

Compilation of actions grouped by theme related to International Affairs and Human Rights adopted by the LWF Council 2004-2008

Resolution on Israel-Palestine (2004)

Recalling the public statement on Israel-Palestine adopted by the Tenth Assembly and the statement by the Executive Committee on the construction of the separation wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory ('Break Down the Walls', 22 February 2004), as well as the LWF's prior statements on the situation in the Holy Land

The Council voted to

reaffirm its hope and offer its prayers for sustainable peace and justice in the Holy Land, and its solidarity with and accompaniment of all those who seek peace in the midst of the current violence;

express its grave concern at the growth of anti-Semitism around the world, and to restate its rejection and abhorrence of anti-Semitism;

express its equally grave concern at the growth of anti-Muslim feeling around the world, particularly in the context of the 'war on terror';

encourage and support initiatives for inter-faith dialogue between religious leaders and communities in the Holy Land, and internationally, in order to promote mutual understanding and 'diapaxis' for peace;

condemn all violent attacks against civilians from both Palestinian and Israeli communities;

express its grave concern at the worsening humanitarian impacts of the occupation, including the separation of families by barriers, checkpoints, denial of permits and other controls;

call on the Government of Israel to do all in its power to facilitate the work of clergy, layworkers, and humanitarian agencies in Israel-Palestine, including the provision of appropriate visas and physical access to all areas;

urge the Palestinian Authority to ensure respect for the rule of law in the areas under its control, and to hold elections without delay as part of the reform process necessary for the transition to democratic governance;

welcome the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on 9 July 2004 and its finding that the construction of the separation wall in the West Bank is in breach of international law, and to call upon all UN member states to respect and support this advisory opinion;

express its dismay and regret at the Government of Israel's recent decision to build approximately 1,000 new housing units in existing West Bank settlements despite the

freeze on settlement expansion required by the 'Roadmap', a plan supported by the United States of America, European Union, Russian Federation and United Nations ('the Quartet');

call on the Government of Israel to refrain from any new settlement expansion, and on the Government of the United States of America and the other members of the Quartet to require compliance with the clear terms of the 'Roadmap' in order to prevent the construction of yet more obstacles to peace in the region; and

urge the Palestinian Authority and the State of Israel to resume their responsibilities for finding a sustainable peace for all the people of the Holy Land.

Resolution on Church and LWF Presence in the Holy Land (2004)

The Council voted to:

express great concern about the circumstances which have led to the emigration of Christians from the Holy Land, and to call on the worldwide community to assist the local church in community-based education and employment and housing initiatives in order to curb further emigration; and

call once again on the Government of Israel to re-affirm the tax-exempt status of the LWF's humanitarian activities in the region, including the Augusta Victoria Hospital.

Public Statement: Challenged to a Ministry of Reconciliation in the Holy Land (2005)

The LWF Council has met in the Holy Land on the invitation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) which has enabled us to visit its congregations and the people of this region. Our visit has opened the eyes of many of us to the daily sufferings of the Palestinian people, often not shown to us by the media and in which context our member church speaks boldly a message of hope and reconciliation.

We have come to more fully understand the urgency of a genuine commitment to building peace in these communities. As Bishop Dr Munib Younan has told us:

“Healing must begin with truth-telling and with breaking the silence that hides the suffering of those who are vulnerable and violated. Only such a start will allow the possibility of healing with justice and forgiveness. Only when the light of truth exposes the lies that have been used to inflict suffering on innocent people can the seeds of reconciliation take root.”

We reiterate our call for an end to the occupation, bearing in mind a number of its manifestations which contribute to the daily struggles faced here. We view the Israeli disengagement from Gaza as but a first positive step in following the Road Map and ending the occupation, establishing a two-state solution with a shared Jerusalem.

Many of us have encountered or been able to visit the separation wall and found shocking its impact on the daily lives of Palestinians – such as church members unable to attend services, farmers cut off from their fields, school children delayed in or prevented from reaching their schools, and patients, doctors and health workers unable to reach hospitals and clinics, a denial of their right to health care.

We found that freedom of movement has been significantly compromised or prohibited, for example, leaving married persons separated from their families because they lack the same required residence permit as their partner or children. This lack of family reunification is but one of a series of pressures upon Palestinians in the Jerusalem area. Houses are being demolished by the Israeli authorities and other facts on the ground, such as the enlargement of Israeli settlements, are being created, forcing Palestinians off their land. The prevention of home and land confiscation and the creation of additional housing is essential in the Jerusalem and other areas to help maintain their human right to housing as well as the demographic status quo. The churches are assisting with such projects but need additional funding.

The increasing constraints on Palestinians are leading to fewer and fewer Christians being able to continue to be a living witness in the Holy Land. Their enduring presence must be assured. A Christian presence is an essential precondition for the further development of church-related educational institutions, for which funding is urgently needed. Such assistance is an investment in people's hope for positive change and contributes to preparing a fertile ground for building understanding among Palestinians and Israelis for reconciliation now and in the future.

