



# The African Pulse

April - June 2025

Issue 14



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

# The African Pulse

April - June 2025 | Issue 14

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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

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I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and I hope that this issue of the African Pulse finds you well. We are grateful for God's faithfulness throughout the period under review in this issue. The second quarter of the year 2025 was filled with many good things but also some major challenges to the body of Christ in Africa.

One of such challenges was a terrible massacre that occurred in the Benue State of Nigeria in June and claimed the lives of over 200 people. We Affirmed and continue affirming our members and partners in Nigeria responding to repercussions of this incident and all duty bearers working hard to ensure that such acts of terror do not become a norm.

I am glad about the achievements realized by the AACC as recorded in this piece and congratulate all staff, members and partners for these.

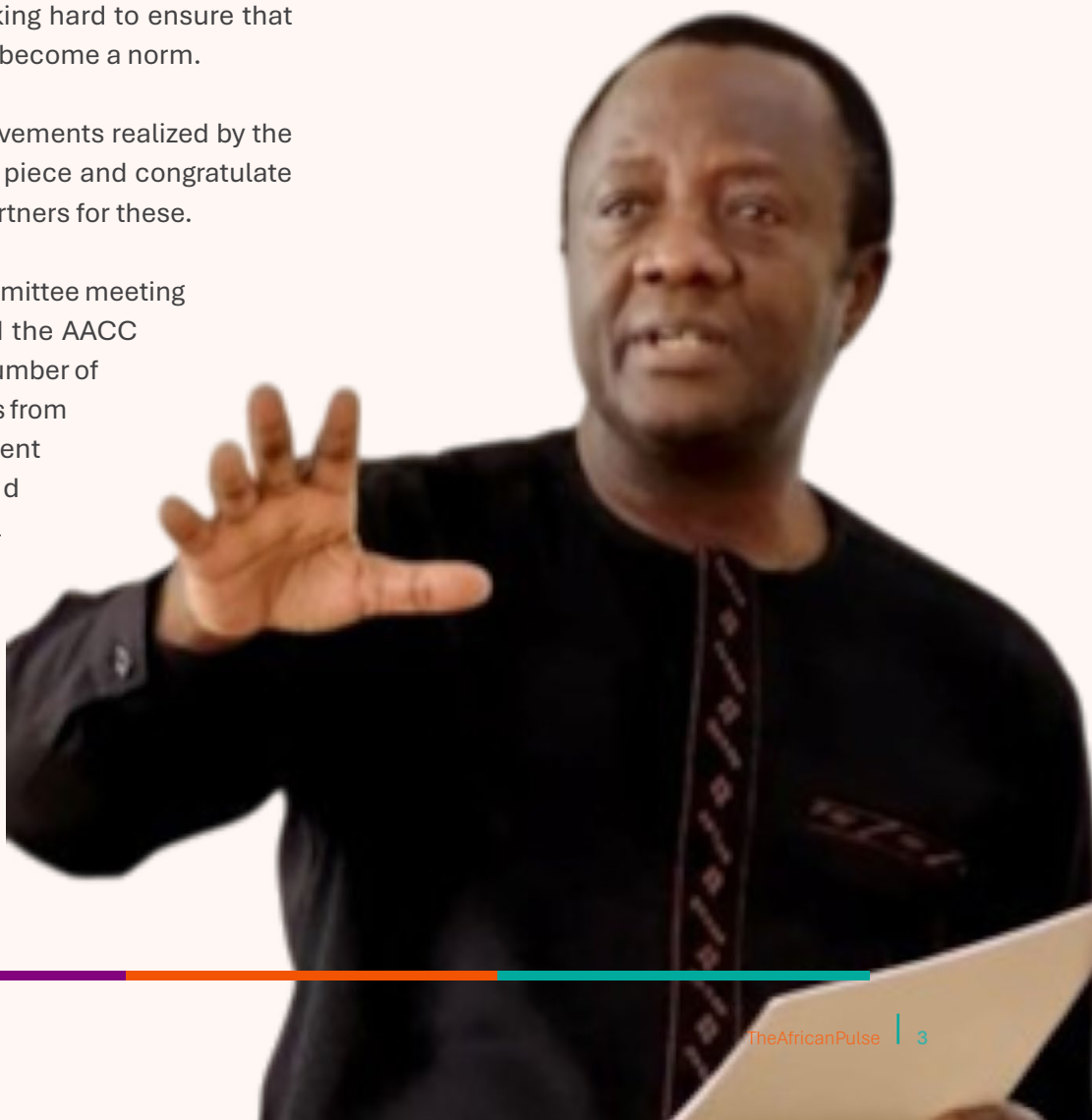
In May, our Executive Committee meeting in Nairobi, Kenya revised the AACC structure increasing the number of Programmatic Directorates from three to four. I am confident that this will indeed accelerate the successful implementation of our current strategy.

I also had the opportunity of visiting various AACC partners

and prospective partners but also of hosting a number of them at the General secretariat. It gives me joy to note that our relationship with partners remain reliable and continue growing stronger.

May God bless you as you engage with our life and work in the next pages of this issues.

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







# Governance, Membership Development & Networking

01



Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki



# Executive Committee Meeting Celebrated AACC's Growth and Revised its Leadership Structure



*Members of the AACC Executive Committee during their meeting in Nairobi, May 2025*

The AACC Executive Committee (EXCOM) is responsible for executing the functions of the General Committee in between its meetings. It is authorized to make decisions on behalf of the General Committee, ensuring alignment with the established strategic objectives and policies. During its meeting held on 30th April 2025, at the Desmond Tutu Conference Center, the EXCOM celebrated the organization's growth and achievements with inspiring commendations to the staff, gratitude to the members and partners, and praise to God for the milestones realized.

The committee acknowledged that the General Secretary and his team had demonstrated outstanding leadership and dedication, ensuring financial prudence and long-term sustainability across all operational areas of the AACC. It was stated that through strategic planning and sound stewardship, they had fostered institutional growth and stability, setting a benchmark for excellence. Furthermore, their commitment to working towards a debt-free organization was recognized as a significant achievement, reflecting their dedication to financial responsibility and sustainable progress.

On membership matters, the Committee reviewed five applications received at the Secretariat and admitted into the AACC membership the Ethiopian Council of Gospel Believers Churches as an associate member of the AACC fellowship. To ensure that all aspects of the current AACC strategy are covered, the EXCOM revised the organization structure, increasing the number of programmatic departments from three to four, effective 1st July 2025. These include:

1. Peace, Theology, Development & Ecclesial Leadership
2. Gender, Women, Youth & Sustainable Population
3. African Union Liaison Office & Advocacy
4. The Regional office in Lomé

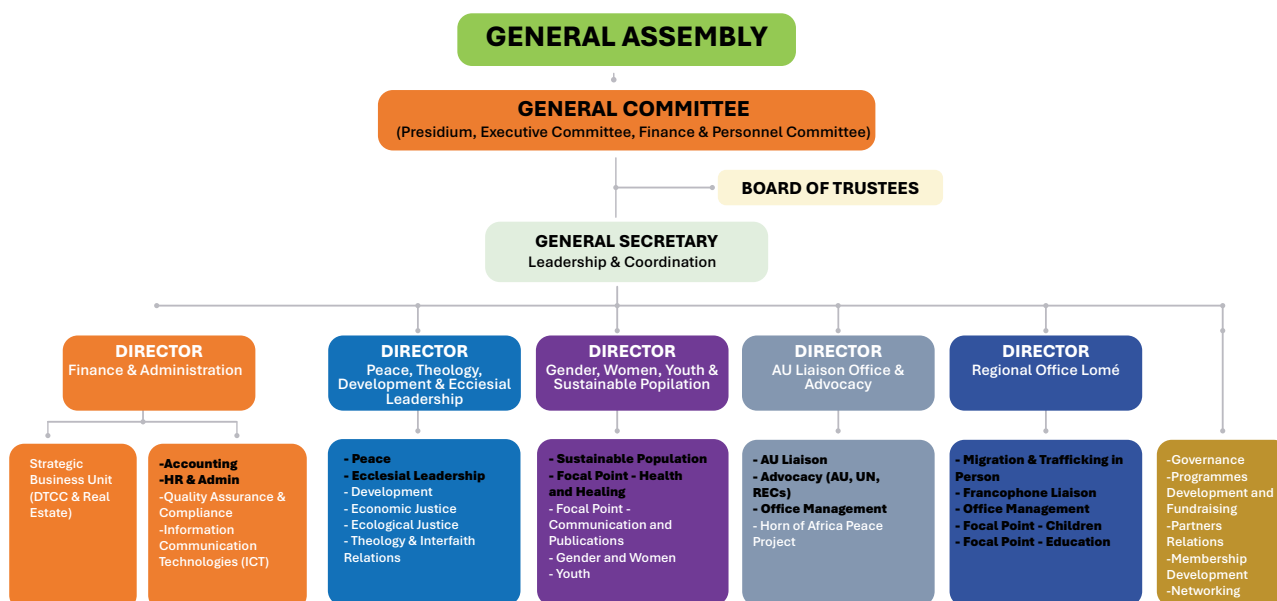
The EXCOM, appointed Ms. Ann Kioi who has been

serving as the Executive Secretary for Programmes Development and Fundraising as the Director for Gender, Women, Youth and Sustainable Population. In addition, the committee extended the contracts of the following three Directors for three years until 2028.

- Dr. Gorden Simango as the Director for the African Union Liaison Office & Advocacy
- Ms. Phyllis Brewah as the Director for Finance and Administration.
- Rev. Dr. Lesmore G. Ezekiel as the Director for Peace, Theology, Development & Ecclesial Leadership.

Meanwhile, Rev. Dr. Angele Dogbe continued in her role as the Director for the Regional Office Lomé. She was also assigned to be the focal point for issues related to children and education.

## ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE



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

On 14th 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.

*"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.



FELM delegation with some of the AACC Staff

The 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.

The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) is an agency of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELF) for its international work. Currently working with almost 100 partners in 24 countries, FELM aims to promote human dignity and justice around the world.



# AACC General Secretary participated in Partners' meetings in Europe

Invited by the Evangelical Lutheran Mission (ELM) Hermannsburg, the AACC General Secretary participated in the 2025 Kirchentag, the largest church event in Germany. This year's Kirchentag attracted more than 150,000 participants attending different exhibitions and meetings, and presentations. During the Kirchentag, Rev. Dr. Fidon participated as a panelist in the discussion on "Racist Realities, Anti-Racist Aspirations – How Can a Diverse Society Succeed?" together with the current chairperson of the Council of the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD), among other theologians and church leaders.

He also had an engagement with students pursuing the Bachelor of Intercultural Theology of the University of Gottingen, sharing his experiences in interculturality of the church. The Kirchentag also offered an opportunity to meet and interact with several ecumenical and church leaders from various AACC partner organizations.

After the Kirchentag, the General Secretary paid a courtesy visit to the United Evangelical Mission office in Wuppertal where he had important conversations aimed at rekindling the Mission's partnership with the AACC. Thereafter, he travelled to Stuttgart to engage with the State Government Library of the state of Baden Württemberg. While there, he shared about AACC's perspective on the role of Bible translation in our Africa. From Stuttgart, Rev. Dr. Fidon visited the Danish Mission Council (DMC) in Denmark at the invitation of the Councils General Secretary, Henrik Sonne-Petersen. While in Denmark, the General Secretary also visited the Centre for Church-Based Development (CKU),

an umbrella body of missions and humanitarian organizations of several churches and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. In addition to the above, he had the opportunity to facilitate a seminar of CKU and DMC on the colonial history of mission and its legacies in the current partnerships.

