



# The African Pulse

January - March 2025

Issue 13



Churches in Africa together for life, peace, justice and dignity

# The African Pulse

January - March 2025 | Issue 13

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The African Pulse is published periodically by the All Africa Conference of Churches as an information, educational and advocacy channel for the ecumenical movement in Africa.

AACC is a continental ecumenical body that accounts for over 200 million Christians across the Continent and a member of the world wide ecumenical network. It is the largest association of Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox and African Indigenous Churches. AACC has 210 members comprising Churches, National Councils of Churches (NCCs), Theological and Lay Training Institutions, and other Christian organizations in 43 African countries.

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# Message from the General Secretary

**E**cumenical greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and thanks be to God for sustaining us thus far. I am delighted to present to you this issue of the African pulse covering our work during the first quarter of the year 2025.

In this issue, we try to share just a few highlights of our extensive work in the continent of Africa. It is difficult to decide which activities to include and which not to include as there are so many engagements the Lord has enabled us to have.

Before going any further, allow me to express my gratitude to the Lord, for the opportunity given to us to serve. We continue to see the AACC increasing in relevance, vitality as well as dependability. We continue to grow as an authentic voice of the churches in the continent, in seeking for life, peace, justice and dignity.

Our membership grew by one member with the

admission of the Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim Church on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025. We are grateful to God for all these and pray that God continues blessing and sustaining our ministry, members and partners. We received high profile visits from the parliamentarians of Sweden as well as the Director for civil society and church affairs in the federal government of Germany. We formalized cooperation agreements with the ecumenical bodies specialized in working for health in the continent.

Unfortunately, our continent continues to suffer from geopolitical controversies within the continent and those affecting us from other parts of the world. The wars far from Africa, and the emerging confrontations between USA and others on trade and fight for resources is affecting us very much as a continent. We pray for peaceful and amicable resolution of these issues.

My visit and participation at the conference on global Christian Zionism which took place in Jordan, gave me an opportunity to see the aptness of our planned 6<sup>th</sup> theological symposium this year, being on the subject of the Perspectives of the African Churches in relation to Israel and Palestine. We expect vibrant and informative conversations.

I Welcome you to read this issue and continue praying for us.

**Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki,  
AACC General Secretary**



01 ▶

# Governance, Membership Development & Networking

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Ms. Evelyne Okunda  
and Ms. Ann Kioi

# AACC, EPN and ACHAP signed a Trilateral Memorandum of Understanding

In its efforts to empower and facilitate churches to promote wholistic health and healing in Africa, AACC collaborates with Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network (EPN) and the Africa Christian Health Associations' Platform (ACHAP) as specialized ecumenical ministries working for the realization of the third sustainable development goal in Africa: Good health and Wellbeing.

The three organizations strengthened their long-standing relationship through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025 to serve as a framework for their work on promoting health and healing.

EPN is a private not-for-profit organization with the aim of supporting churches and church health systems to provide and promote just and

compassionate quality pharmaceutical services across Sub Saharan Africa (SSA). At the same time, ACHAP brings together more than 43 national-level faith-based networks providing health services in 32 SSA countries to share resources, establish technical working groups (TWGs), and provide ongoing training and technical assistance (TA) to its members.

AACC, EPN and ACHAP share a common goal of improving the health and spiritual wellbeing of people in Africa and recognize the potential benefits of leveraging their respective strengths to enhance the services provided to their constituencies. Through the signed MOU, the three organizations will continue joining forces and, combining their expertise, resources, and networks in promoting the well-being of all people at all ages.



(L-R) EPN Executive Director, Mr. Richard Neci Cizungu, AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, and ACHAP Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Nkatha Njeru after signing the MOU. [Credit – Joan Mwayo]

# The Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim Church gained full membership in the AACC

**D**uring its meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025 via zoom, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) General Committee anonymously voted in favor of the Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim (ESOCS) Church application to join the AACC as a full member. This was after the committee received a report highlighting ESOCS church fulfillment of all requirements needed for a church to become an AACC member.

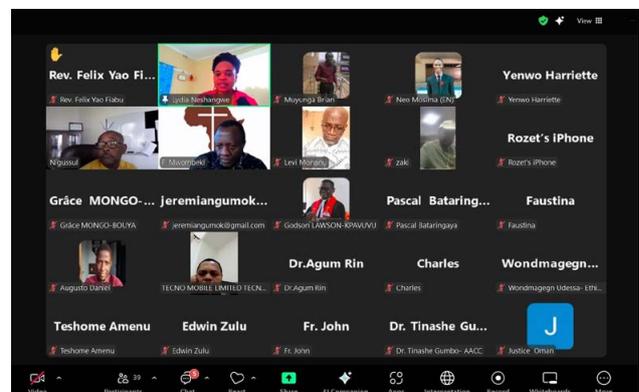
ESOCS Church is an African Instituted Charismatic and Pentecostal Church founded on 9th September 1925 by Moses Orimolade Tunolase at Agoshofin, Lagos Island, Lagos, Nigeria, and incorporated on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1930. Its vision is ‘Salvation for all through Jesus Christ,’ and its mission is to evangelize and arouse the African in Nigeria and the world to the practice of a spiritual Christian life and to those sublime principles of Christian charity and faith as taught by Christ Himself. Since its foundation, the church has grown from one small prayer group into a global church with 200 provinces and 3000 branches spread beyond Nigeria to Ghana, Togo, Cameroon, Cotonou, Gabon, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, HongKong, Germany and Belgium.

Following its application for AACC membership, the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki and Vice President for West Africa, Bishop Teyi Dogbeda Lawson-Kpavuvu, led an AACC delegation for a verification visit to the church head offices in Lagos, Nigeria between 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

While welcoming the delegation, the Prelate of ESOCS Church, Baba Aladura Dr. Dabaye Lamjose described the AACC as a unique space which allows member churches to reflect, speak, act, worship and work together, challenge and support each other, share and debate with each other as members of one body of Christ.

*“It was in order to promote and expound ESOCS church interest in ecumenism that we prayerfully applied to be registered as a member of the AACC.” He said.*

The AACC president, Rt. Rev. Lydia Neshangwe appreciated the committee that was appointed to assess ESOCS church for membership and expressed her delight for the growth experienced by the fellowship. The admission of ESOCS Church into the AACC increases the ecumenical organization’s membership to 214 members.



Screenshot of the General Committee in session on 26/02/2025

# LCCN Celebrated its centennial annual national convention with renewed hope and commitment to Christian unity



L-R: AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, LWF President, Bishop Henrik Stubkjaer, CAN President, Archbishop Daniel C. Okoh & LCCN Archbishop, Most Rev Panti Filibus Musa leading other guests of honor into the Anniversary Celebration grounds.

**T**he Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN), one of AACC member churches in Western Africa held its 100<sup>th</sup> annual national convention between 17<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2025 at their covenant ground, Demsa in Adamawa state Nigeria.

The convention brought together over one hundred and fifty thousand Christians in Nigeria and LCCN's

partner organizations for a one-week long fellowship under the theme, 'You are the Light of the World.' During this year's convention, LCCN also celebrated its annual national convention's centennial anniversary in a glorious occasion held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2025 under the theme, 'One in Christ.' The AACC general Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki and Director for Programmes, Rev. Dr. Lesmore G. Ezekiel joined the convention to celebrate this milestone.

While opening the celebrations, the LCCN Archbishop, Most. Rev. Musa Pantil Filibus honored the first missionaries who endured various challenges to bring the light of the gospel to Africa. He also paid tribute to the visionaries who began the practice of bringing together people from every tribe, language and culture, with a goal of fostering Christian Unity.

