the Empowerment and Capacity Building Programme Director will represent the AACC.

4. Follow Up Committee Meeting in Repatriation of Foreign Armed Groups and Refugees in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

Organised jointly by the AACC and

the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa in Bukavu, DRC on 29th April 2009. Mrs Mbari Kioni, the Peace, Healing and Reconciliation Programme Director will represent the AACC.

Engagements of General Committee members

1. Alternative to Economic Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth (AGAPE)

The World Council of Churches and United Church of Canada have scheduled an AGAPE seminar on 'Ecological Debt: From Debt to Justice,' in Toronto, Canada, from 27-30 June, 2009. It will be attended by Rt. Rev. Dr. S. Tilewa Johnson on behalf of AACC.

2. International Conference on Climate Justice

Church of Sweden in collaboration with Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency are organising a conference on climate justice that will be held in Hårnosand, Sweden, from 26-27 May, 2009. Edmond Bayisabe will represent AACC.

3. International Reference Group (IRG)

Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA) has scheduled an IRG meeting in Accra, Ghana, 9-11 June 2009. The Most Rev John Kivuli Mweresa and Ms Mulenga Chilambe will participate on behalf of AACC.

4. Churches responding to the challenges of racism and related forms of discrimination and exclusion

Organised by the World Council of Churches in cooperation with the Council of Churches in the Netherlands, the Association of Migrant Churches (SKIN),

KerkinActie and OIKOS. It will take place in Doorn, Utrecht, Holland on 14-17 June, 2009, Ms. Yatta Pewee and Mr. Tientcheu Bertrand will represent the AACC.

Human Rights, Peace and Security Consultation for West Africa

A consultation on Human Rights, Peace and Security for Church leaders is jointly being organised by The Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa (FECCIWA) and the AACC, to be held on June 15-19, 2009 in Monrovia, Liberia. Issues touching on Women, Migration and Peace in Africa will be discussed.

Second Great Lakes Ecumenical Forum (GLEF) Summit

The Second Great Lakes Region Ecumenical Forum (GLEF) Summit is set to take place from 18th to 21st May 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda. The summit will bring together participants from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Ecumenical partners, members of the Core Group and several other international agencies and governments.

GLEF, an initiative of All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA) provides a platform to bring together church groups and other organisations working for peace and security in the Great Lakes Region. GLEF's inaugural summit and launch took place in May 2006, in Burundi ■

**WE INVITE YOU ALL TO SHARE YOUR STORIES AND EXPERIENCES
THROUGH THE
THE AFRICAN CHRISTIAN PULSE**

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