From Denmark, Rev. Dr. Fidon travelled to Berlin, Germany to participate in a consultation convened by the World Council of Churches (WCC) to commemorate the 140th Anniversary of the Berlin Conference. The consultation invited African and European churches to remember the past, reappraise the present and reimagine the future, particularly on how the Berlin Conference was catalyst to African discrimination and anti-black racism. During the consultation, he made a presentation on Mission and Colonialism.



*Rev. DR. Fidon Mwombeki with some of the leaders of the Danish Church Councils*

# AACC hosted WCC's Think-Tank on Sustainable responses to HIV, Tuberculosis, and Malaria

On 28th and 29th May 2025, the AACC hosted the WCC Think-Tank on Sustainable responses to HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The event provided a safe platform for religious leaders and communities to discuss, strategize, and initiate a campaign in support of the Eighth Replenishment of the Global Fund to reinforce the sustainability of the health response. Participants, the majority of whom were young people, included religious leaders and diverse community leaders from Kenya, South Africa, Zambia, Togo, Nigeria, Uganda, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Netherlands, Bolivia, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, and Tanzania.

In her opening remarks on behalf of the AACC General Secretary, Ms. Ann Kioi, AACC Executive

Secretary for Programmes Development and Fundraising affirmed AACC's commitment to health and healing, describing the think tank as a timely step towards sustaining ecumenical and global achievements in ensuring quality life for all by 2030 as per the 17 UN SDGs.

As the workshop ended, participants published a statement placing an urgent call all governments, and the private sector to commit to and fully fund the Eighth Replenishment of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, urging continued efforts to close equity gaps, to give hope, and to defend the sanctity of life.



*Group photo of the think tank participants.*

# The AACC General Secretary made the keynote address during the Liberia Council of Churches General Assembly

From 28th to 31st May 2025, the Liberia Council of Churches (LCC) held its 35th General Assembly at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Paynesville. The assembly was convened under the theme: “Reconciliation: Acknowledging the past, accepting the present and adjusting for the Future with True Healing” (C.f., Eph.5:14-16) and was attended by all members of the LCC, its partners, and various ecumenical leaders from Africa and beyond.

On 31st May 2025, the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, delivered a keynote address in which he celebrated LCC’s work in promoting peace, justice, and reconciliation in Liberia. While expounding on the theme of the General Assembly, Rev. Dr. Fidon emphasized the richness of the concept of reconciliation as a pathway for Liberia to undergo true social, economic, and spiritual transformation.

*“When reconciliation is done successfully, it changes the lives of all involved. It is a pertinent national and ecclesiastical requirement to usher in a desired future for Liberia.” He urged.*

He called for an approach to reconciliation that begins with acknowledging the past, accepting the present, and adjusting for the future in true healing.

*“We need to work in the spirit of the AACC young people’s campaign: Africa: My Home. My Future. A future we want is one that embraces the shared values of justice, equity, and respect for human dignity.” He expressed.*

The assembly re-elected Rev. Dr. Samuel B. Reeves Jr. as President of LCC for the next four years. Dr. Reeves also serves as a member of the AACC General Committee and Advisory Group on Theology and Interfaith Relations.

In recognition and honor of his contribution to ecumenism in Africa, Rev. Dr. Fidon was presented with the medal and plaque of honor, admitting him into the Bishop Brown Hall of Fame as Ambassador of Ecclesiastical Ecumenical Relations on 1st June 2025, at the historic Providence Baptist Church.



Rev. Dr. Fidon receiving the plaque of honor, admitting him into the Bishop Brown Hall of Fame as Ambassador of Ecclesiastical Ecumenical Relations



# South African Churches and Christian Council hosted the WCC Central Committee in Johannesburg

The WCC Central Committee is the council's governing body with primary responsibility and authority to carry out the vision and policies of the organization set by the WCC General Assembly, deepen the living fellowship of the WCC member churches, provide coherence and strategic leadership to the one ecumenical movement, provide opportunities for consultation among Christian churches on issues of mutual concern, among other duties. The 70th Central Committee elected at the 11th WCC Assembly in 2022, meets every two years. Its 2025 meeting took place in Johannesburg between 17th and 25th June at the invitation of the South African Council of Churches and member churches.

During the meeting's opening session held on 18th June 2025, the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, welcomed the Central committee to Africa on behalf of all AACC's member churches and councils.

*"The Church in Africa thanks God for the Gospel." He said. "Now we celebrate the gospel together with the whole church of God in the world." He continued.*

Rev. Dr. Fidon expressed that the African churches thrive in the love of Christ that compels us to proclaim the same gospel of salvation to our people and beyond, fight for the dignity of Africans and people of African descent, be faithful stewards of God's creation, exercise ethical leadership in our churches and society, work for justice for all and to work for peace in the continent and beyond.



AACC General Secretary making welcome remarks

"We are so delighted to be in South Africa, and I would like to thank the South African Council of Churches and all member churches in South Africa for hosting us and the wonderful hospitality we are enjoying here." Said the WCC Moderator, Prof. Dr. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, during the opening session.

# AACC General Secretary affirmed the international symposium on Global Justice's prophetic calls to action to the G20



Rev. Dr. Fidon with some faith and Civil Society leaders at G20.

**A**head of the G20 meeting scheduled for 22 – 23 November 2025 in South Africa, the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference and the University of Cape Town's Centre for African Studies, in collaboration with other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) organized an international Symposium on Global Justice in Cape Town, South Africa from

23<sup>rd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025. The Symposium aimed to position African priorities for the G20 within the global justice conversation at a pivotal moment in multilateral governance.

Speaking on the role of Civil Society and Faith in Global Transformation, the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, described faith as the barometer and guide of ethical and moral convictions which govern how we live together as one humanity.

*"We are expected to remind the world of what God desires and expects in how we live and are related with one another and all creation in its entirety, both in this generation and beyond." He expressed.*

Rev. Dr. Fidon identified the three interconnected calls to action the symposium offers as a practical, moral vision for the G20 as an opportunity to live in accordance to God's will for us as revealed in Micah 6:8. These include an ecological impact fund (EIF), a just and accountable global debt architecture and a globally universal school lunch program as a practical.

*He emphasized that these "provide to the G20 an opportunity to correct and transform systemic injustices that continue frustrating Africa's efforts to achieve sustainable development."*





# Theology and Interfaith Relations

02



Rev. Dr. John Njoroge Ngige



# 1<sup>st</sup> Cohort of the Master of Theology in Ecumenical Leadership (MTEL) Programme reflects on their experiences at Mindolo Ecumenical Institute

In 2024, 10 young African Theologians were admitted to the Master of Theology degree in Ecumenical Leadership offered by the AACC in collaboration with St. Paul's University and Mindolo Ecumenical Institute. One year later, nine of these had successfully walked the one-year journey ecumenical in leadership formation and met to share their joys, experiences, and plans for the future as they prepared to return to their sending communities. The graduates were joined by their Dean and the Dean of Students, Joshua and Timothy school of theology at St Paul's university, Rev. Dr. Julius Githinji and the AACC Executive Secretary for Theology and Interfaith Relations, Fr. Dr. John Njoroge as they responded to a couple of questions presented to them by AACC communication department as narrated below.

## Life at Mindolo

In their sharing, Rev Agnes Zulu Munayani, Rev. Avalla Ohimbe Julilate, Rev. Jackson Simon, Rev. Skonje Ntanadazo, Rev Oladapo Akintaju, Rev. Gatebuka David and Mr. Geoffrey Ahuna Muganizi provided an insight into the students' life at Mindolo. While acknowledging that the programme is very intensive, exhausting, and demanding due to its condensed schedule, it helped them discover their hidden strengths and ability to adapt to different cultural backgrounds and work settings. For them, teamwork and the ability to appreciate each other's uniqueness, gifts, and cultural background significantly contributed to their success as a team.

## The role of home church accompaniment in the student's life at Mindolo

Much as each of the students reported having received some sort of support from their home church, the level of this support varied from student to student. To some like Rev. Athanase Ibyimana, the Church went as far as funding his travel, upkeep, and providing continuous psychosocial support, to some like Rev. Victoire Wamunyu, the home church was very present in their lives through regular phone calls, and emails providing care, and monitoring progress.

For others, the only support received from their churches was a recommendation letter. One of such students noted that receiving no accompaniment from his church beyond the recommendation letter made him realize the value and need for every church to offer emotional support and accompaniment to its people who travel out of the country for studies or any other programmes.

*"Once I return home, I am going to pursue the formulation and implementation of policies for supporting and accompanying church members undergoing training and those we send abroad to represent our church in various programmes so that they do not experience the negative emotions I have been experiencing, missing the accompaniment of my church." He noted.*



*1<sup>st</sup> MTEL Cohort with their certificates of excellence*

### **The role of MTEL in Africa's Sustainable development**

While affirming the student's perspectives, Dr. Julius expressed his excitement about the ecumenical leadership program, emphasizing its potential to foster unity and peace in Africa. He highlighted the program's unique nature, combining academic and ecumenical elements, and its potential to produce faith leaders whose character and competence can lead us to the Africa We Want.

Father John Njoroge added that the program's ecumenical nature and its focus on producing leaders with integrity and vision are key to its success. He also emphasized the program's potential to raise a generation of young theologians who can spearhead the positive transformation of the Church in Africa and globally.

### **A glimpse into the Future: What next for the Grandaunts?**

It was very inspiring to watch and listen to the students as they shared their plans for the future

with excitement and an obvious sense of fulfillment. Athanase expressed his desire to contribute to his church and make them see the value of their investment in him. Valentine shared his plans to put his learnings into practice and become a voice for peace and climate change in his community. David expressed his intention to educate people about ecumenism and lead initiatives fostering Christian unity and religious tolerance workshops. Agnes was already on fire to inspire girls to pursue their dreams and get into spaces of influence. She was already looking for an opportunity to pursue a PHD in ecumenism.

As the students bid farewell to the dreams nurturing environment of Mindolo Ecumenical Institute that served as their home for twelve months, the institute, and its two companions in this task of nurturing transformative ecumenical leaders (AACC and St. Paul's University) were also getting set to receive the 2nd Cohort of the MTEL programme.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Cohort of AACC's Masters of Theology in Ecumenical Leadership admitted at Mindolo Kitwe, Zambia

With enthusiasm and academic optimism ten students from across the African continent have commenced their Master of Theology in Ecumenical Leadership at the Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation (MEF) in Kitwe, Zambia. The program, offered in partnership with St. Paul's University, Kenya, officially began on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025, following the arrival of the students from nine African countries and ten AACC member churches, including:



**Rev. Odie Djifa**  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Togo



**Ms. Favour Ibukunoluwa Oladapo**  
Baptist Church, Nigeria



**Rev. Fiabu Felix Yao**  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana



**Pst. Marozoky Randrianaina**  
Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar



**Mr. Rogers M. Garwoh**  
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Liberia



**Mr. Isaac Ndegwa Wambui**  
Presbyterian Church of Kenya



**Rev. Wellington Gonja Chiranzi**  
Anglican Church of Kenya



**Rev. Julius Hiire**  
Methodist Church, Uganda



**Rev. Fishani Simbeye Muwowo**  
Uniting Presbyterian Church in Zambia



**Rev. Aurtha Gumbo**  
Reformed Church in Zimbabwe



The warm hospitality and orientation at MEF marked the beginning of what is expected to be an academic, ecumenical, spiritual, and transformative leadership journey.