*“One hundred years ago, from 6<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> September 1925, the first church gathering was held here with around 20 participants. This planted the seed of what has become the annual convention.” Expressed the Archbishop. “In His Grace, God calls us to be the light of the world and our mission is urgent.” He said.*

To fulfill this, Archbishop Musa encouraged Christians to be steadfast in confronting all challenges

facing the world, including the widespread injustice, a weakened economy, gender-based violence, insecurities and corruption, with a prophetic voice, and by standing for the dignity and rights of all people.

In his congratulatory message to the Church, the AACC General Secretary applauded LCCN for its transformative witness to the Gospel of Christ since the annual convention was established in 1925.

*“As we celebrate these a hundred years, may the love of Christ compel us to hold unto the hope we have built through the century to remain steady fast in making Christian unity visible, continue affirming and establishing the freedom offered by God through the forgiveness of sins and pursue our vision for life, peace, justice and dignity.” He noted.*



LCCN women leaders making a presentation during the celebrations

# The Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church Consecrated its 6<sup>th</sup> Patriarch

**H**is Eminence Abune Basliyos was elected the 6<sup>th</sup> Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church by the Holy Synod of the church convened on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

His Consecration and Enthronement took place on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Asmara, Eritrea. While presenting AACC's greetings and congratulatory message at the joyful occasion, the AACC president, Rt. Rev. Lydia Neshangwe noted that leadership of the church in the modern day is

both a privilege and a challenge. She pledged the ecumenical fellowships, prayers and support to His Eminence Abune and the Entire church.

She prayed to God to grant His Holiness Abune Basliyos the wisdom of Solomon, the missional vision of the Apostle Paul, and the faith of Queen Esther.

*“Believe that you have been called to this leadership and servanthood role for such a time as this.”* She noted.



Rt. Rev. Lydia Neshangwe (in the middle) with His Holiness Abune Basliyos and some of the other dignitaries after the consecration.

# AACC hosts Swedish Parliamentarians and officials from Act Church of Sweden

On 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025, five members of the Swedish Parliament and three officials from Act Church of Sweden and the development arm of the Swedish Pentecostal Movement paid a courtesy visit to the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) General Secretariat in Nairobi, Kenya. Coordinated by the Embassy of Sweden in Kenya, the visit provided an opportunity to expose the delegation to the role of the AACC and the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA) in Africa's sustainable development.

On behalf of the General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, the delegation was welcomed by Rev. Dr. Lesmore Gibson, AACC's Director of Programmes. During the half day meeting, the delegation engaged with the staff in Nairobi on AACC's mandate, work and sustainability strategies.

In her remarks, Ms. Phyllis Brewah, AACC's Director for Finance and Administration appreciated the mutual accompaniment between AACC and the ACT Church of Sweden, expressing hope that this life flourishing relationship will continue to grow.

While presenting AACC's programmatic overview, Ms. Ann Kioi, the Executive Secretary for Programmes development and fundraising described ACT Church of Sweden as one of AACC's long-lasting partners. David Omondi also shared about FECCLAHA's role in Africa's peacebuilding efforts, especially within the great lakes region.

*"Your work and programmes are very important in the global pursuit for gender justice, sustainable peace and health and well-being."* Affirmed the Swedish delegation leader, Ms. Lili Andre.



Group photo of the Swedish delegation with some of the AACC and FECCLAHA staff at the AACC offices in Nairobi, Kenya.

# The AACC General Secretary Participated in the international Consultation on Christian Zionism in Jordan

**B**etween 22<sup>nd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki travelled to Jordan to represent the AACC in the International Consultation on Christian Zionism and its Effects on Christians in the Middle East. Organized by Dar al Kalima University and supported by Prince Ghazi Bin Muhammad, the event took place at Jesus' Baptismal Site near the Jordan River.

*"I noted Africa's underrepresentation despite its relevance on the continent." Reported the General Secretary. "The trip also included exploring the historic baptismal site, engaging in panel presentations, and witnessing Jordan's commitment to preserving holy sites and supporting Christian communities." He said.*



Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki Leading the closing plenary during the meeting.



The GS Visiting the Baptismal place of Jesus

# High profile visits to the AACC General Secretariat in Nairobi, Kenya

On 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025, AACC hosted a delegation from the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD). Led by Rev Franko, the delegation was received by AACC's Director for Finance & Administration, Ms. Phyllis Brewah and Director for Programmes, Rev Dr. Lesmore Ezekiel on behalf of the General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki. The team engaged on a number of matters relating to the collaborative work done by the two institutions, the implementation of AACC's strategy, and its flagship projects such as the All Africa Youth Congress, Male Champion for Gender Justices initiative, among others.



Rev. Frank Kopania, Director of International Work at EKD, along with Rev. Marc Reusch, Executive Secretary and Head of the Africa and Development Policy Desk, and Pastor Hartmut Hawerkamp of the German-speaking Evangelical Lutheran Church in Nairobi, with AACC staff during their courtesy visit.

On 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025, the General Secretariat received officials from Bread for the world, German (BFTW). The visitors included, Director for civil society and church affairs in the federal government of Germany, the Brot für die Welt Programme Officer Africa Policy and Continental Projects & Networks/ Africa. These were received by the General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki and thereafter a dinner reception meeting was held and was attended by NCCK General Secretary with some staff. Discussions focused on AACC's and NCCK's ongoing work and their partnership with BftW.



AACC staff at the reception of the BMZ and BFTW. Together with the General Secretary of NCKK.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, Wendy Gichuru the Global Partnership Program Team Lead and Ms. Amy Zavitz, the Global Partnership Program Coordinator, Africa from the United church of Canada paid a courtesy visit to the AACC General Secretariat in Nairobi. They were received by the General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, Director for Finance and Administration, Ms. Phyllis Brewah and the Executive Secretary for programmes development and Fundraising, Ms. Ann Kioi.



(L-R) Phyllis Brewah, Wendy Gichuru, Ann Kioi, Amy Zavitz and Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki.



On 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025 the AACC General Secretary received a courtesy visit from the Bishop of the Anglican Church of Burundi, Bujumbura Diocese, the Rt. Rev. Eraste Bigirimana.

(L-R) Ms. Ann Kioi, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, Rt. Rev. Eraste Bigirimana and Ms. Okunda Evelyne at the AACC General Secretary's office)

# AACC participated in CORAT's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Prayer Breakfast Meeting

**O**n 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025, the Director of Programs represented the General Secretary at the prayer breakfast meeting held to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Christian Organizations Research and Advisory Trust of Africa. Participants came together to thank God for His faithfulness over the past five decades that CORAT has been in existence.



AACC Director of Programs Rev. Dr. Lesmore delivering biblical reflection during the CORAT-Africa 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Launch & Breakfast.

# Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) officials paid a courtesy visit to the AACC Secretariat

On 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025, FELM's Executive Director, Rev. Pauliina Parhiala and Regional Director for Africa, Teresa Juhaninmäki paid a courtesy visit to the AACC General Secretariat in Nairobi, Kenya.

They were received by the AACC Director of Programmes, Rev. Dr. Lesmore G. Ezekiel on behalf of the General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, together with other AACC staff members including the Executive Secretary for Programmes Development and Fundraising, Ms. Ann Kioi, Executive Secretary in the office of the General Secretary, Ms. Evelyne Okunda, Executive Secretary for Quality Assurance and Compliance, Ms. Anysie Uwimana and Executive Secretary, Youth, Brian Muyunga.

FELM is an agency of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELF) currently working with almost 100 partners in 24 countries to promote human dignity and justice around the world. Both

AACC and FELM share common interests in theological education, peace and reconciliation, ecclesial (church) leadership development, climate action and indeed prioritizing youth involvement in aspects of our work.