Justice and the rule of law must be respected and prevail in this land. Building reconciliation and establishing justice will require mutual recognition of the needs of the other. We hear of the fears of Israelis and the anger of Palestinians, reminding us that the security and freedom of each is interdependent.

Our experience here calls us to ask the member churches to encourage pilgrimages of peace to the churches in this region to enable people to experience the living conditions in Palestinian areas and to promote renewal of their faith.

We have noted that some member churches have developed specific action strategies in support of peace in this region and we encourage all member churches to consider such efforts to move from supportive words to action.

We endorse the call of the Bishop of the ELCJHL for an annual gathering in Jerusalem for prayer for peace and reconciliation involving Christians, Muslims, Jews, Palestinians and Israelis.

We continue to support inter-faith dialogue, especially here in the Holy Land.

As churches we pledge ourselves to work for justice, peace and reconciliation in the Holy Land.

Resolution on the Middle East (2007)

The Council

affirms that the core problem in the Middle East is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which, if not solved, is a threat to peace not only in the Middle East but throughout the world;

notes the planned ecumenical commemorations, under the leadership of the heads of the local churches in Jerusalem, in June 2007, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the occupation of the Palestinian Territories;

calls for actions by the international community to end the illegal occupation and for the LWF member churches to join ecumenical coalitions for that purpose, such as the WCC-initiated international week of action to end the occupation 3–9 June 2007;

welcomes the initiative to create an inter-faith Council of Religious Institutions in the Holy Land, as a sign of shared commitment to building mutual trust and understanding among the faith communities and their peoples, and calls for this Council of Religious Institutions in the Holy Land to work to build peace among the two nations and that it become a reference group for Palestinian and Israeli negotiators in any future negotiations;

commends to LWF member churches "The Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism" issued by the heads of churches in Jerusalem in August 2006;

welcomes the fact that a Palestinian government of national unity has been established, and stresses the LWF Council's expectation that the new government will respect all previous agreements concerning or relevant to the search for peace in the region;

calls on the international community to co-operate with the new Palestinian government and to end the international economic blockade in order to restore the health, education, and welfare situation of the Palestinian people and the infrastructure of the Territories;

calls upon the State of Israel to comply with international humanitarian law and United Nations resolutions concerning the occupation of the Palestinian Territories.

calls for an international conference to be convened to resolve the long-standing issues between the parties, such as the status of Jerusalem, the return of refugees, settlements, borders, and water resources.

expresses deep concern about the continued emigration of Christians from Palestine and the entire Middle East, and calls on the LWF member churches to pray on Maundy Thursday for Christians in the Middle East and for their continued presence and ministry in the region in accordance with the call from the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches (FMEEC):

continues to support the LWF member church—the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land—in its struggle to be a witness for peace and justice in the region through its educational, ecumenical, and inter-faith activities.

Resolution on Israel-Palestine (2008)

The Council voted to:

Commend the current negotiations underway between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority and encourage the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to continue these talks with a view toward reaching a final status agreement leading to a two-state solution and a shared Jerusalem;

Remain gravely concerned about the impact of the continued expansion of settlements and the construction of the separation wall in the Occupied Territories, that continue to be an obstacle for building trust on both sides;

Reject any armed struggle to solve political divisions and encourage the Palestinian people to overcome their divisions and pursue a unified strategy for justice, rule of law and a pluralistic state;

Commend the formation of the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land as a beacon of hope and evidence of the cooperation that can be achieved when leaders of the three faith communities -- namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam -- in that region are committed to build trust between Israelis and Palestinians, monitoring any derogatory remarks about each other, seeking to correct the disparaging images of the other in their educational curricula, and finding a common understanding for a shared Jerusalem;

Commend the recent letter of the General Secretary on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel which also recognized the displacement which has been experienced by the Palestinian people for 60 years;

Call upon the Member Churches to remind their members of the long-standing support of the LWF and the World Council of Churches for an inclusive, shared Jerusalem as also reflected in the statement of the heads of churches in Jerusalem in 2006;

Reiterate its strong support for the ecclesiastical, educational and diaconal work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) in the face of grave challenges;

Commend the Member Churches for their support for the work of the ELCJHL, in particular in the field of education and for the Mount of Olives Housing Project, as responses to help stop the emigration of Christians; and
Commend the LWF President for his constructive response to “A Common Word”, the letter of 138 Muslim scholars to international Christian leaders.

Public Statement on Zimbabwe (2007)

In the midst of the celebrations of the sixtieth anniversary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Lund, Sweden, the LWF Council laments the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe.

The beacon of freedom that Zimbabwe once represented has been almost extinguished by the present suffering of its people and the intransigence of its government.

The LWF Council expresses its strong support for the initiatives taken by churches in Zimbabwe to open a "sacred space" for national dialogue towards a resolution of the current crisis, and particularly affirms the Ecumenical Peace Initiative and its document "The Zimbabwe We Want: 'Towards A National Vision For Zimbabwe.'"