*Speaking at the orientation event, Rev. Wellington Gonja Chiranzi from Kenya asserts: I thank the AACC for giving me this scholarship. I believe I have a great future to lead after my studies here."*

The programme creates an environment of ecumenical and leadership formation by having the students stay, learn, and worship together in an ecumenical setting. This has turned into a reality for Ms. Favour Oladapo from the Baptist Church - Nigeria, one of the female students who has been elected as the student leader. On sharing her experiences so far, she underlines:

*"Learning, staying, and worshipping with people from different countries and backgrounds has been nothing short of amazing. I appreciate this opportunity, and I know this is a great opportunity given to us by AACC to enhance our leadership skills and function properly in every sphere around*

*the world. I am confident that after completing the course, AACC will continue to engage us."*

The programme is designed to promote the AACC agenda for Inter-generational learning and mentorship of young theologians, producing present and future ecumenically-oriented leaders for African churches and the globe. Rev. Felix Yao Fiabu from Ghana appreciates:

*"I thank God. It is a great privilege to be part of this programme. We need to appreciate the good work AACC is doing in nurturing young generations to fill the leadership gap and sustain the future of the ecumenical movement in Africa."*

This 2nd cohort of students brings together a vibrant mix of church traditions, languages, and cultures, embodying the spirit of ecumenism in Africa. The students have expressed readiness for learning, facing new cultural realities, and committing to becoming transformational leaders for their churches, countries, and the global Christian community.

# AACC Convened a continental consultation on African Perspectives on Decolonization and Reparations debates in Global Christianity

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Discourses on decolonization and calls for reparations for historical injustices are gaining momentum globally, cutting into various aspects of Africa's developmental agendas and aspirations. The African Union designated the theme of the year 2025 as 'Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparation.' This reflects the centrality of the notion of decolonization and reparation in the current work of the African Union and its partners. Given the need to engage with the various critical questions on the church's mission and its role in sustainable development that these discourses present to the African churches and their ecumenical partners, the AACC convened a continental consultation on the African Churches' perspectives on decolonization and reparations. Opened on 4th June 2025 to run till 6th June 2025 at the Desmond Tutu Conference Center in Nairobi, Kenya, the consultation convened 40 African Church leaders, including lay theologians, ordained leaders, young theologians, and theological educators from across the continent.

In his opening Remarks, the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, noted that as much as many church synods are not engaging on the topic of decolonization, there is a need for a proper voice on Africa to contribute to the ongoing conversations at regional and global levels. He cautioned against the tendency of different parties speaking for Africans without listening to Africans and encouraged participants to strive to discern together a discussion paper to guide the churches'

engagements and accompany the continental work on decolonization and Reparations.

To set the pace for discussion, Rev Prof. Helen Ishola-Esan, the President, Baptist Theological Seminary, Eku, Nigeria, noted that in contemporary discourse, decolonization goes far beyond the mere transfer of political authority to dismantling colonial legacies in every sphere of life; economic, cultural, educational, psychological, and epistemological.

*"For African Churches, decolonization involves more than rejecting Western theology and entails reconstructing Christianity through African lenses." She expressed.*

Speaking to the Tanzanian Context, the Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Tanzania, Most Rev. Maimbo Mndolwa, highlighted the divided perspectives on decolonization and reparation, with many in favor of the agenda and a significant other not even expressing any interest in the topic.

Reflecting on the nexus between mission and colonialism, Rev. Dr. Jeannie Normel Dorgeles from the Methodist church in Ivory Coast stressed the need for the consultation to help participants define the meeting point between the Western world and authentic African Christianity.

The second day of the consultation on African Perspectives on Decolonization and Reparations debates in Global Christianity held in Nairobi,

Kenya on 5th June 2025 opened with thought provoking conversations on Reparative Justice. To lay a foundation for the day's business, Dr. Tinashe Gumbo, AACC Programme Executive for Ecological and Economic Justice presented a paper on the development of the concept of Reparations in global conversations on development.

Reflecting on the biblical and theological understanding of reparations, Rev. Dr. Motuma Bedassa, from the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, stressed the need to find a meeting point for repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. His presentations stirred a heated theological

debate on the interpretation of several biblical texts on reparations.

Feeding into the day's opening session, Prof. Susan Kilonzo from Maseno University, Kenya, cautioned the forum against reading biblical texts selectively in a sense that would limit their deliberations to looking at reparations from only the aspect of historical colonialism.

*"We also need to be alive to our current reality; the things that we do to each other as Africans backed by ethnicity, tribalism, and other vices." She emphasized*



Group photo of the participants





# Peace in Africa

03



Rev. Charles Berahino

# Refresher training for the Eminent Persons Ecumenical Program for Peace in Africa (EPEPPA)

Peace in Africa is a key aspiration and major commitment for the AACC. In this regard, the Eminent Persons Ecumenical Program for Peace in Africa (EPEPPA) is the vehicle through which the AACC decides and enforces its initiatives and peace efforts in solidarity with nations facing political instability and fragile peace. EPEPPA is driven by the desire to maintain peace, justice, dignity, and equality as the fabric that holds society together. The program focuses on early warning and conflict mediation mechanisms, with eminent persons always on standby to intervene where peace and stability are threatened or shaken. The EPEPPA is a powerful tool that the AACC relies on in its efforts to unite the voices of faith leaders and communities to maintain stability in Africa.

From 6-9 May 2025, in order to complement previous engagements held in 2020, 2021, and 2022, the AACC organized a refresher session that brought together 35 Eminent Persons (22 males and 13 females) from 21 African countries. They met at the Desmond Tutu Conference Center (DTCC) in Nairobi-Kenya.

The overall objective was to acquaint the team with the mission of EPEPPA as designed by AACC so that they would have a clearer understanding of their mission in the wide spectrum of AACC's peace vocation on the continent, but also to be updated on the current changing context of Africa. The two-day refresher provided a comprehensive and thought-provoking analysis of violent conflict and insecurity across Africa, with speakers drawing links between governance failures, resource exploitation, climate change, and social exclusion. In addition, they were equipped with strategies and steps for effective advocacy, on silent diplomacy, and on dialogue-centered approach and lobbying. As outcomes, the EPEPPA members got a better understanding of the African context, of the EPEPPA mission, and recommitted to remain true to the mission and vision, and meaningfully contribute to peace in Africa's complex socio-political landscape. The refresher was also an occasion for fostering unity among eminent persons for better interactions and consultation going forward.



*Photo of the eminent persons, 7 May 2025 at DTCC, Nairobi-Kenya*

# Regional Capacity Strengthening workshop for member churches on peacebuilding, conflict resolution and transformation



Participants in the event- Kampala, 21 May 2025

Since 2018, the AACC is implementing a project to strengthen peacebuilding and conflict resolution interventions in Africa, with hope of contributing to various efforts to address challenges to sustainable peace and harmonious coexistence in the continent. In the implementation of the third phase of this project, the AACC organized a regional capacity strengthening workshop for its member churches from the Eastern and Southern Africa regions. Hosted by the Church of Uganda, the event took place at Jevine Hotel in Kampala-Uganda. It offered a rich blend of theological reflections, practical tools, and experiential learning. The workshop was delivered through a series of thematic presentations and plenary discussions facilitated by experienced resource persons, including both external experts and staff from the AACC. Sessions covered topics such as drivers of conflict and social cohesion, biblical approaches to peacebuilding, understanding conflict prevention, management, resolution, and transformation.

Participants engaged deeply with the sessions that emphasized the role of faith communities in addressing structural injustices and nurturing inclusive, justice-driven societies. The devotional moments, led by various regional leaders, reminded participants of the spiritual responsibility that underpins their work as peacebuilders. Compelling country presentations from the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and the Kingdom of Eswatini illuminated the urgency and complexity of current conflicts, displacement, and social trauma. These reflections fostered a spirit of solidarity and a shared commitment to advocacy, pastoral accompaniment, and ecumenical action across borders. The honest conversations and collaborative learning created momentum for sustained, faith-based engagement with issues of governance, justice, and reconciliation.

The workshop concluded with a guided site tour to key religious landmarks in Uganda, offering participants a unique opportunity to explore the country's rich spiritual heritage, witness local expressions of faith, and draw inspiration from Uganda's interfaith history of resilience and unity. The participants returned to their countries equipped with a shared vision of a peaceful, just, and inclusive Africa.



Rev. Dr. Lesmore Gibson Ezekiel, AACC DoP facilitating a session



# Ecumenical Peace Mission to Eswatini inspires Social Cohesion and National Transformation

Eswatini has experienced significant political and social tension, particularly since the 2021 protests, which led to violence and loss of life. The church has remained a central pillar in Eswatini's society, and its influence positions it as a key factor in advancing peace and reconciliation. It is with this understanding that the AACC, in collaboration with the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) and the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) organized a round table meeting to deepen Ecumenical Relations for National Cohesion and Transformation in eSwatini from 24th to 27th June 2025. This meeting brought together twenty-six church leaders, including women and youth from

the three main church bodies in eSwatini, to reflect on how to foster social cohesion and work for peace in eSwatini.

During the meeting, the team also engaged with different peacebuilding stakeholders, including the United Nations (UN) resident coordinator's office, the Human Rights Commission, and the Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (CANGO). During these engagements, participants advocated for close collaboration with the Church in eSwatini as it works for life, justice, peace, and dignity of God's people in the Kingdom of eSwatini.



*Group photo of the participants during day one of the consultation*





# Economic and Ecological Justice

04



Dr. Tinashe Gumbo



# AFAN-CJ Commemorates World Environment Day through locally-led initiatives

The Africa Faith Actors Network for Climate Justice (AFAN-CJ) joined the world in commemorating World Environment Day (WED) 2025 under the theme ‘Beat Plastic Pollution’. The WED is commemorated annually to raise global awareness and encourage action for the protection of the environment. This year’s theme allowed faith actors to raise awareness about the harmful impacts of plastic waste on the ecosystem, wildlife, and human health.

Locally-led initiatives were implemented in thirty countries in Africa from 5 to 30 June 2025. Speaking on the eve of the WED commemorations from Accra, Ghana, the Chairman of the Africa Faith Actors Network for Climate Justice (AFAN-CJ),

*Rev Dr Bliss Divine Agbeko, said, “On this day, the AFAN-CJ rejoices in the beauty and wonder of God’s creation. Today, we encourage all people,*

*institutions and communities to take intentional steps in reducing environmental harm”.*

Dr. Tinashe Gumbo, the AACC Programme Executive, Economic and Ecological Justice, expressed optimism stating that he looked forward to AFAN-CJ’s country-level commemorations that run from 5 to 30 June 2025. The planned activities were characterized by awareness-raising activities, engagement of key national policy stakeholders, and collaborative initiatives involving public institutions, schools, civil society organizations, and others. In line with this year’s theme, the AACC continued to call for sustainable production, usage, and disposal of plastics.



Group photo of the participants during day one of the consultation



Clean up exercise in Zambia led by AFAN-CJ Secretary, Evelyn Chirwa, to mark WED 2025. Photo courtesy of Evelyn Chirwa



## AFAN-CJ participates in the Nairobi Reality Tour

The AFAN-CJ participated in a three-day training meeting on climate justice (a.k.a Nairobi Reality Tour) from 12 to 14 June 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya. The AFAN-CJ was represented by six delegates, including the Director of Programs for AACC, Rev. Dr. Lesmore Gibson Ezekiel, and Dr. Tinashe Gumbo, the Programme Executive for Economic and Ecological Justice.

The meeting was organised by the Climate Reality Project, a global network founded by former United States Vice President Al Gore, who is its chairman. The training was attended by over seven hundred participants representing climate advocates, youth leaders, policy makers, Africa's Group of Negotiators, scientists, academic institutions, and others. Vice President Gore was one of the main mentors during the training.