*"We commend the work that FELM has been doing in Africa and we are very delighted by your visit to the AACC,"* noted Rev. Dr. Lesmore as he welcomed the team. He also gave an overview of the thematic focus of the AACC as outlined in the 5-year Strategy, 2024-2028.

Rev. Pauliina Parhiala described FELM as a membership organization drawn from the congregations of the ELF that has been in existence for 166 years now. She also highlighted the programmatic areas that FELM focuses on. Together with Teresa, they expressed FELM's intention to adopt a transformative model of collaboration with all its partners.



02 ▶



# Theology and Interfaith Relations

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Rev. Dr. John Ngige Njoroge

# Master of Theology in Ecumenical Leadership: Students Reflect on their Academic Journey



1<sup>st</sup> Cohort of the MTEL students with some of their lecturers at St. Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya.

**A**s the academic year of leadership formation comes to an end for the first cohort of AACC's Master of Theology in Ecumenical Leadership (MTEL), students shared reflections on their academic training, leadership formation and ecumenical journey at Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation (MEF) – Kitwe Zambia with the AACC communications team.

The MTEL Programme aims to equip students with deeper knowledge and skills in leadership to serve regional and global ecumenical movements and churches. The first cohort confidently expresses how this transformative goal has changed their leadership perspectives and ignited ecumenical passion and enthusiasm for transformative leadership on the continent and beyond.

*“This programme has sharpened my leadership skills, teaching me how to navigate challenges, work across Christian traditions, and contribute to a more unified Christian witness in Africa.”* Shared Rev. Oladapo Valentine Akintaju - A priest in the church of Nigeria Anglican Communion.

Rev. Agnes Munayani Zulu from the Reformed Church of Zambia, is the only female student in this cohort. She has all along kept the passion and leadership zeal in her training, aspiring and prophesying that one day she will lead an ecumenical organization.

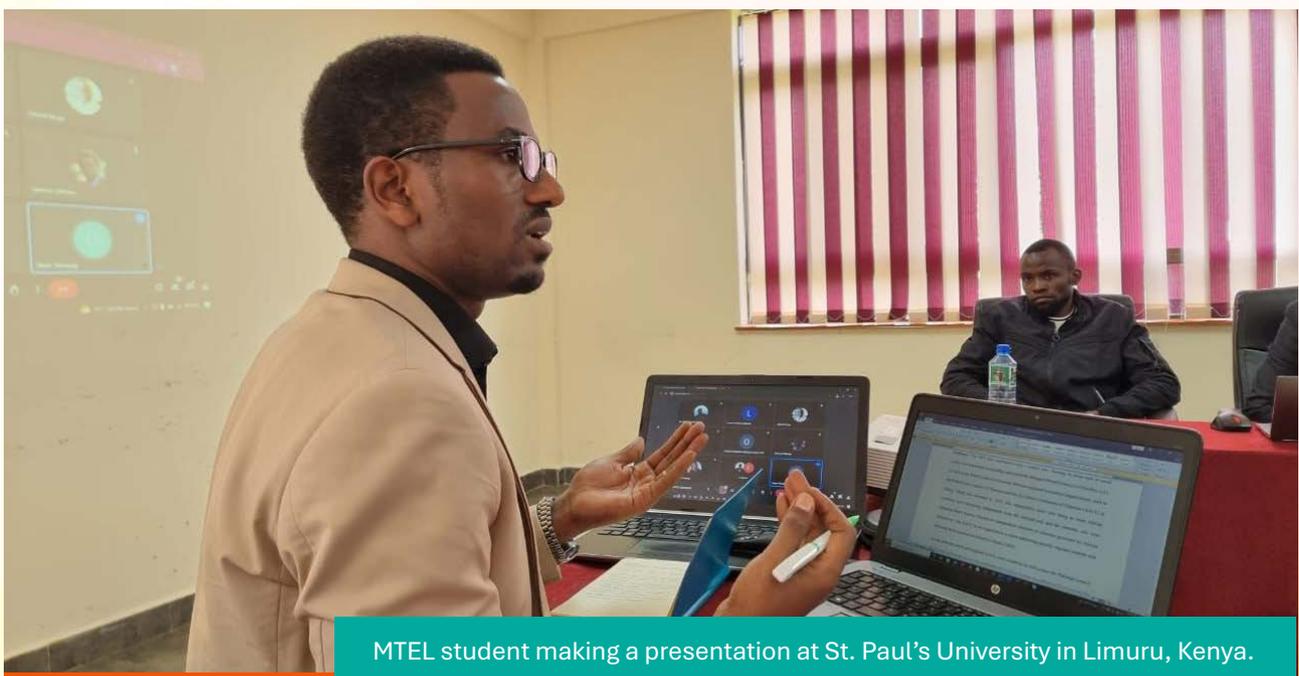
*“I would advise women and young theologians who have passion for leadership to take up the chance of studying when the opportunity comes. Education is the best equalizer; an educated and empowered woman brings change in the society.”* She notes.

Rev. O. Jubilate Deo H. AVALLA from the Methodist Church in Benin affirmed that Life at MEF is an ecumenical experience of its kind, bringing together students from different parts of Africa and denominations within the AACC jurisdiction.

*“The programme offers enriching ecumenical encounters and transformation, putting leadership into practice away from home and calling for a collegial consultative approach to solving life challenges.”* He noted.

As their academic year ends in May 2025, awaiting St. Paul’s University to confer the prestigious MTEL Degree, the cohort anticipates life after MEF with optimism and they are prepared to face the world with courage and competencies to lead.

*“With certainty that Africa is our home and our future, we feel charged to apply the leadership knowledge, skills and experience gained to build a better Africa.”* Expressed Mr. Geoffrey Mugadizi from the Orthodox Church in Kenya.



MTEL student making a presentation at St. Paul’s University in Limuru, Kenya.

# African Churches on Israel and Palestine: Preparations for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual theological Symposium are Gearing Up



in Nairobi and is expected to facilitate; consensus building on African churches' relationship with Israel and Palestine, the development of biblical hermeneutical approaches to Zionism and pilgrimage for use by member churches, the interrogation of the misinterpretation of ecclesial authenticities and identities and its impact on African churches and the development of a framework on addressing middle east churches expectations.

*“Participants intending to contribute papers for discussion at the symposium and thereafter for consideration for publication as part of the event’s outputs are encouraged to submit abstracts of their contributions following the guideline laid down in the concept note attached below. The application deadline is 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025.”* Affirmed Fr. John.

**A** ACC has been holding annual theological symposia on addressing misleading theologies in Africa since 2019. Throughout the period under review, the theology and interfaith relations unit has been working around the clock, making the necessary preparations for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> October 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya.

The application form and more details about this symposium are available on the AACC website via link: <https://aacc-ceta.org/en/applications-open-aaccs-6th-annual-theological-symposium>

*“This year’s symposium will run with the theme: African Churches on Israel and Palestine.”* Noted AACC’s Executive Secretary for Theology and Interfaith Relations, Rev. Fr. John Njoroge.

The symposium will take place at the Desmond Tutu Conference Center



Participants of the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium on addressing misleading theologies in Africa held in Nairobi in November 2024.



