

ELCT Press Release

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Workshop on advocacy for gender and child rights in Africa takes place in Dar es Salaam

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) President, Archbishop Dr Musa Panti Filibus, reminded churches in Africa of their role as the prophetic voice that brings God's redemption to the people. He urged church leaders in Africa to evaluate their life before they could critique other organs. He said "it is not enough to confront the system without giving an alternative to what is being criticized".

Dr Musa who was in Dar es Salaam to attend the Africa Region Advocacy Training Workshop on Gender and Child Rights focusing on Education and Health that started on 10 October 2017, is the Archbishop of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN).



A group photo of the Workshop participants after the opening session.

He said one of the biblical elements of prophecy is the expectation that a prophet upholds integrity when advocating against injustices that society condones. "In order to be prophetic in our engagements with the systems that be, especially those perpetrating gender-based abuses and denial of child rights, church leaders should demonstrate from within the house that they are themselves women and men of integrity, honesty, sincerity, accountable" and thus able to challenge the oppressive structures.

The 70 participants at the workshop included church leaders, diaconal actors, women and youth representatives from the 31 member churches in the region. Hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), the workshop participants discussed how they could foster a closer collaboration with the government and civil society in a meaningful way in implementing the United Nations "Sustainable Development Goals" focusing on health, education and gender equality.

The LWF President emphasized truth as an important criterion. He said churches need to be agents of transformation because members of the congregation believe what their leaders tell them; therefore, they could not afford to break such trust as it would make a mockery of what they do. He urged them to stand firm in what they believe in, prepare and equip themselves well for the leadership role in society.

The president noted that education “empowers an individual to be critical and creative,” adding that the focus on “children helps to break the cycle of abject poverty from one generation to the other.” For the girl-child, he said, education not only lowers or eliminates the threat of early marriage but it also reduces maternal infant mortality.

The LCCN archbishop called on the church to be more engaged in the fight against the perennial problem of trafficking of children and child labor in Africa, describing it as a real shame that children “who are gifts from God,” were being turned into commodities even by families and friends. “Let the voice of the church re-echo the LWF Twelfth Assembly message that ‘human beings are not for sale,’” he added.

The LWF Vice-President for Africa Rev. Dr Jeannette Ada Maina, who is from Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon, officially opened the workshop which was also attended by LWF Council members from the region. Delegates from Germany, India, Sweden and the United States also attended.

Bishop Dr Alex Malasusa, from the ELCT Eastern and Coastal Diocese (ECD), welcomed the participants on behalf of the ELCT Presiding Bishop, Dr Fredrick Onael Shoo. He expressed the church’s honor in hosting the workshop and welcomed whole heartedly the LWF President on his first visit to ELCT since his election at the Assembly in May 2017.

Bishop Malasusa urged churches to continue advocating for the rights of the marginalized and confronting structures that discriminate women, children, youth and people with disabilities from accessing essential social services such as health and education.

He said the offering collected during the workshop’s opening service held at the Azania Front Lutheran Cathedral would go to the ECD-run Mtoni Diaconal Orphanage Centre in Dar es Salaam.

In addition to plenary presentations and group discussions on education, diakonia, theology, gender-based violence and advocacy skills, participants went on study tour of congregations around the city to exchange views and learn more about the work and share experiences with the church members.



The LWF President (second right in the back row) was full of joy after baptising more than 16 people (front row) during an excursion to Kimara Lutheran Parish in Dar es Salaam on 12 October 2017. Others are Pastor in charge Kimara Parish Rev. Nimrod Mastayi, Bishop Dr Alex Malasusa and the LWF Vice President for Africa, Mch. Dkt. Jeannette Ada Maina.

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Warsha ya utetezi wa haki za watoto Afrika yafunguliwa Dar es Salaam

Rais wa Fungamano la Makanisa ya Kilutheri Duniani (FMKD), Askofu Mkuu Dkt. Musa Panti Filibus, amewakumbusha viongozi wa makanisa barani Afrika kutumia sauti ya kinabii ili kuwaletea watu wa Mungu ukombozi. Aliwataka viongozi wa kanisa wajitathmini kwanza kabla ya kutoa sauti ya unabii kwa lengo la kukosoa mamlaka nyingine. Alisema "haitoshi kukinzana na mfumo uliopo bila kutoa mbadala kwa unayoyakosoa".

Askofu Mkuu Dkt. Filibus ambaye alikuwa Dar es Salaam kuhudhuria warsha kuhusu mbinu za kupambana na umaskini na uonevu wa kiuchumi Afrika iliyofunguliwa 10 Oktoba 2017 pia ni Askofu Mkuu wa Kanisa la Kilutheri la Kristo Nigeria (LCCN).