AACC Programme Executive, Dr Tinashe Gumbo, with Vice- President Gore and Ms. Wanjira Mathaai during the dinner hosted for the delegates. Photo credit: Bishop Dr Emily Onyango

In his opening remarks at the meeting, Rev Dr Ezekiel challenged the participants to be responsible stewards of God's creation. He said, "Our collective responsibility is to rescue our common home, Earth". He urged all of humanity to rescue the Earth from the hands of those who are committed to destroying it.

Rev Dr Ezekiel lamented that greed has made a fraction of humanity exploit and destroy the earth, an action which, according to him, is now coming back to hunt all of humanity in the form of climate change. He added, "We are obligated to call out for Climate Justice and also to realize that we have been given the responsibility of creation care and stewardship by the Almighty."

The AFAN-CJ members had the opportunity to connect with other critical stakeholders in climate advocacy at the continental and global levels. They also shared the work of the AFAN-CJ and committed to collaborating with like-minded players in responding to the effects of climate change in Africa.



Members of the AFAN-CJ on the first day.  
Photo Credit: Unknown Delegate requested to take the photo

## Religious Leaders in Sierra Leone Urged to Hold Government Accountable on Public Debt Accumulation and Management

The AACC, in collaboration with the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) convened a stakeholders' engagement meeting on public accountability and debt management in Sierra Leone from 2 to 3 April 2025 in Freetown. The aim of the meeting was to raise awareness on public debt and corruption while strengthening the capacity of religious leaders to track and document public resource management data to enhance their prophetic role in society. Participants included religious leaders, legislators, civil society, media, independent Commissions, experts on public resource management, the private sector, women and youth groups.

Dr. Tinashe Gumbo, the AACC Program Executive on Economic and Ecological Justice analyzed Africa's debt crisis based on the research carried out in Burundi, Ghana, Zambia, Tanzania, and Sierra Leone between 2022 and 2024. He highlighted familiar drivers of debt accumulation and emphasized the urgent need for faith leaders to take an active role in advocacy.

Faith leaders were encouraged to persistently advocate for responsible debt management, leveraging their influence over communities and policymakers for public awareness and campaigns.



Hon Cathrine Zainab Tanawully presenting on the role of Parliament in public debt management. Photo credit: Dr Tinashe Gumbo





# Ecclesiastial Leadership Development

05



Rev. Dr. Lesmore G. Ezekiel



## Southern African Churches Commit to Ethical Leadership and Eco-Stewardship at Landmark AACC Summit in Luanda

Church leaders from across Southern Africa converged in Luanda, Angola, from May 26th to 30th 2025, for a pivotal regional capacity strengthening program focused on Ecclesial Ethical Leadership Development and Eco-Stewardship.

The five-day program commenced with a special ecumenical church service at the United Methodist Church of Angola Cathedral, hosted by the Council of Angolan Christian Churches (CICA). AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, delivered a compelling sermon on “Church Participation in Nation Building,” drawing inspiration from Ephesians 2:19-22. The service saw participation from diverse Christian traditions, including African indigenous churches, with Angolan churches expressing profound appreciation for AACC’s solidarity amidst the country’s socio-political and economic challenges.

Delegates from Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe engaged in intensive sessions led by expert facilitators. Topics covered

included Biblical and Theological Reflections on Leadership and Resource Mobilization Strategies for Sustainability, guided by Dr. Sindiso Jele. Rev. Dr. Lesmore G. Ezekiel facilitated a session on Transformative and Ethical Leadership, while Ms. Annette Oloo led discussions on Strategic Management and Planning and Human Resource Management in Church Institutions.

A significant outcome of the summit was the unanimous decision to launch a regional programmatic campaign focused on “Promoting Ethical Leadership and Investment for a Transformed and Sustainable Future.” A dedicated Taskforce was constituted to spearhead this initiative, comprising prominent regional leaders: Bishop Ignatios Makumbe (Zimbabwe), Presiding Bishop Pumla Nzimande (South Africa), Rev. Dr. Denis RAKOTOZAFY (Madagascar), Rev Felicia Ramaribana (Botswana), Bishop Bernardo João Ngunza (Angola), and Khombisile S’phiwe Dlamini (Lesotho). The General Secretaries of all the Councils within the region will serve as the Technical Team to the Taskforce.



Group photo of the participants



# Youth

Brian Muyunga

06





# Youth Leaders In Mauritius Advocate for Tax Justice and the eradication of Human Trafficking

Youth leaders from the Presbyterian Church in Mauritius are advocating for tax justice and combatting human trafficking after benefiting from the AACC's capacity building initiatives on these thematic areas. Arising from this, they organized workshops that engaged fifteen (15) other youth leaders of their church on tax justice and human migration matters. The first workshop took place on the 5th of April 2025 at the Jean Le Brun Centre, in Rose-Hill.

*"These workshops are aiming at enabling our entire leadership team to understand our role as youth leaders in promoting economic justice and in confronting irregular migration and human trafficking," noted Miss Rindra Razanatovo, the National Youth Coordinator of the Presbyterian Church in Mauritius. "They ensure that we all benefit from the exposure, knowledge, and skills that Grace and Fanirisoa gained from the opportunity they got to be trained by AACC," she continued.*

During the first workshop, the session exploring the fundamental concepts of tax justice and its importance in promoting social equity and reducing poverty was facilitated by Miss Grace Cangy, the youth leader who participated in the 2024 All Africa Youth Network training webinars on economic justice. Grace also represented the AACC in the 2024 Pan-African Conference on illicit financial flows. Her session featured a quiz on what the bible teaches about tax and youth agency. Thereafter, Miss Fanirisoa Razanatovo, a participant in the 2024 regional youth consultation on Migration, led discussions on human trafficking in the context of Mauritius. Her session interrogated the causes



Grace Cangy introducing her session during the workshop

and dangers of Human trafficking and existing legal instruments to end this evil.

Both Grace and Fanirisoa urged their peers to utilize the opportunity they have as youth leaders to bring the vision of 'Africa: My Home. My Future.' campaign to reality by living as drivers of positive change in Mauritius. While announcing the date and focus of the next workshop, the National Youth Coordinator, Rindra, encouraged her fellow leaders to continue mobilizing their constituencies to register and prepare to participate in the upcoming All Africa Youth Congress.

*"The congress offers a rare opportunity for learning, capacity building, and networking and sharing experiences with other youth leaders from across Africa," she emphasized.*



# Webinars on Youth and Pan-Africanism set the pace toward the All Africa Youth Congress 2025



**A**s African youth leaders prepare for their ecumenical and Pan-African gathering later on in 2025, the second All Africa Youth Congress, thematic webinars on youth and Pan-Africanism on the theme, “Africa: My Home My Future.” are periodically held to set the pace for the physical gathering. The first webinar was held on April 29, 2025, with over 150 participants. Rev. Vivian Ritho from the Anglican Church of Kenya and Edwin Osei, Youth President of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, moderated the session, while Mr. Simbarashe Hunzvi from Zimbabwe facilitated. Mr. Hunzvi stressed the need for a new Pan-African movement, led by young people, to fight poverty, migration, gaps in governance, and destructive global narratives. He did this by linking Africa’s previous struggles for freedom to the problems it faces now.

Mr. Hunzvi told African youth to stop outsourcing their goals and instead construct them at home. He pointed to grassroots activism and youth-led initiatives like Fees Must Fall in South Africa, EndSARS

in Nigeria, and the Gen Z mobilization in Kenya as examples. “Fix the roof,” he said. “Don’t run away from Africa.” The Congress is a strong base for change.

The second webinar was held on 15<sup>th</sup> May with over 200 youth leaders participating on Zoom. The webinar focused on “Youth Active Citizenship and the Role of Agenda 2063 in Pan-Africanism and was moderated by Ms. Yenwo Harriette from the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon. This time, Mr. Osei Edwin from Presbyterian Church Ghana facilitated.

Osei spoke about the six pillars of active citizenship: awareness, participation, responsibility, accountability, solidarity, and respect. He also gave examples of how young people may get involved, like organizing their communities, starting businesses that are ethical, peacefully advocating for change, and mentoring. He also linked these ideals to important goals of Agenda 2063, especially Aspiration 6, which says that women and young people should be the ones who lead Africa’s development.



# Churches Campaign against SGBV in Africa: Youth transforming the continent's narrative

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The churches campaign against SGBV in Africa project was launched in 2023 to empower male and female youth leaders advocate for an end to SGBV in Africa and contribute to the realization of SDG5 (Gender Equality) and AU Agenda 2063 Aspiration 6 (Aspiration 6: An Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children). Under this campaign, 20 AACC member churches were supported to run in-country campaigns against SGBV in Africa, capitalizing on the agency of their youth forums.

Most of the campaigns run by the participating churches include social media advocacy and activism for gender justice and equality using local radio and television stations and various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. Through the young people's creativity, youth developed and disseminated messages creating awareness on SGBV and theologies challenging gender stereotypes.

In addition to this, several capacity strengthening trainings were organized to equip more youth and church leaders with the knowledge and skills required to prevent SGBV and, where it occurs, respond effectively. During physical gatherings, the youth utilize the All Africa Youth Network Pledge of commitment to mobilize fellow young people to commit to work and live as agents of change, resisting all forms of SGBV and teaching those around them to uphold Gender Justice.

Through grassroots community dialogues, youth-led forums, and Media outreach, the campaign has sparked critical conversations around gender justice

and respect for human dignity. Below are some of the excerpts from the impact reports.

*“Our Anti-GBV campaign has helped our society to recognize and reject forms of violence that had long been normalized. Youths and society are now aware that SGBV takes many forms, including harassment through texts or calls, and have been taught to reject these with confidence. The campaign's engagement with local stakeholders has also challenged administrative structures to be more vigilant, especially in response to previously unreported cases. Community members who were unaware of legal procedures have now been enlightened not only on how to report cases but also on how to preserve evidence when such cases happen, as failure to do this hinders justice from being served.”*  
Josphat Maina Mwangi, Africa Christian Church and Schools (ACC&S), Kenya

*“The campaign has succeeded at enabling our church to include boys and young men in these the fight for Gender Justice and also bring their issues at the attention of the church. Many are beginning to understand that SGBV affects them too, and that they have an important role to play in both prevention and support. There is an increasing interest in conversations promoting healthy masculinity and creating safe spaces for both males and females to break harmful stereotypes.”* Wapalwa Musaba, United Church of Zambia.

*“The campaign is not only fostering a culture of respect and dignity, but also inspiring a new generation of leaders committed to ending SGBV across Africa.”* Claudina Shimanda, Namibia Council of Churches.



Youth leaders holding a talk show to mobilize citizens for gender justice on Mozambique National Television on 9th June 2025.



Anti-GBV campaign leaders in Cameroon during a television talk show in June 2025



A campaign poster calling for the respect of human rights and dignity on a public van in Ghana. This is one of the posters developed and disseminated by the Presbyterian Church in Ghana.





Some of the participants in a training of trainers' workshop on ending SGBV organized and facilitated by the Methodist Church in Guinea Conakry in May 2025.



Sign post calling for collective efforts against SGBV on one of the Church premises in Malawi.



Youth and Church leaders of the United Church in Zambia steering the churches campaign against SGBV in the country.

## Churches Campaign against SGBV in Africa: Youth transforming the continent's narrative

The Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC), through its Women, Youth, Peace and Security Institute (WYPSI), organized a short-term training on Leadership and Peacebuilding for youth leaders and young professionals. The training took place from May 12th to 16th, 2025, in Ghana. Among the participants was Mboriini Ceaser Eliaba Younis, a member of the All Africa Youth Network (AAYN) from South Sudan, representing AACC.