# Peace in Africa



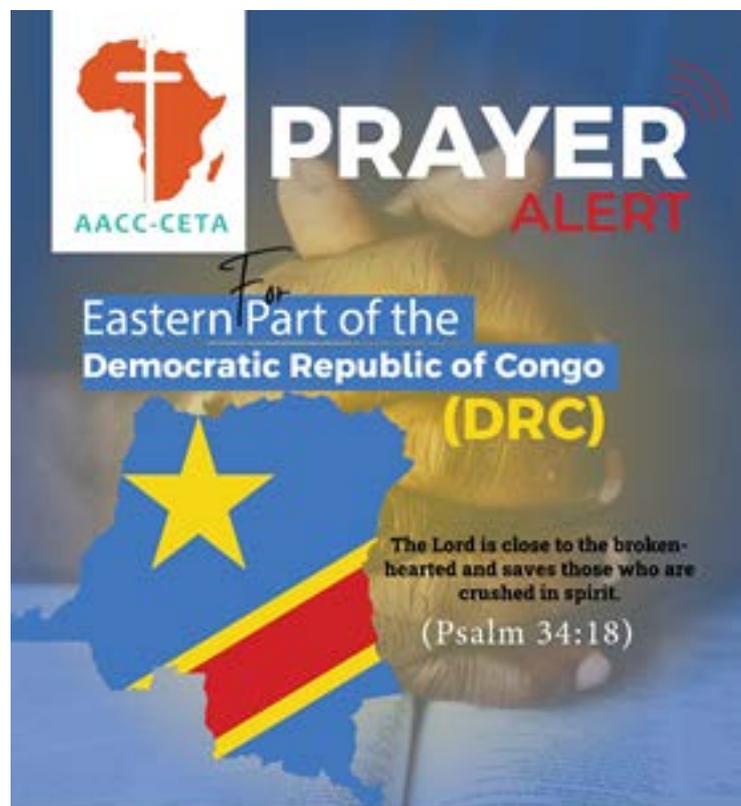
Rev. Charles Berahino

# AACC engages its member churches and councils in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa for Peace in the region

Since the beginning of 2025 and as was in the past, the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa region continued to experience instability and wars.

The ongoing war in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the instability in Sudan and South Sudan represent major conflicts defining the political and security landscape of the region. Millions fled those conflicts and have caused a significant influx of refugees into neighboring countries like Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Chad.

In November 2024, a task force was created to reflect on the different issues and propose ways of intervention. From January to March 2025, the members met four times and suggested ways to accompany the churches and councils in the different countries. Statements and prayer alerts were issued. Both physical and online engagements between AACC staff and Church of Christ in DRC (ECC), South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) and Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) were conducted to consult and accompany them in their respective peace and mediation initiatives.



**In November 2024, a task force was created to reflect on the different issues and propose ways of intervention. From January to March 2025, the members met four times and suggested ways to accompany the churches and councils in the different countries.**

# Accompanying Conflict burdened countries in Africa

Together with the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA) and other ecumenical bodies in the continent, AACC mobilized church leaders for ecumenical prayer meetings for the restoration of peace in DRC. Held on 28<sup>th</sup> February and 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025, the meetings also explored ways of ways of sustaining the ecumenical accompaniment needed by the eastern part of DRC. Additionally, the AACC has continued to journey with the South Sudan Council of Churches in their peacebuilding efforts and other work fostering healing among people affected by war.



Religious leaders signing on the pledge to stay committed to cultivating a culture of peace for an inclusive future last year in Addis ababa.



# Economic and Ecological Justice

Dr. Tinashe Gumbo

# AACC Hosted a Pre-AU Heads of State and Government Side Event on Reparatory Justice and Racial Healing



Participants during the opening ceremony of the consultation  
[Courtesy - Justice Oman]

**C**omprising of all the African Union Member States, the African Union Heads of States and In Partnership with Zimbabwe Council of Churches, Act Alliance, Christian Aid, and Norwegian Church Aid, the All Africa Conference of Churches convened faith actors in Africa for a pre-African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government Summit consultation on Reparatory Justice.

This consultation took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 12 to 13 February 2025, running parallel to the 46<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council. The consultation was attended by AU-CIDO, diplomats, development experts, theologians, lawyers, civil society organizations, and representatives from the Diaspora.

Delegates reflected on the faith perspectives on reparatory justice to establish consensus within the African Church around the matter and create alignment across denominations, regions, and globally. In his welcome remarks, the AACC General Secretary, Rev Dr Fidon Mwombeki congratulated the AACC and its partners for initiating the conversation on reparatory justice and reiterated that the process will amplify the prophetic voice of the Church and contribute immensely to the ongoing conversations on the matter at the AU level.

The consultation noted that the Church's role in the conversation on reparatory justice is critical and emphasized the need for the Church and all faith actors to not only be actively involved in the AU

and global conversations on reparatory justice but also utilize their resources and facilities to facilitate racial healing.

Led by the Director for AACC's Liaison office to the African Union, Consultation delegates also paid courtesy visits to some of the Embassies in Addis Ababa to appreciate ongoing global efforts promoting reparatory justice and racial healing. Following this meeting, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government will be convening in Addis Ababa on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> February for their 38<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session on the theme, "Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations.

Following this side event, the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki attended the High-Level Pre-Launch Event of the African Union Theme of the Year 2025 on Friday, 14 February 2025, at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as one of the observers of the 38<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the AU Heads of State Summit.

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# Youth

Brian Muyunga



# All Africa Youth Congress steering committee members reflects on the 2025 Youth Congress

**A**s preparations for the second gathering of the All Africa Youth Congress (AAYC) gear up, members of the All Africa Youth Network, led by the 2025 AAYC Steering Committee spent the first quarter mobilising their constituencies towards this cause. In addition to mobilising delegates to register for the congress, they are also highly involved in fundraising. During the preparation of this issue, the communications team engaged with two members of the AAYC Steering Committee, gathering their perspectives on the significance of the AAYC and its upcoming gathering scheduled for 31<sup>st</sup> October – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

In his sharing, the Co-Chairperson of the AAYC Steering Committee, Rev. Jacques Heyman from the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa defined the AAYC as a significant platform dedicated to empowering the youth of Africa, giving them the opportunity to actively engage in shaping the future of their communities, churches, and the continent as a whole. According to him, this campaign, which culminates into the largest Pan-African and ecumenical gathering of African Youth Leaders is a movement driven by young people and for young people, ensuring that their voices are not only heard but also acted upon.

**Jacques described the Congress as a:**

## 1. A Celebration of Hope and Possibility

*“The AAYC embodies hope in a world often characterized by uncertainty, crisis, and division, this conference stands as a beacon of possibility. It affirms that young Africans have the power to*

*shape their destinies, contribute to the renewal of their churches, and build a brighter future for their continent. By bringing together young people from diverse backgrounds, the AAYC fosters unity, collaboration, and a shared vision. It reminds African youth that they are not alone in their struggles or dreams; they are part of a larger community that believes in their potential and is committed to walking the journey of transformation together.”*

## 2. Space for Youth to Engage with Modern Issues

*“Africa’s youth face a multitude of challenges in the 21st century, ranging from economic instability, unemployment, and climate change to issues of mental health and social justice. The AAYC provides a vital space where young Africans from across the continent can come together to discuss these pressing matters, exchange ideas, and develop solutions that are relevant to their lived realities. It is a testimony that young people are not just the future but also the present, and it recognizes their ability to be key agents of transformation.”*

## 3. A Voice for the Future of Africa

*“One of the most powerful aspects of the AAYC is its emphasis on giving young people a voice. In many contexts, youth are often overlooked in decision-making spaces, with older generations taking the lead in governance, church leadership, and societal affairs. However, the AAYC challenges this norm by ensuring that young people are at the forefront of discussions about the affairs and future of Africa and the church.”*

The second Gathering of the All Africa Youth Network will take place in Nairobi, Kenya on the theme, **“Africa: My Home. My Future.”** When asked about the meaning of the Congress theme: Africa: My Home. My Future., the second co-chairperson, Ms. Vivian Ritho of the Anglican Church of Kenya affirmed that that theme is a powerful declaration of love, responsibility, and hope for our continent Africa.