Alisema kigezo kimoja wapo cha unabii kibiblia ni kutaka anayetoa unabii ajitathmini kama ni mwenye kutenda haki na kufuata maadili ili asiwe amepotoka kwa kukiuka haki anazotetea. Kwamba ni watu wanaosimamia uadilifu, uaminifu, ukweli na kuwajibika hivyo kuthubutu kukabiliana na miundo kandamizi.



The LWF President Archbishop Dr Musa Panti Filibus with the Minister for Home Affairs, Hon. Mwigulu Nchemba

Watu wapatao 70 wakiwemo viongozi wa makanisa, wadau katika huduma za diakonia, wawakilishi wa wanawake na vijana toka makanisa 31 barani Afrika walihudhuria warsha hiyo ambayo Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Tanzania (KKKT) ilikuwa mwenyeji. Washiriki walijadili namna watakavyoweza kushirikiana vizuri zaidi na Serikali na asasi za kijamii ambao ni wadau katika utekelezaji wa programu ya Umoja wa Mataifa ya kuleta maendeleo endelevu kwa lengo la kuwa na usawa wa kijinsia hasa katika nyanja za elimu na afya.

Rais huyo wa FMKD alisema kweli ni kigezo muhimu katika uongozi. Alisema kanisa lazima liwe chachu ya maendeleo kwa kuwa washarika wanaamini yale wanayoambiwa na viongozi wao, hivyo, viongozi wasithubutu kuvunja imani hiyo kwa kutenda kinyume cha wanachokisema wenyewe. Aliwataka viongozi wa kanisa kuhakikisha wanaamini wasemayo na wanajiandaa kikamilifu kwa kazi ya uongozi katika jamii.

Rais huyo alisema “elimu inampa mtu uwezo wa kufanya upembuzi wa mambo na kuwa mbunifu.” Na kwa kuwapa watoto kipaumbele katika elimu kutavunja mnyororo wa umaskini toka kizazi kimoja hadi kingine. Kuhusu mtoto wa kike alisema elimu kwa watoto hao itapunguza tishio la ndoa za utotoni na vifo vya watoto wachanga.

Askofu huyo Mkuu wa LCCN alitaka Kanisa lishiriki kwa nguvu zaidi katika tatizo sugu la biashara ya kuuza na utumikishwaji watoto barani Afrika na kusema ni aibu kwamba watoto ambao ni zawadi kutoka kwa Mungu wameguzwa bidhaa ya kuuzwa hata na ndugu au marafiki zao. Sauti ya kanisa irudie tena wito toka kauli mbiu ya Mkutano Mkuu wa 12 wa FMKD iliyosema: “Binadamu sio bidhaa ya kuuzwa”.

Makamu wa Rais wa FMKD Barani Afrika, Mchg. Dkt. Jeannette Ada Maina, kutoka Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kilutheri Cameroun, alifungua rasmi warsha hiyo iliyohudhuriwa pia na wajumbe wa Halmashuri Kuu ya FMKD toka Afrika na wajumbe wengine kutoka Ujerumani, India, Sweden na Marekani.

Mkuu wa KKKT Dayosisi ya Mashariki na Pwani, Askofu Dkt. Alex Malasusa, aliwakaribisha washiriki kwa niaba ya Mkuu wa KKKT, Askofu Dkt. Fredrick Onael Shoo. Alielezea furaha yake kwa upendeleo ambao KKKT imepata kwa kuwa mwenyeji wa warsha hiyo na kumkaribisha kwa moyo mkunjufu Rais wa FMKD ambaye anatembelea KKKT kwa mara ya kwanza tangu achaguliwe kuwa Rais katika Mkutano Mkuu wa Fungamano uliokutana mwezi Mei 2017.

Askofu Malasusa alishauri makanisa yaendeleo kutetea haki za walioachwa pembezoni na kupambana na miundo inayobagua wanawake, watoto, vijana na walio na ulemavu wasiweze kupata huduma muhimu kama elimu na afya.

Alitangaza kwamba sadaka iliyopatikana siku hiyo ya ufunguzi wa warsha iliyofanyika katika Kanisa Kuu la Azania Front itakwenda kituo cha watoto yatima: “Mtoni Diaconal Centre” cha Dar es Salaam.

Licha ya kuwa na majadiliano ya pamoja na mada na majadiliano ya vikundi kuhusu masuala ya elimu, diakonia, theologia, unyanyasaji wa kijisania na mbinu za kufanya utetezi, washiriki walipata fursa ya kutembelea sharika za jirani ili kubadilishana mawazo na kujifunza zaidi kuhusu kazi na kubadilishana uzoefu wa washarika.