The program aimed to equip young leaders with vital skills and knowledge to actively participate in peacebuilding efforts within their communities. The training covered key areas such as Ethical Leadership, Peacebuilding Strategies, Conflict Resolution, Resource Mobilization, and Policy Engagement.

In his feedback, Caesar expressed that, “The knowledge and skills acquired during this training are directly applicable to my church’s efforts in promoting dialogue, youth engagement, and social justice for peace in South Sudan.”

He also highlighted the diverse backgrounds of the participants, which included individuals from civil society, media, government, academia, and youth-led organizations. “This diversity provided invaluable perspectives and fostered a strong sense of regional cooperation among youth networks,” Caesar added. He shared that he feels better equipped to contribute meaningfully to peace and security initiatives in his community.

To maximize the impact of his training, Caesar plans to organize a sharing workshop with fellow youth leaders to disseminate knowledge gained and to explore partnership opportunities with KAIPTC and other peacebuilding institutions. His goal is to build the capacity of more youth leaders in South Sudan to become active agents of peace and development.



Mboriini Ceaser Eliaba Youni during the training in Accra.

# Empowering Youth to Embrace Transformative Masculinities and Femininities in Africa through Intergenerational Conversations

In April and June 2025, the AACC convened four intergenerational webinars aimed at deepening the Church's engagement in promoting gender justice and equality across Africa. These virtual gatherings brought together youth, church leaders, and gender advocates from various countries to reflect on theological perspectives, lived experiences, and the structural and cultural forces that influence gender relations.

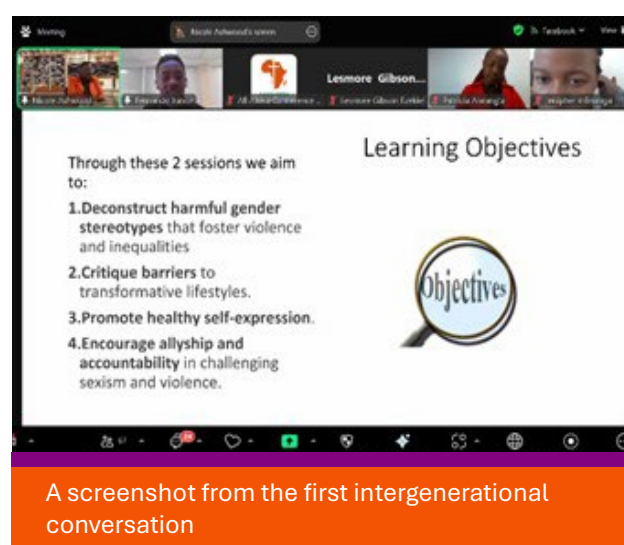
The first two-day webinar, held on April 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, was in collaboration with the World Council of Churches (WCC). It aimed to introduce participants to the concepts of Transformative Masculinities and Femininities within the African context. Facilitators for this session included Rev. Nicole Ashwood, WCC's Programme Executive for Just Communities for Men and Women, and Mr. Fernando Junior, a member of the AACC's All Africa Youth Network (AAYN) from Mozambique.

The second set of webinars took place on June 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. These sessions examined socialization processes, gender formation, and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). Facilitated by Ms. Kibiki Bupe from Tanzania, and Rev. Dr. Sindiso Jele from the Ecumenical Church Leaders Forum (ECLF) in Zimbabwe, the conversations challenged participants to critically analyze how families, schools, religious institutions, and media socialize boys and girls into gendered expectations from birth—expectations that often reinforce inequality and normalize violence. Facilitators encouraged

attendees to re-read scripture through a lens of justice, fostering a mindset open to transformative change.

Future intergenerational conversations are scheduled as follows:

- August 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>: Focus on Gender Stereotypes and Tech-Facilitated GBV
- September 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>: Developing and Disseminating Theologies and Advocacy Messages for Transformative Masculinities and Femininities (TMF)
- December 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>: Reflections on Sustaining Advocacy for Gender Justice





# The Day of the African Child Commemorated with a call to end SGBV in Africa

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**O**n June 16, 2025, and through the whole month of June, youth leaders in 11 African countries marked the Day of the African Child under the churches' Campaign against SGBV in Africa on the theme, **"Let Love Lead: End Gender-Based Violence Now."** Through church events, school workshops, and community forums, children and youth were empowered to speak out and act against SGBV.

In **Ethiopia**, youth leaders trained over 50 pastors, evangelists, and seminary students, offering theological tools to prevent SGBV and support survivors. The session emphasized the church's public and personal responsibility to speak out and act in compassion and justice.

In the **DR Congo**, youth and young parents gathered to discuss SGBV and exploitation. Legal experts and cultural performances helped envision a violence-free future, with follow-up plans for survivor support and training centers.

In **Gabon**, youth-led interactive session for 40 young people, breaking taboos around GBV through open dialogue and digital literacy. Youth leaders stressed collective responsibility and the importance of empowering children to speak out.

In **Congo Brazzaville**, a multi-phase campaign through radio, schools, and home visits mobilized the public to challenge GBV. Religious leaders, children, and educators united to break the silence and promote safe spaces.

**Ghana's** Atebubu Senior High School hosted over

50 junior high students in workshops combining education, drama, and cultural expression. The event focused on child rights, leadership, and GBV prevention, encouraging ongoing empowerment initiatives.

**Kenya** saw two vibrant efforts: ACC&S held three sessions in Maai Mahiu, engaging over 600 youth in open talks, storytelling, and community forums to raise awareness about sexual and gender-based violence and empower young people to speak out. At the same time, ACK St. Mathews Juja organized a lively event featuring a children's parade, cultural performances, youth dialogue, and different sessions with different topics for children, teens, and parents.

In **Tanzania**, two impactful initiatives marked the Day of the African Child: a research project engaging children from diverse backgrounds schools, churches, and the streets shed light on the complex realities of GBV and existing interventions, and from 10th to 20th June youth leaders led seminars, school visits, parish dialogues, and campus debates to equip youth and church members with advocacy tools, emphasizing the power of education, faith, and social media in breaking the silence around GBV.

In **Namibia**, the youth leaders hosted an event at the University of Namibia, where young people learned about SGBV and pledged zero tolerance, using art and peer education as tools.

**Morocco** commemorated the day with a sports walk, combined with a workshop for collective reflection, enabling children to express their

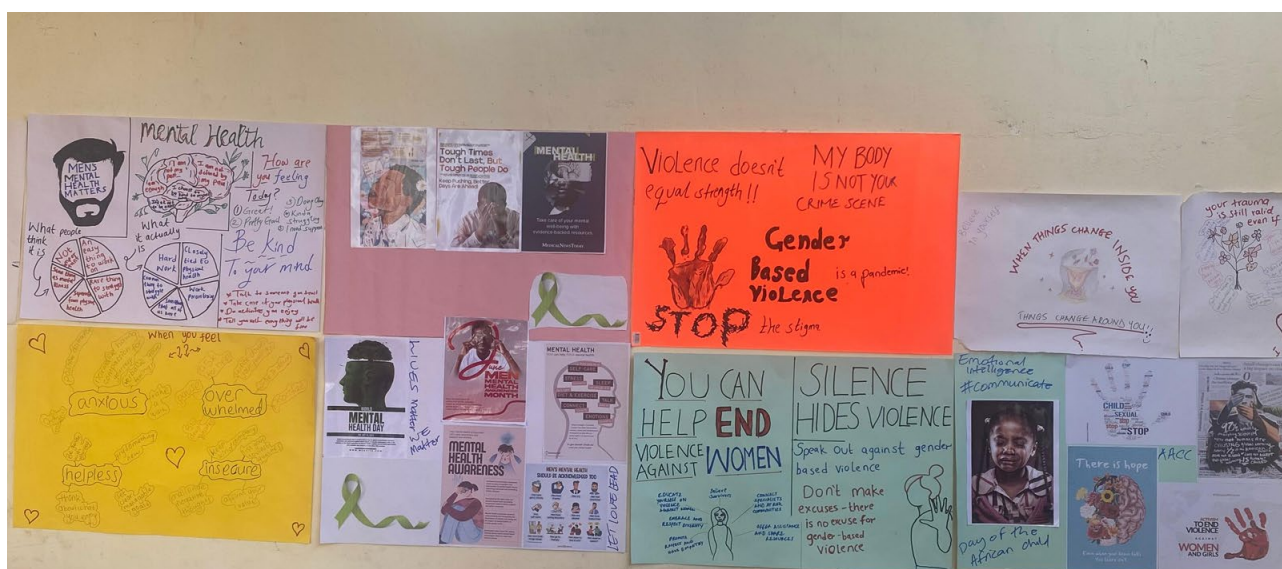
rejection of violence and build solidarity. In **Nigeria**, activities took place both in schools and churches. In Oron, over 500 students participated in interactive sessions, group discussions, and role plays that deepened their understanding of GBV and empowered them to speak out and support victims. Meanwhile, the Wesley Circuit engaged about 100 young people in sermons, workshops, survivor testimonies, and community dialogues focused on addressing GBV within faith spaces.

Finally, in **Mozambique**, youth led the way with drama, poetry, music, and group discussions centered on peace, justice, and ending SGBV. Their creative expressions raised awareness and encouraged transformation through dignity, equality, and love



Youth leaders of the ACK St. Matthew's who led the Church's Day of the African Child events

Across Africa, these activities reflect a growing commitment to create safe, loving spaces where children's rights, dignity, and justice are upheld, and SGBV is no longer tolerated.



Advocacy posters developed by children brought together by youth leaders of the ACK St. Matthew's in Kenya.

# AACC Youth Spearhead Contextual Bible Studies on SRHR and Sustainable Population Growth

In its commitment to promoting human dignity, the AACC is accompanying youth leaders and young theologians to develop Contextual Bible Studies (CBS) manuals for use in promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Sustainable Population Growth (SPG) for quality life in Africa.

To facilitate this process, two virtual consultations with 25 youth leaders and young theologians were held in June 2025. The consultations were partly aimed at establishing the structure and identifying themes for the CBS manuals to be developed.

The first consultation held on 3rd June focused on SRHR. Participants engaged in robust discussions, thoughtfully unpacking themes such as:

- Understanding the human body and its sacred design from a theological perspective
- Exploring safe and unsafe sexual practices in the light of God's wisdom.
- Addressing the practicalities and spiritual dimensions of menstrual health management.
- Grasping gender identity and roles from God's divine perspective.

Ethical access to essential reproductive health services. The second consultation held on June 11th focused on the SPG category and deliberations centered around procreation and sustainability, caring for Christian families, family planning, childlessness, and assisted reproductive science.

The second consultation shifted its focus to the equally significant category of Sustainable Population Growth (SPG). Deliberations centered around critical issues including:

The theological understanding of procreation and its alignment with environmental sustainability.

Strategies for nurturing and caring for Christian families in challenging contexts.

Exploring the nuances of family planning through a faith lens.