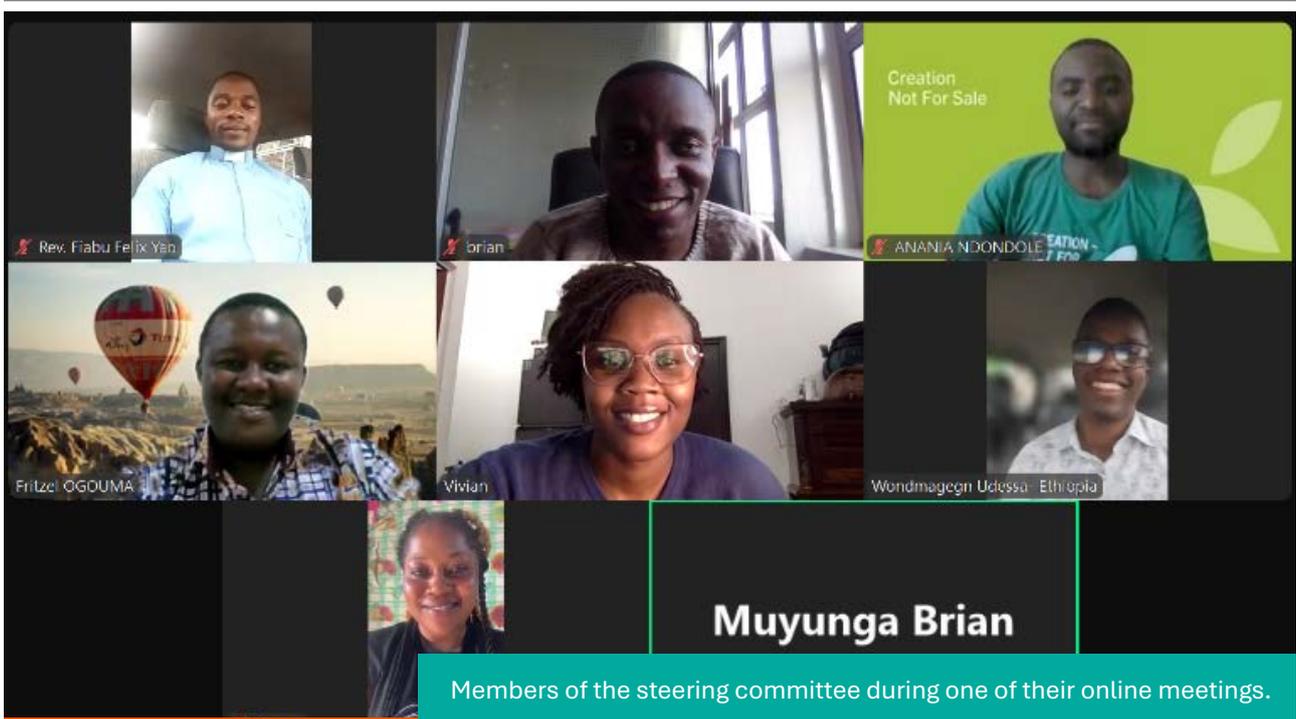
*“It reminds us that Africa is more than just a place on a map - it is our home, our heritage, and the foundation upon which our future is built. Just like any home, it requires care, commitment, and a collective effort to ensure that it remains strong, welcoming, and full of life for generations to come.”* She noted.

Harriet Yenwo from the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon defined a home as a place where we find belonging, identity, and security. She went on to say that Africa, our home, faces many challenges—poverty, unemployment, inequality, and environmental crises—but even with this reality, we are not helpless bystanders. The youth of Africa have the energy, vision, and strength to fix these leaks in the roof of our home and the congress brings us together to strategize for the ongoing processes towards fixing the roof.

According to Rev. Felix Fiabu from the Presbyterian Church in Ghana, declaring **“Africa: My Future”** is a commitment to taking ownership of what lies ahead.

*“We are not waiting for someone else to change things - we are stepping forward, ready to create the Africa we dream of.”* He said. *“The decisions we make today will shape the tomorrow we inherit. If we want a continent that thrives, we must invest in education, leadership, innovation, and sustainable development. The future of Africa is not far away - it is right here, right now in the hands of us willing to build, to serve, and to lead with integrity and faith.”* He continued.

In his letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025, the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki encouraged all African young people within the AACC constituency in Africa and the diaspora who have not yet expressed interest to participate in the congress to register and prepare to participate in the congress. Registration is ongoing until 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025. Similarly, all AACC partners interested in contributing to the congress program through side events and other activities are also invited to express interest by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025.



# All Africa Youth Network delegates at the 2025 Alternative Mining Indaba shared key lessons from the gathering

Every year, mining companies, investors, financiers and governments meet at the African Mining Indaba (MI) in Cape Town to discuss the future of African Mining with very minimal participation of stakeholder communities directly affected by mining activities.

In response to this injustice, Faith Based and Civil Society Organizations established the Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI) in 2010 as a strategic platform for bringing to light the lived realities of dispossession, relocation, gender-based violence and marginalization faced by people in communities directly affected by mining activities in Africa.

The 15<sup>th</sup> AMI took place between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> February 2025 in Cape town, South Africa on the theme: Energy transition for Who? A critical question in our times!

Two members of the AACC's All Africa Youth Network: Patricia Matemera from the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe and Jacques Heyman from the Dutch

Reformed Church in South Africa joined other religious leaders from the AACC members and other faith communities across Africa to bring the faith perspectives in all AMI conversations and activities.

*"This was my first time to participate in the AMI and I was so inspired by the fellow youth delegates' consistent call for urgent reforms in Africa's resource governance, increased tax transparency, and accountability."* Noted Patricia.

The AACC youth took the floor on several occasions to lobby for support towards the UN Tax convention and commitment towards the implementation of liberative and progressive policies with the potential of ending the injustices experienced in the mining sector.

*"This AMI made it clear to me that we need to invest more in building awareness on the alarming level of illicit financial flows on our continent and its impact on Africa's sustainable development and the wellbeing of our people."* Expressed Heyman.



Group photo of the 2025 AMI participants

# Kenyan Orthodox Youth launched the Churches Campaign against SGBV during their 2025 Syndesmos Day Celebrations

**O**n 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2025, 1250 orthodox youth gathered at the Hagia Sophia Cathedral at Makarios III Patriarchal Seminary in Nairobi for the 2025 celebrations of Syndesmos Day: The World Day of Orthodox Youth.

*“This day serves as a time for young people within the Orthodox Church to celebrate their faith and heritage through worship, fellowship, and service.”* Noted the Orthodox Christian Youth association of Kenya (OCYAK) Chairperson, Mr. James Gathiaka.



Some of the participants in the youth walk to mark OCYAK's launch of the Churches Campaign Against SGBV in Africa.

The occasion was graced by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Kenya, Orthodox and ecumenical youth leaders from different African countries, Kenyan government representatives, among others. Among OCYAK's accomplishments on this day included launching the IMPACT-ing East Africa Initiative aimed at equipping orthodox youth leaders with the necessary skills for impactful missionary work, and the Churches Campaign Against SGBV in Africa with the theme, 'Let Love lead: End GBV Now!'