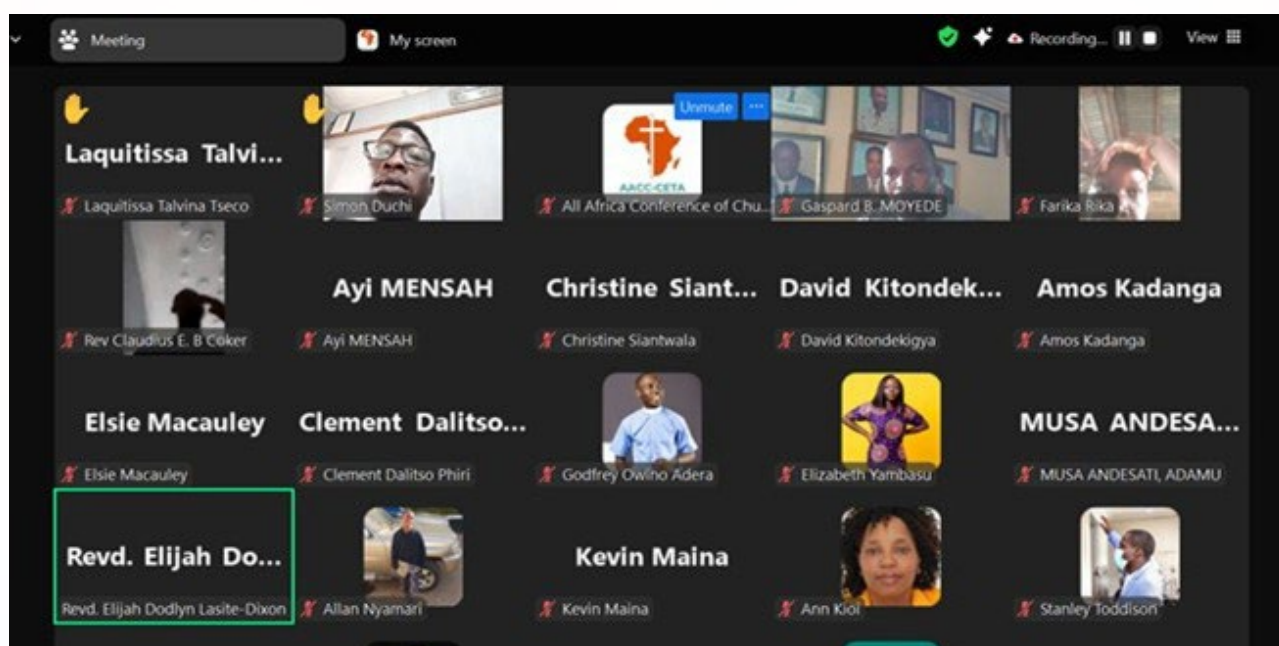
Addressing the deeply personal and often stigmatized topic of childlessness within a faith community.

Examining the ethical and spiritual considerations surrounding assisted reproductive science.

These fruitful consultations mark a significant milestone in the AACC's commitment to empowering young leaders and integrating faith into solutions for Africa's most critical development challenges. With the foundational structure and key themes now firmly established, the participating youth leaders and young theologians will now embark on the crucial task of developing the actual Contextual Bible Studies.

The resulting manuals are anticipated to be powerful tools, providing churches and communities with biblically grounded resources to foster open dialogue, promote informed decision-making, and champion practices that uphold human dignity, health, and a sustainable future for all Africans. It is expected that these will be launched at the upcoming All Africa Youth Congress.





Some of the participants during the consultations

## An interview with AAYC Steering Committee Co-Chairperson

As the 2<sup>nd</sup> All Africa Youth Congress draws close, the communication team led by Brian Muyunga held an online interview with the AAYC Steering Committee chairperson to get insights on the progress of the congress plans and her leadership role. Below is the narrative of their conversation.

**Brian: Greetings, Madam Chairperson. Please introduce yourself to our readers.**

**Vivian:** I am Rev. Vivian Wanjiku Ritho, an ordained minister in the Anglican Church of Kenya and a passionate advocate for youth empowerment, leadership, and holistic development. I am a Co-Chair of the Steering Committee for the All Africa Youth Congress 2025 (AAYC25). I also serve as a member of the Executive and General Committee of the All Africa Conference of Churches. I am the founder of T-World International - a mentorship platform designed to inspire and equip teenagers and youth.

**Brian: Nice! How are the congress preparations going?**

**Vivian:** Preparations for the All Africa Youth Congress (AAYC25) are gaining momentum. Behind the scenes, a passionate and diverse team of young leaders, clergy, youth workers, and regional coordinators is working tirelessly to bring the vision to life. From program design to building partnerships and securing a welcoming venue in Nairobi, every detail is being handled with purpose and urgency. Youth networks across Africa and the diaspora have shown tremendous support, fueling a growing excitement. This congress is more than an event—it's a movement with long-term impact.

**Brian: What does it mean to serve as chairperson of the steering committee?**

**Vivian:** Serving as chairperson is both a great honor and a serious responsibility. It means co-leading a continental gathering that highlights the potential of Africa's youth. As a clergy woman, I see this as a sacred task—to guide this process with integrity, vision, and care. The role involves ensuring inclusive planning, listening deeply to young people, and helping the team remain focused on the big picture. This congress is a generational milestone, and I'm grateful to be a part of shaping it.

**Brian: What should participants expect at AAYC in November 2025?**

**Vivian:** Expect a dynamic, high-impact experience bringing together 500 young leaders in Nairobi, and many more via digital platforms.



The congress will include plenary sessions, workshops, cultural celebrations, worship, networking, and innovation spaces. It will be a diverse space—welcoming youth with disabilities, various faith backgrounds, and members of the African diaspora. Whether your passion is climate justice, entrepreneurship, peacebuilding, or faith-based leadership, you'll find your place. Most importantly, participants will leave equipped, inspired, and connected to a pan-African community of changemakers.

**Brian: With over 2,600 applicants but only 500 invited to Nairobi, how will others be included?**

**Vivian:** The overwhelming response shows the hunger for engagement among Africa's youth. While only 500 can attend physically due to logistical constraints, we're deeply committed to keeping everyone involved. Our monthly pre-congress webinars are one way we're doing that. These sessions reflect the congress themes and have already attracted youth from various countries. Beyond that, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) continues to offer youth programs year-round, ensuring all interested individuals can stay engaged and contribute.

**Brian: What milestones have been achieved since the committee's formation?**

**Vivian:** Well, significant progress has been made. This includes:

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Launching the congress theme: Africa: My Home. My Future.

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Receiving over 2,600 applications.

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Hosting monthly webinars on key topics like climate justice, gender, faith, and peacebuilding.

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Confirming a diverse cohort of delegates, including youth with disabilities and members of the diaspora.

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Building strategic partnerships with churches, regional councils, and youth-led organizations.

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These steps are laying a strong foundation for a transformative gathering.

**Brian: What challenges have you faced, and how have you addressed them?**

**Vivian:** We've encountered challenges typical of organizing a pan-African event. Managing high interest with limited capacity was one; we're responding through digital engagement and regional follow-ups. Funding has also been a challenge—bringing together youth from across the continent is resource-intensive. We've tackled this by seeking support from churches, NGOs, and other partners. Coordinating across a diverse continent has required strong regional teams and clear communication. Digital tools and empowering local leadership have helped us stay connected and focused.

**Brian: What support do you hope to see from churches, FBOs, and governments?**

**Vivian:** We call on churches and faith-based organizations to invest in youth, not only by sponsoring delegates but by mentoring and supporting them before and after the congress. Promoting the congress and embracing Africa: My Home. My Future. The campaign should be part of every church's youth mission.

For governments, we seek more than symbolic gestures. We urge them to provide tangible support through funding, recognition, and commitment to long-term youth development. The congress outcomes must feed into broader national and continental agendas, with youth seen as co-creators of Africa's future.



**Brian: How has this leadership role affected your personal and professional life?**

**Vivian:** This journey has been deeply transformative. Personally, it has reinforced my belief in the power of youth leadership and expanded my capacity to lead with empathy and vision. Professionally, I've gained invaluable experience in project management, diplomacy, cross-cultural coordination, and strategic planning. More importantly, I've been inspired daily by the voices and energy of young Africans who are determined to shape their future. This role is more than an assignment—it's a calling.

**Brian: What's your vision for the "Africa: My Home. My Future." campaign beyond 2025?**

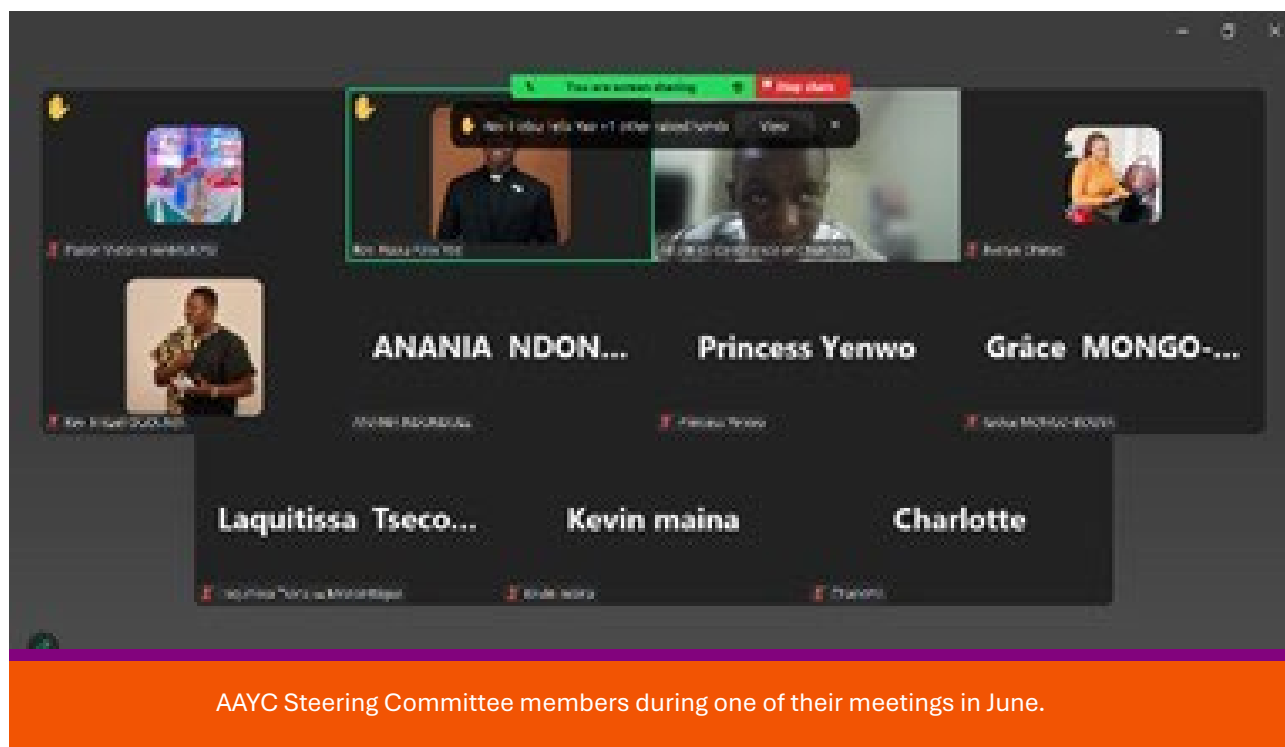
**Vivian:** This campaign is at the heart of our work. It's not just a theme—it's a rallying call for

transformation. Post-congress, we envision it evolving into a sustained movement. Plans include national and regional forums, youth-led advocacy, leadership development programs, and interfaith collaborations. The aim is to ensure the momentum from Accra in 2022 to Nairobi in 2025 spreads across the continent, impacting communities, schools, churches, and policymaking arenas.