In his message to the gathering, the AACC Executive Secretary for Youth, Brian Muyunga celebrated the Orthodox youth of Kenya for their passion and commitment to the ecumenical movement, and their leadership in its work for gender justice and

human dignity. While affirming their potential to positively transform the narrative of Gender Justice and equality in Africa, he urged them to take the launch of the Churches campaign against SGBV as a moment of renewed commitment, and a sacred pledge to shun and bring an end to all forms of religious and cultural norms, teachings and practices that perpetuate violence and inequality.

Brian described the Orthodox Youth's Agency for social transformation as a very important form of active citizenship. He encouraged them to participate in the upcoming All Africa Youth Congress on the theme, 'Africa: My Home. My Future.', noting that the congress is organized for such transformative Christian youth leaders.

# Youth led in-country events celebrating the International Women's Day mobilize hundreds to undertake a pledge of Commitment against SGBV in Africa.

**B**etween 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> March 2025, youth leaders from 10 African countries led in country activities celebrating International Women's Day in alignment with the churches' campaign against SGBV under the slogan "Let Love Lead: End GBV Now."

In Accra, Ghana, the Young People's Guild of the Presbyterian Church, Ghana empowered youth through discussions and creative arts and an International Women's Day Colloquium to educate participants on women's rights, leadership, and financial independence.

In Tanzania, youth leaders in Iringa marked the day with a two-day radio campaign, a Twibbonize social media initiative, and an orphanage visit to raise awareness on GBV while at Ntenga Parish, 89 participants, including men, women, and children, engaged in intergenerational dialogues on addressing SGBV in schools. Young people in Congo Brazzaville, marked the day with discussions on the novel *Je meurs en silence* to highlight the impact of abuse and silence.

The event encouraged open conversations, challenged societal taboos, and called for stronger survivor support, legal reforms, and gender-inclusive education. In Goma, DRC, a youth-led conference on GBV gathered 210 participants to discuss its impact and prevention.

The event resulted in the formation of anti-GBV clubs and calls for extended programs to deepen engagement and support women's dignity and security.

In Namibia, 50 participants engaged in discussions on gender equality, SGBV, and women's leadership whereas in Ethiopia, the youth leaders organized small group discussions on the role of the church in combating GBV. In Mozambique, the event featured interactive sessions, including a GBV awareness quiz. Participants discussed the church's role in advocacy, shared personal stories, and explored practical ways to support survivors. In The Gambia, the campaign incorporated storytelling, scripture reflections, and a Q&A session, deepening participants' understanding of GBV. Informative leaflets were distributed, banners amplified the message, and a photo booth encouraged visual advocacy.

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa and the Methodist Church in Kenya youth leaders engaged in interactive discussions on ending Female Genital Mutilation and advancing access to legal support for survivors and victims of GBV.

The in-country initiatives mobilized over 1300 youth to undertake the All Africa Youth Network Pledge of Commitment against SGBV in Africa in expression of their commitment to a violence-free society.

# A Reflection on the AAYN Monthly Devotions held in February and March 2025

By Grace Cangy, Presbyterian Church in Mauritius

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**T**he AAYN monthly devotion is an hour of spiritual nourishment held every first Friday of the month bringing together ecumenical youth leaders from across Africa for worship through prayers and bible study.

Through sharing in prayer, music and reflection on scripture, we are reminded of the common values and aspirations that bind us together as children of God sharing the vision of the Africa we want. We recognize that change begins from within and radiates outwards, touching the lives of those around us and when we join our hearts and minds in prayer, we amplify our impact.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of February our brother from the Anglican communion Church of Nigeria, Chims Nzeagwu shared the biblical reflection on the theme, *“Seek God First” drawn from Matthew 6:33*. We were powerfully reminded of the reasons why God should be our priority in all things, what it means to seek God first, how to seek Him first and the impacts it will certainly have in our everyday life.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of March our sister from the Anglican Church in Uganda, Namanya Caroline led us in an insightful bible study on the theme *“surrendering your heart to God” from Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.”*

In her message, sister Caroline talked about the importance of surrendering to our Creator, reminding us of God’s nature and character, and how surrendering to God would help us live in accordance with God’s plan for our lives.

As we participate in the AAYN Monthly Devotions months after months, let us remember that our voices, our prayers, and our actions have the ability to shape a brighter future for Africa and beyond. Together, let us keep the flame of faith burning bright and let our unity be a shining example of what can be achieved when we come together, embracing the power of prayer and work towards creating a better future for all.



# Gender & Women

Ms. Faustina Nillan

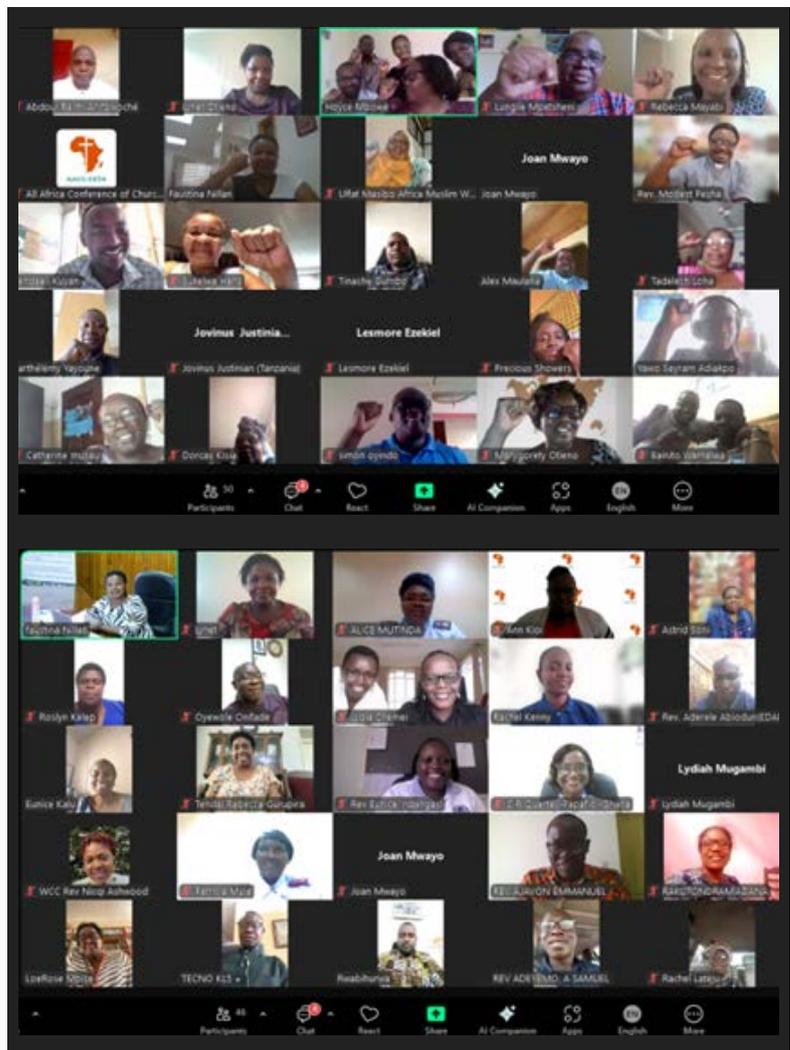
# Webinars Commemorating the International Women’s Day called for accelerated action for Gender Equality

The AACC marked the International Women’s Day of Prayer (IWDP) on February 28<sup>th</sup> with a virtual event uniting faith leaders and stakeholders from across Africa.

The event featured a Bible Reflection on Psalm 139:1-18, which says: “I made you Wonderful”. This verse aligns with the IWD campaign theme that aimed to remind all that God created all of us with care and love.

On March 7, the AACC held another virtual event to commemorate the International Women’s Day (IWD). The purpose of this commemoration was to recognize and appreciate women’s contributions to social, economic, cultural, and political milestones in achieving sustainable development. The webinar explored ways of advancing advocacy for inclusivity and gender equality to end gender-based violence. The IWD was marked under the theme *‘Accelerate Action’*: *“For All Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment”*.

A total of 113 people participated in the webinar and expressed commitment to support advocacy and policy influencing engagements gender equality.



The group photo during the International Women’s Day March 2025

# The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus celebrated its silver jubilee of Women's Ordination



Ms. Faustina Nillan (L) receiving AACC's award of recognition during the anniversary

The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Women's Ordination in the Ethiopian Evangelical Mekane Yesus (EECMY) was held from 4<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> March 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The anniversary celebrated the progress and contributions of women in church leadership and growth. AACC was represented by the President Rt. Rev. Lidya Neshangwe, Dr. Gordon Simango Director at the AACC-AU Liaison Office, Ms. Faustina Nillan from Nairobi Office, Rev. Emanuel Ajavon (Togo), Mr. Martin Rwabihura (Uganda), Ms. Tendai Gurupira (Zimbabwe) and Ms. Vivian Fiscian from Ghana.

The event included reflections on the journey of women's ordination in the EECMY, highlighting the challenges and achievements over the past 25 years. In her remarks, the AACC president Rt. Rev Lidya Neshangwe drew from the Biblical story of Deborah the Judge to describe the role of women in the church and community.

AACC's Program Executive for Gender and Women Ms. Faustina Nillan, also enlightened the achievements and challenges affecting Women in Ordained Ministry across Africa and the role of the church to leverage the potentials, talents and gifts of women in the ministry for sustainable churches.



# AACC Regional Office in Lomé

Rev. Angele Dogbe

# Webinar on Africa 140 Years After the Berlin Conference Explored Faith-Based Perspective on the Colonization of People, Resources, and Land



faith-based organization. She explained that while colonial powers divided Africa without taking into consideration the cultural, ethnic, and social realities of indigenous peoples, they not only established arbitrary borders that continue to cause tensions and conflicts today but also left behind elements that continue to negatively impact the continent.

**O**n 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025, Global Ministries-Disciples of Christ organized a webinar on “Africa 140 Years after the Berlin Conference: A Faith-Based Perspective on the Colonization of People, Resources, and Land”. Rev. Angele Dogbe, AACC’s Director for the Regional office in Lome was one of the panelists.

She led a discussion on the “New Scramble for Africa,” highlighting the current effects of the Berlin conference and enabling participants to understand how faith communities can address the negative impacts of colonialism.

In her intervention, Rev. Dogbe presented the historical context of the Berlin Conference; its impact on the continent today; and what we must do as a

Rev. Angele pointed out that Faith-based organizations (FBOs) have a unique and powerful role in addressing the long-term consequences of the Berlin Conference, especially in areas of economic justice, social healing, education, and political advocacy. She elaborated that FBOs should:

- *Advocate for Economic Empowerment & Self-Sufficiency*
- *Promote Education & Historical Awareness*
- *Engage in Political & Social Advocacy*
- *Cultural & Religious Healing*
- *Lobby and advocate for the Reduction of Foreign Dependency*

# WCC Reference group on the Pilgrimage of Justice, Reconciliation and Unity met in Sri Lanka



Members of the Reference group together with delegate from the Council of Churches in Asia and National Council of Churches in Sri Lanka.

From 13<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> March 2025, the WCC Reference group on the Pilgrimage of Justice, Reconciliation and Unity had its first in person meeting to work on the theology of pilgrimage and the methodology of how to journey together with member churches for reconciliation, justice and unity. The pilgrim group also took the opportunity to journey with the National Council of Churches in Sri Lanka.

# Youth webinar on migration interrogates the relationship between Bilateral labor agreements, human trafficking and modern slavery

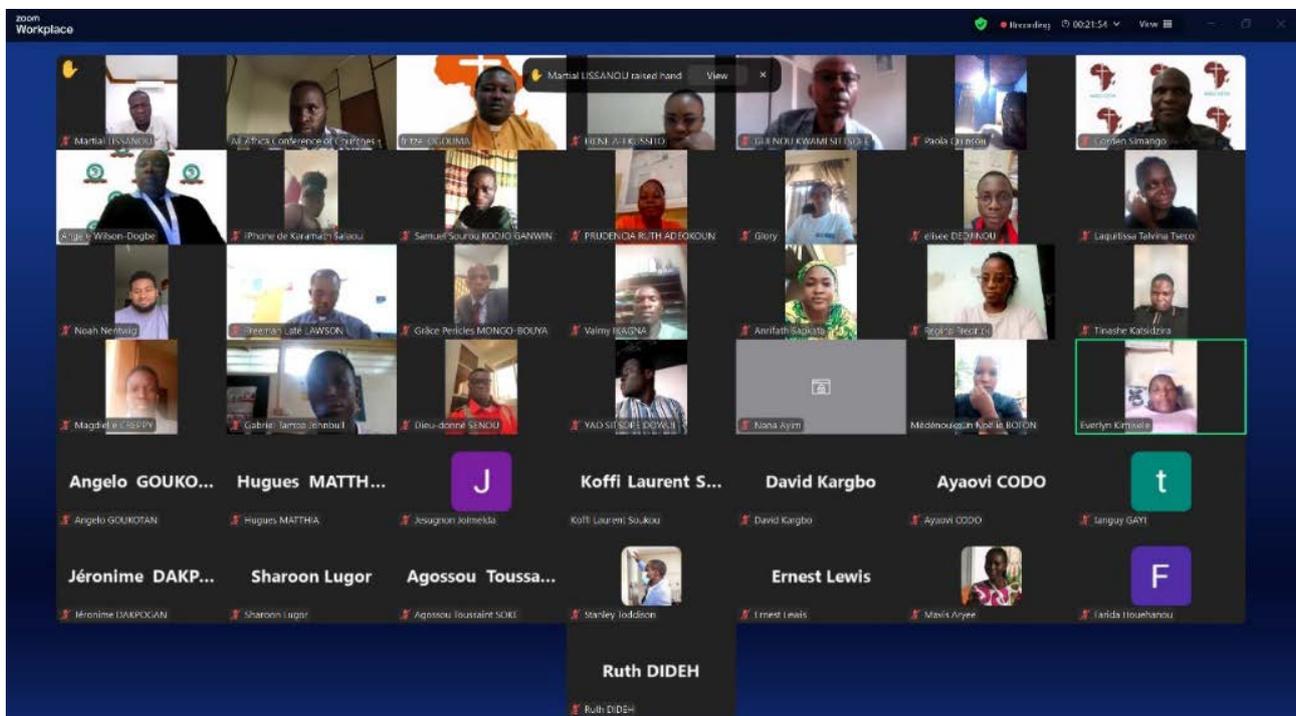
The AACC regional office in Lomé organized the first webinar on migration, human trafficking and modern slavery on 13 March 2025.

The theme of the webinar was Bilateral contracts: a source of human trafficking and modern slavery. Several young people from 20 African countries and AACC member churches took part in the webinar as did AACC staff members.

The welcome address was given by Rev. Fritzel OGOUMA, Program Support Officer at the AACC

regional office in Lomé, on behalf of the General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki.

Two topics were presented and these are: General overview on Religion, Youth and Migration in Africa by Rev Freeman LAWSON of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Togo, and Examining the advantages and gaps in bilateral agreements on migration by Dr. Gordon Simango, Director, AACC Liaison Office to the African Union & Advocacy.