**Africa:** My Home. My Future. is a declaration of ownership, dignity, and action—and we're only just beginning!

**Brian: Thank you, Vivian, and we wish you and your team all the best.**

**Vivian:** Asante sana!



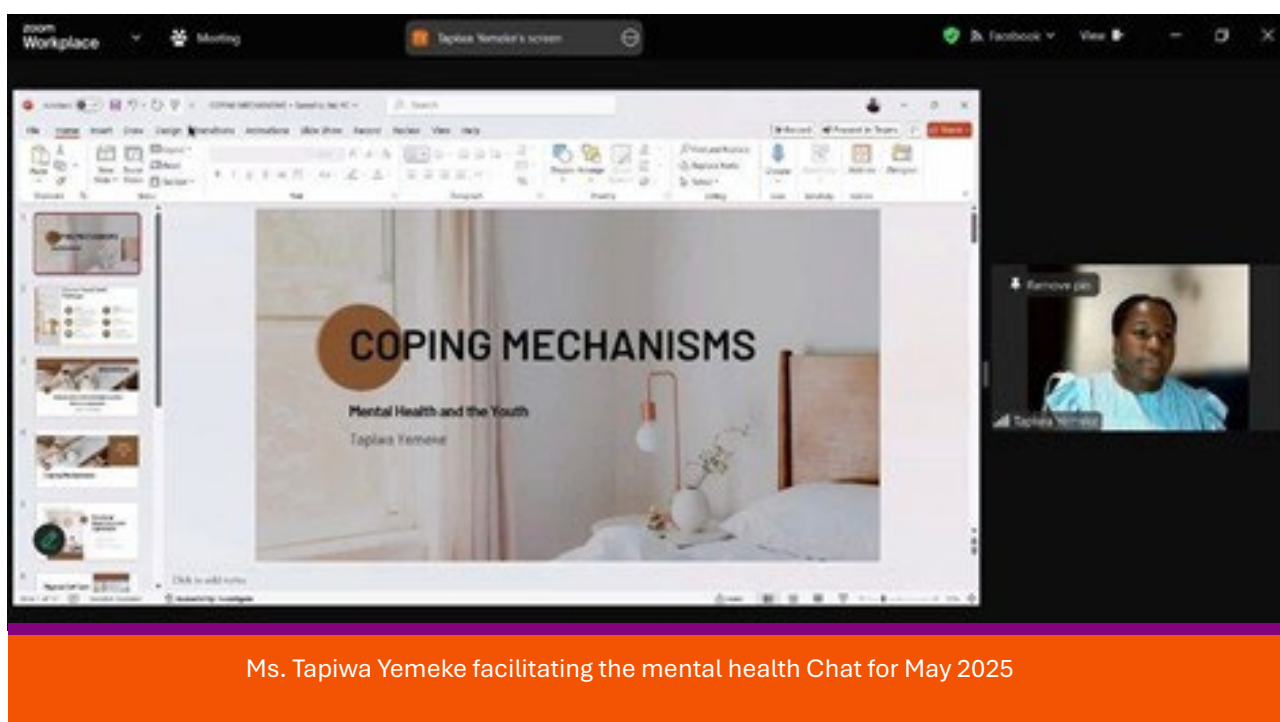
AAYC Steering Committee members during one of their meetings in June.

# AAYN Monthly Devotions and Mental health talks promote holistic health and well being

The Monthly Devotions and mental health chats are online spiritual gatherings that bring together young people from various countries, churches, and cultures to reflect on relevant topics in the light of Christian faith. Abigail Calulo from Angola had the privilege of leading one of the Monthly Devotion and Mental Health Talks, alongside Pastor Victorie Wamunyu and Ms. Tapiwa Yemeke. The session was based on 1 Timothy 4:12 — “Let no one despise your youth, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”

*“We discussed the importance of balancing physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, as well as healthy coping mechanisms to face life’s adversities.” She noted in her message to the AACC Youth Executive Secretary, Youth who was involved during the preparation of this issue.*

*“This experience made me feel part of a generation committed to rebuilding Africa with courage and faith. Seeing young people from different denominations praying and sharing revealed the true meaning of ecumenism: unity in diversity.” She testified.*



Ms. Tapiwa Yemeke facilitating the mental health Chat for May 2025



# Gender and Women

07



Faustina Nillan



# Ecumenical Interfaith taskforce on ending femicide and GBV Meeting



Taskforce members after their meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**O**n May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025, a crucial meeting of the AACC's Ecumenical Interfaith Taskforce on combating femicide and GBV was held at the Waridi Paradise Hotel. This meeting focused on the urgent imperative of ending femicide and other forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) across national, regional, and continental levels.

The initiative brought together a diverse range of stakeholders, including representatives from AACC, Christian Aid, CAPA, AYT, World Renew, World Vision, TearFund, FECCLAHA, CREAM, Fin Church Aid, and Muslim Professionals League Africa. Their collective aim is to intensify awareness campaigns on femicide and GBV, explore their root causes and devastating consequences, and crucially, to galvanize enhanced political will and commitment towards implementing robust policies that protect women and girls.

Discussions during the meeting delved deep into identifying current trends and hotspots of violence across the continent. Participants highlighted significant impediments in the fight against femicide and GBV, chief among them being limited access to justice for victims and inadequate data tracking systems, which hinder effective intervention and policy formulation. A robust action plan was subsequently developed, guided by agreed Terms of Reference, to chart a strategic path forward.

A poignant aspect of the gathering was the resounding unity demonstrated by the faith community. Transcending religious boundaries, representatives from various faiths affirmed their shared condemnation of femicide and all forms of GBV. As articulated by the Taskforce, “Our shared commitment to justice, human dignity, and the

sanctity of life compels us to address femicide comprehensively and collaboratively.” This unified stance underscores a collective moral imperative to safeguard the most vulnerable in society.

The collaborative spirit fostered at the Nairobi meeting is set to continue with a series of bi-monthly follow-up meetings throughout 2025. FECCLAHA will host the next session in July, followed by Fin Church Aid in September, and AACC will host the concluding meeting for the year in November 2025. This sustained effort underscores the long-term commitment of these organizations to creating a safer, more equitable society where women and girls are protected and free from violence, reflecting a unified stand against a global scourge.

# AACC Commemorates International Widows Day 2025 under the theme “The Love of Christ Compels Us to Restore Dignity and Secure Justice for Widows in Africa”

On June 23rd, 2025, the AACC’s Gender and Women Program held a continental commemorative event to mark the International Widows Day. The event, themed “The Love of Christ Compels Us to Restoring Dignity and Securing Justice for Widows in Africa,” aimed to raise awareness of the socio-economic, legal, and emotional challenges faced by widows in Africa.

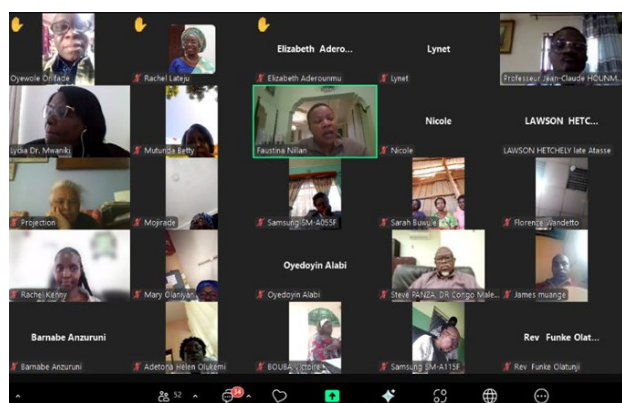
The 3-hour virtual event featured theological and policy discussions, with a call to amplify widows’ voices, empower them economically, and enable them to actively participate in policy making and technological advancement. The AACC widows’ grants beneficiaries from Angola, Burundi, and South Sudan shared success stories based on both biblical reflections and community-based solutions.

The virtual commemoration was attended by 52 participants, men and women aged between 25 and 60, with the objective of enhancing the rights of widows guided by faith-based values of respecting the dignity and God’s image in every human being. The event sought to raise awareness of the challenges faced by widows in Africa, amplify their voices, mobilize churches to advocate for policies that protect widows’ rights and dignity, and encourage theological reflection on justice, loss, and restoration from an ecumenical lens.

Presentations at the event focused on deepening theological understanding of the role of the church in advocating for widows’ rights, legal frameworks

for the protection of widows’ welfare, and innovative approaches towards addressing harmful norms that discriminate against widows. The way forward focused on economic empowerment, continued advocacy for widows’ rights, push for policy reforms and legal protection, mental health and social support, engaging widows as part of decision-making, and effective and compassionate solutions.

A call to action was made for gender justice champions to serve, advocate, volunteer, and support local initiatives such as sustainable projects. The urgency for action was emphasized, with the right time being now, and commitment being key to standing for widows’ welfare, ensuring their rights, supporting their projects, and initiating interventions that can support them holistically.





# AACC'S Male Champions For Gender Justice Converge In Nairobi For Capacity Strengthening

**A**ACC'S Male champions for gender justice from nine African countries converged in Nairobi for a significant capacity strengthening consultation, convened by the AACC. Launched on June 16 and running until June 19, 2025, the four-day gathering was specifically designed to bolster efforts in ending Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and promoting gender equality across the continent.

The consultation's agenda was multifaceted, focusing on strengthening partnerships among national male champions platforms, re-examining contemporary theological perspectives on men's roles in fostering human dignity, and facilitating the exchange of best practices and innovative approaches for social change. Participants included a diverse group of faith leaders, gender experts, researchers, and members of the AACC Advisory Group on Gender Work, representing countries such as Cameroon, Benin, Togo, Gabon, Guinea, Nigeria, Uganda, Malawi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

During the opening session, Rev. Dr. Lesmore Ezekiel, AACC Director of Programs, speaking on behalf of the General Secretary, commended the male champions for their transformative work in their communities. He affirmed their vital role as "true disciples of Christ and agents of positive change in the world," highlighting their commitment to justice.

The consultation featured insightful sessions, including a discussion led by Ms. Faustina Nillan, AACC's Programme Executive for Gender and Women. Ms. Nillan facilitated a conversation on the

male champions' role in realizing critical African and global frameworks, including the Maputo Protocol, the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (CEVAWG), African Union Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Dr. Daniel Muvengi, a development expert, further enriched the dialogue by expounding on seven central theological themes underpinning gender justice: the image of God in humans, love and mutual respect, men as protectors and providers, spiritual leadership, fatherhood and mentorship, advocacy against stereotypes, and the moral and ethical imperative to challenge injustices.

Additionally, Angelina Cikanda from CREAM presented on "The Role of Men and Women in Overcoming GBV in Africa," where she strongly urged participants to abandon flawed masculinity and embrace equitable roles for lasting change.

As the consultation concluded, participants unanimously adopted a comprehensive action plan. This plan aims to ensure continuous exchange of experiences, best practices, and resources among the champions, facilitating their ongoing work for gender justice and equality across their respective nations.



Photo credit: Faustina Nillan, AACC



# Regional Office in Lome

08



Rev. Angele Dogbe

# Reforming Traditions: Religious Leaders in Cameroon Confronts Gender-Based Violence Through Cultural Dialogue

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**T**he AACC's Regional Office in Lomé organized a consultation focused on reforming socio-cultural practices in a crucial move to address the pervasive issue of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Cameroon. Held on May 15 and 16, 2025, at the Bano Palace Hotel in Douala, the event brought together a diverse group of 30 participants, including men, women, and youth religious leaders, civil society actors, community leaders, traditional chieftaincy officials, and government representatives.

The consultation stemmed from a clear understanding that the weight of social norms often constitutes a significant obstacle to women's empowerment. Persistent socio-cultural constraints, particularly harmful traditional and customary practices, are identified as major contributors to the escalating violence against women within communities. The overarching goal of the assembly was to work towards the transformation of these harmful social norms and to strengthen both prevention and response mechanisms for GBV.

A key highlight of the two-day program was a compelling presentation by His Royal Majesty Alain Camille Dissake Mouangue, Traditional Ruler of Bonamoukouri and a member of the FATA Executive Board. His presentation focused on "Progress in the reform of rites and customs and practices that promote GBV in our traditions," directly challenging socio-cultural and traditional norms that are detrimental to women's dignity.