Participants at the webinar



# AACC Liaison Office to the African Union and Advocacy

Dr. Gorden Simango

# AACC Hosted the Second Africa-Europe Ecumenical Forum on Migration in Addis Ababa



Participants of the Forum and staff of the African Union Division for Labour, Employment and Migration In front of the Mandela Hall at the AU offices in Addis Ababa

**F**ollowing the first Forum which took place in March 2023 in Hamburg, Germany, the second forum organized by the AACC and Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) opened today 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to run for four days.

It brought together key stakeholders from Africa and Europe to address critical issues related to migration governance with a special focus on externalization of asylum & migration, significance

and fairness of bi-lateral migration agreements, and the role of the African Union (AU) in shaping migration policies and practices. The forum was opened by the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki. In his welcome remarks, he stressed the need for churches in Africa and Europe to pay close attention to the heightening toxicity towards migrants at a time when the need for migrants is also increasing.

*“We are so delighted to be here in Addis Ababa for this meeting seeking to ensure that the world responds to migration in ways putting human safety and dignity above border security.”* Noted Fiona Kendal, member of the CCME Executive Committee in her opening remarks.

While welcoming the forum to Addis Ababa on behalf of the Ethiopian government’s ministry of foreign affairs, Mr. Daniel Samuel expressed the state’s confidence in the church as a key player in addressing challenges in human migration. To spark off the deliberations, the CCME executive secretary, Ms.

Ana Puljiz made a presentation on the externalization of migration in Europe, its consequences and the European Churches perspectives on external migration control. She highlighted the strong growth of anti-migration sentiments and also exposed the gaps in the various bilateral agreements that breed human rights violations.

During the forum, participants explored ways of transforming bilateral agreements into fair tools for labor mobility, interrogated the relationship between Climate Change and displacement, engaged on the role of the African union as an actor in regional and international migration governance, and defined the next course of action for the churches in Africa and Europe to address the migration related challenges at hand.

During the closing ceremony, the forum issued a communique affirming the participants’ shared commitment to human rights, dignity, and sustainable development in both Africa and Europe.

**During the forum, participants explored ways of transforming bilateral agreements into fair tools for labor mobility...**

# AACC Held a Virtual Follow-Up Meeting for Trauma Healing Trainers

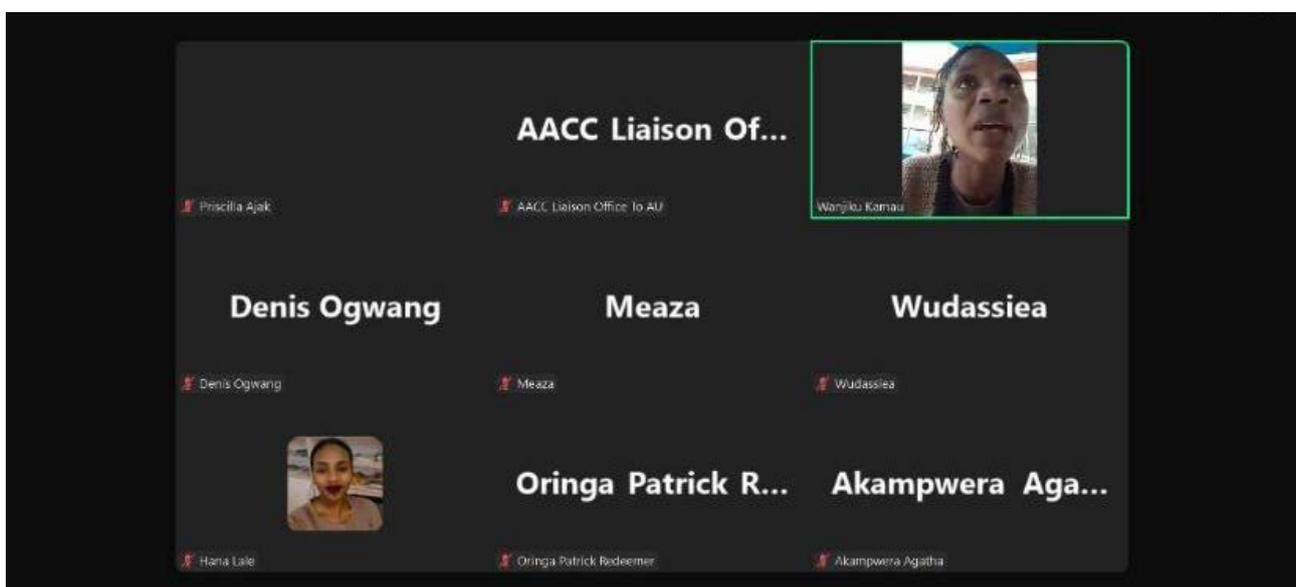
**O**n 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025 AACC held a virtual meeting with participants from the Training of Trainers (ToT) on Trauma Healing and Counseling program to evaluate their progress since the training in Djibouti last November 2024.

The participants have established a Community of Practice on Trauma Healing that aims to empower civil society organizations (CSOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) with essential skills and knowledge, enabling them to become catalysts for change within their communities. As a result, numerous individuals affected by trauma will have the chance to heal, recover, and rebuild their lives.

Participants from Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and South Sudan shared their experiences and activities during the meeting. These included peer-to-peer support for young mothers, training interfaith leaders in trauma healing, and integrating trauma

healing with economic empowerment initiatives. The meeting also focused on advocacy and capacity-building efforts, highlighting key challenges such as cultural norms, budgetary constraints, fluctuating participant numbers, and the lack of systems for data analysis on trauma.

To ensure sustainability, plans were devised to promote interfaith approaches, collaborate with various organizations, and train church leaders to independently support their communities. Action points identified include providing training on nutrition, raising trauma healing awareness among faith leaders, integrating trauma healing into income-generating activities, and conducting surveys on gender-based violence awareness and peaceful conflict resolution. Recommendations were made to identify trainers with expertise in trauma healing and explore potential technical and financial support from the AACC.



Screenshot from the virtual meeting session

# AACC participated in the Maputo Protocol Validation Workshop

**T**he AACC participated in the Maputo Protocol validation workshop held between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at the Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. Other participants included experts in Gender and Human Rights, representatives from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), UN Women, and Civil Society Organizations. During this workshop, the AACC President, Rev. Dr. Lydia Neshangwe delivered a keynote address highlighting biblical perspectives on the rights of women.



Rt. Rev. Lydia Neshangwe (AACC President); presenting on the Biblical Perspectives on the Rights of Women at the Validation workshop

## AACC participated in a consultation on advancing justice for Africans and people of African descent through reparations

On 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025, the AACC Liaison Office participated in a consultation on the role of faith communities and ethical organizations in advancing justice for Africans and people of African descent through reparations.

The African Union Commission chaplaincy program of the catholic church, the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM),

and the African Union citizens and diaspora directorate (AU CIDO) organized the consultation.

The meeting concluded with the “Addis Ababa declaration by religious, interfaith, ethical and scientific organizations on reparations” and resolved to place the agenda on “justice for Africans and people of African descent through reparations at the center of the African peace initiative.

## AACC president at the EECMY CMCR Meeting

On 6<sup>th</sup> March, the AACC President, Rt Rev. Lydia Neshangwe participated in the 43<sup>rd</sup> Committee of Mutual Christian Responsibility (CMCR) Steering Committee of Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus at Gudina Tumsa Holistic Training Centre in Addis Ababa. The CMCR met under the theme “One Spirit, One mission” and it brought together partners of EECMY to discuss and develop ways to strengthen mission, fellowship and unity.



(L-R) Dr. Gordon Simango, Rev. Lydia Neshangwe, Rt. Rev. Dr. Yonasi Yizegu (EECMY President) and Ms. Faustina Nillan



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