During his address, His Royal Majesty Dissake candidly acknowledged a paradox within many African

traditions, particularly in the Sawa community of Cameroon. While women are undeniably major players in all areas of community life, traditional roles sometimes deprive them of their inherent dignity. He affirmed that, broadly, cultural norms place women in a position of inferiority compared to their husbands or other men, leading them to be "undervalued, disrespected, and at risk of suffering violence from their male counterparts."

The Traditional Ruler highlighted how this perception of women's inferiority, particularly in rural areas, is deeply rooted in tradition, often resulting in women being considered "objects or property." He cited the often harsh and dehumanizing practices associated with widowhood rites as a stark example of this deeply ingrained issue.

However, His Royal Majesty Dissake also brought a message of hope and progress. He shared that following concerted advocacy efforts, a comprehensive review of customs within the Association of Traditional Chiefs of Sawa Villages in Wouri has led to significant advancements. This collaborative work has enabled the harmonization of practices and a marked reduction in abuses related to widowhood.

Crucially, a mechanism for monitoring this reform process has been put in place by traditional authorities, ensuring the sustainability of the changes. As concrete examples of progress, His Majesty cited the easing of stringent widowhood rites and, notably, the growing tolerance and acceptance of Christian widowhood practices within traditional settings.



The Douala consultation signaled a critical step in Cameroon's ongoing efforts to combat Gender-Based Violence. By bringing together diverse voices and actively engaging traditional leaders in the reform process, it underscored the understanding that meaningful change in combating GBV must be rooted in a respectful yet firm transformation of societal norms and values, paving the way for a future where all women are treated with dignity and respect.



Rev. Angele Posing with His Boval Highness Dissake

# Gambia to Establish Special Court for Gender-Based Violence Cases Amidst Efforts to Curb Irregular Migration

In a significant move aimed at both enhancing justice for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and addressing a key driver of irregular migration, The Gambia is set to establish a special court dedicated to GBV cases. The announcement was made by the Minister for Gender, Women and Children's Welfare, Hon. Fatou Kinteh, during the three-day consultation, organized by the AACC Regional Office Lomé, that highlighted the intricate link between GBV and irregular migration. Convened at the Kombo Beach Hotel in Banjul from April 8th to 10th, 2025, this consultation brought together a diverse group of thirty participants, including Church leaders, Imams, Community leaders, the Head of Police, Women and Youth Leaders, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and government representatives.

The primary objective of the consultation was to increase awareness and understanding of the link

between GBV and irregular migration, and to advocate for robust preventive measures and protective mechanisms for survivors.

During the discussions, Minister Kinteh revealed the government's plan for a specialized GBV court. She explained that this initiative is crucial because typical court proceedings for GBV cases are often protracted, leading to immense frustration for victims who, disheartened by the lengthy process, frequently withdraw their cases. The dedicated court aims to expedite justice and provide a more supportive environment for survivors. This concerted effort by the AACC and the Gambian government underscores a holistic approach to addressing irregular migration by tackling its root causes, particularly the pervasive issue of gender-based violence, and ensuring justice for those most affected.



Ms. Phyllis Brewah and Rev. Angele Dogbe posing with the Hon. Minister (center)





# African Union Liaison Office and Advocacy

09



Dr. Gorden Simango



## AACC AND AU Champion Reparative Justice at UN Forum on People of African Descent



Some of the participants in the AACC and AU Side event

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the African Union (AU) co-hosted a significant side event on April 15, 2025, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, focusing on faith perspectives on reparative justice and racial healing. Held during the fourth session of the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, the event sought to amplify the Church's prophetic voice in the ongoing global discourse on reparations. The side event was a key component of the Permanent Forum's fourth session, which convened from April 14-17, 2025. The forum brought together UN member states, organs and bodies, civil society organizations, and people of African Descent under

the overarching theme, "Africa and people of African descent: United for reparatory justice in the age of Artificial Intelligence."

The event's objectives included deepening partnerships between the AU, AACC, and its members, fostering practical pathways for reparative justice, and proposing actionable steps for integrating reparations into the flagship programs and policies of both the AU and AACC.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Onyekachi Macaulay Obasi Kalu, Secretary General of the African Union Sixth Region Global, articulated restorative and reparative justice as "twin pillars of healing." He elaborated, "Whereas restoration focuses on

repairing what was taken, reparation focuses on rebuilding what was broken, and together, they form the foundation for true reconciliation and lasting justice.”

Echoing this sentiment, the AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, emphasized that “real reparative justice goes beyond restitution in the form of compensation to acknowledging the history of harm, addressing the ongoing impacts of that harm, and striving for true healing and restoration.” He underscored the long-term commitment required, stating, “This is a long process that requires honesty, courage, and the willingness to confront uncomfortable truths.”

The event also featured a robust panel discussion, bringing together diverse voices and expertise. Panelists included Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker Smith, the World Council of Churches President for North America-Turtle Island; Bishop Bannie Manga of the Methodist Church of Gambia; Mr. Salem Matug, a senior political officer at the AU; and Ambassador Rev. Ladi Peter Thompson, the Deputy Secretary General & Director for Peace and Security, Africa Union Sixth Region Global.

The discussions underscored the critical role of faith-based organizations in advocating for and implementing frameworks for reparative justice, highlighting the moral imperative behind addressing historical injustices and their contemporary impacts. The event aimed to lay the groundwork for more concrete actions and collaborations moving forward.

### **Dr. Gorden Simango Advocates for Church’s Transformative Role in Conflict Resolution at African Methodist Summit**

Dr. Gorden Simango, Director, AACC Liaison Office to the African Union & Advocacy, delivered a compelling public lecture on 17th May 2025 urging religious institutions to embrace a proactive and

transformative role in fostering lasting peace across the continent. Speaking at the Africa Methodist Council, Heads of Conferences Summit held at the Methodist Resort and Conference Centre in Nairobi, Dr. Simango’s address was titled “The Role of the Church in Conflict Resolution.”

Addressing the assembly of influential church leaders, Dr. Simango articulated a vision of “positive peace” – a state transcending the mere absence of conflict to encompass harmony, justice, and lasting stability. He emphasized that the world stands at a critical juncture, where the pursuit of genuine peace necessitates a fundamental shift in how peacebuilding is approached globally.

“The path to lasting peace is not merely the cessation of violence; it is a transformative journey towards positive peace, which is a state of harmony and justice that extends far beyond the absence of conflict,” Dr. Simango stated. He highlighted the unique position of churches, with their inherent moral authority and deep community reach, as crucial agents in this transformation. He called upon them to become “beacons of hope, embodying peace and offering solace and strength to those affected by conflict.”

Dr. Simango further elaborated on the strategic influence churches can wield, advocating for the judicious application of “soft power.” “We must harness the power of influence – soft power – leveraging the church’s inherent credibility and trustworthiness to persuade, not coerce, towards peaceful resolutions,” he explained. He underscored that this is far from a passive stance, asserting, “This is not a passive role; it demands active engagement and a commitment to building bridges, not walls.”

However, Dr. Simango also presented a vital caution regarding the challenges inherent in this peacebuilding mandate. He stressed the paramount importance of maintaining the church’s neutrality. “The church must vigilantly protect its non-partisan

status,” he warned. Any compromise of this neutrality, he elaborated, risks not only exacerbating existing conflicts but also undermining the church’s crucial role as an honest and trusted broker in reconciliation efforts.

“The church must actively guard its integrity, for this is the foundation upon which its peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts rest,” Dr. Simango concluded,

reinforcing the moral and ethical imperative for religious institutions as they navigate complex conflict landscapes. His lecture resonated deeply with the assembled leaders, setting a clear agenda for the church’s continued and evolving engagement in fostering peace and justice in Africa and beyond.



Figure 1: Dr. Gorden Simango, Director of the AACC Liaison Office to the African Union and Advocacy, giving a Public Lecture on “The Role of the Church in Conflict Resolution”.



## Addis Ababa Successfully Hosted the G20 Interfaith Forum



Dr. Gordon Simango speaking during the interfaith forum

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, became the nexus of global interfaith dialogue and collaboration when it successfully hosted a high-level G20 Interfaith Forum. Held on May 13-14, 2025, at the Hilton Hotel, the event brought together an impressive array of faith leaders, government officials, and civil society representatives from across the globe to address pressing global challenges. Under the overarching theme, “Africa’s

Faith Communities: Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, the African Union Agenda 2063, and Africa’s 2025 G20 Process,” the forum celebrated the African Union’s (AU) recent G20 membership—a significant milestone for the continent. The timing also coincided with World Interfaith Harmony Week and Golden Rule Day, adding further resonance to the discussions.

The prestigious event was jointly hosted by the African Union, the Interreligious Council of Ethiopia, and the United Religions Initiative. The forum was officially inaugurated by AU Commission Chairperson H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf and Ethiopian President H.E. Taye Atske Selassie, underscoring the high-level commitment to interfaith engagement on critical global issues.

Plenary sessions delved into crucial topics including the African Union's evolving role within the G20 framework, strategies for building lasting peace, pathways to sustainable development, and the vital importance of women's leadership. Concurrent sessions offered deeper dives into specific challenges such as environmental concerns, the promotion of freedom of religion, upholding human dignity, combating hate speech and discrimination, addressing human trafficking and displacement, and improving education for children and youth.

Dr. Gorden Simango, Director, AACC Liaison Office to the African Union & Advocacy, served as a panelist on Plenary Session 1, titled "The African Union at the G20 Summit: The Role of Faith Communities

in Africa to Advance G20 Purposes in Africa." He also moderated Plenary Session 3, "Sustainable Development in a World in Turmoil: Africa's contributions, Africa's needs," which featured distinguished panelists from organizations including AU ECOSOCC, the Jesuit Justice and Ecology Network – Africa South Area, Religions for Peace, the Organization of African Instituted Churches, the AU Interfaith Dialogue Forum, the Muslim Council of Elders, and the IGAD Centre of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.

Throughout the forum, participants and organizers widely lauded the significant contributions of the AACC, highlighting the impact of its representatives' participation on various panels and their insightful contributions from the floor during plenary discussions.

The G20 Interfaith Forum concluded with a palpable sense of renewed collaboration and a shared commitment to addressing global challenges through sustained interfaith dialogue and cooperation, positioning Africa's faith communities as key partners in the global arena.

# CSOs and FBOs Leaders from the Horn of Africa Region Empowered with Trauma Healing and Counselling Skills

Twenty representatives from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) across the Horn of Africa completed an intensive training program in Trauma Healing and Counseling, equipping them to address the profound psychosocial needs of communities affected by conflict. The second round of this vital training, held from May 26 to 28, 2025, in Kampala, Uganda, aimed to strengthen mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) in regions often grappling with the long-term impact of violence and displacement.

Facilitated by renowned trauma recovery expert Alemayehu Tibebe, the three-day workshop delved into critical areas including trauma-informed care, Psychological First Aid (PFA), community-based psychosocial support models, and the essential ethical considerations in MHPSS. Participants engaged in dynamic and highly interactive sessions, gaining practical skills directly applicable to their work in conflict-affected settings. A significant component of the training also focused on critical reflection and the importance of self-care practices for frontline workers, acknowledging the demanding nature of their roles.

The training received a warm welcome and strong endorsement from the Church of Uganda. Rt. Rev. Fredrick Jackson Baalwa, Assistant Bishop of the Kampala Diocese, addressed the participants, emphasizing the critical role of their acquired knowledge. He encouraged them to cascade the training, ensuring its impact extends widely and deeply within their respective communities.

On the final day, a key outcome was the collaborative development of actionable plans. These strategies are designed to localize trauma healing initiatives and strengthen community resilience across the diverse contexts represented by the attendees.



Participants during the opening session of the workshop





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