The Council also endorses the call made by the LWF general secretary in his letter of 15 March 2007 for the African Union to take a stronger role in promoting positive change in Zimbabwe.

We call on all LWF member churches to uphold the people and churches of Zimbabwe in their thoughts and prayers, and to act in solidarity with those who suffer from injustice, oppression, violence, and poverty in that country.

We call for the international community to respond to the suffering of the people of Zimbabwe, to act to restore hope, and to promote peace.

Public Statement on Zimbabwe (2008)

The Council of the Lutheran World Federation, meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, on the eve of the scheduled presidential run-off election in Zimbabwe on June 27, calls for an immediate end to political violence and repression in that country, and the restoration of the democracy for which so many Zimbabweans have struggled and died.

The Lutheran World Federation has long been gravely concerned by the disastrous economic, humanitarian and political situation in Zimbabwe. Today, we join former South African President Nelson Mandela in declaring that there has been a "tragic failure of leadership" in Zimbabwe. Indeed, the policies and practices of the current government have undermined the most basic political, economic and social rights of Zimbabweans.

We especially denounce the systematic, organized, politically-motivated intimidation and violence whereby the current government has sought to retain power. We note that the perpetrators of that intimidation and violence have not hesitated to target church leaders and clergy, as well as opposition party leaders and members, media representatives, academics, specific groups within Zimbabwean society, and anyone thought to have voted for the opposition in the March 29 elections. The attacks on Zimbabweans for exercising their right of democratic choice are directly contrary to the purpose of the struggle for Zimbabwe's liberation from colonial rule.

All governments have a responsibility to ensure the safety, security and welfare of their citizens. Therefore, the government of Zimbabwe must act to prevent political violence by whoever committed it. Its failure to do so, and its apparent complicity in the violent repression, calls into question this government's legitimacy.

The outcome of the March 29 elections – themselves conducted in far from ideal conditions – has already demonstrated that this government has lost the trust and support of Zimbabweans. The result of any presidential run-off election conducted under the current circumstances should not be recognized by the international community. We deeply regret the government of Zimbabwe's refusal to postpone the election and to take effective measures to ensure minimum conditions for a free and fair democratic process.

The international community has a legitimate interest and role to play in addressing the crisis in Zimbabwe. The world must not stand idly by, as it did during the genocide in Rwanda, and watch the unfolding of a human catastrophe. We welcome the fact that the United Nations Security Council has finally begun to address this matter by issuing a statement.

We especially welcome the rising chorus of concern from African political, religious and community leaders. We call on the Southern African Development Community and the African Union, and all African leaders, to take a more active role in promoting human security in Zimbabwe and encouraging a political transition back to the democracy that Zimbabweans have a right to expect.

Therefore, we call for the urgent establishment of a process for building peace in Zimbabwe in which all national actors, regional organizations and the international community are engaged.

For its part, the Lutheran World Federation stands ready to support the people of Zimbabwe in rebuilding their nation, and in restoring their betrayed hopes of a life in dignity and justice.

We call upon all LWF member churches to pray on Sunday July 6 for peace with justice for all Zimbabweans.

Resolution on Zimbabwe (2008)

The Council voted to:

Request the LWF President to write a pastoral letter to the heads of churches in Zimbabwe, expressing our hope and trust in God that God cares for and will save the suffering people of Zimbabwe;

Request the General Secretary to write a letter or letters to the chair of the African Union, heads of government in the African region, and the ecumenical community in Africa in order to encourage regional action to protect Zimbabwe's suffering people and to promote a return to genuine democracy;

Express particular concern for the situation of Zimbabweans who have fled the country as refugees, and gratitude for the hospitality of those neighboring countries that have received them;

Ask the General Secretary to undertake appropriate advocacy actions on behalf of Zimbabwean refugees in situations where they lack recognition or adequate support; and

Request the LWF/DWS to consider possible action to better support Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa and in other host countries where DWS has a presence or an associate program

Resolution on Darfur, Sudan (2004)

The Council voted to

condemn the ongoing attacks by armed militias against people and communities in the Darfur region of Sudan, and express dismay at the refusal by the Government of Sudan to accept an adequate force of international peacekeepers in the region;

express deep concern about the unfolding humanitarian crisis in the region, and affirm the importance of LWF support for the delivery of humanitarian assistance through the Action by Churches Together (ACT) network;

endorse the call by the Catholic bishops of Sudan for help from the international community to prevent “terror, rape, torture and slavery”, and “the annihilation of an entire ethnic group” in Darfur, for the Government of Sudan to enable the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of the region, and for all parties to the conflict to negotiate a just and peaceful settlement; and

request the General Secretary to communicate the content of this resolution to the relevant parties.

Resolution on Darfur (2007)

The Council voted to call the attention of the LWF member churches to the LWF statements that have been made on the situation in Darfur as an expression of our concern for and commitment to a just and lasting solution to the crisis and as a contribution to peace and justice in the region.

Resolution on HIV/AIDS and Trade (2005) (DMD)

In view of the devastating impact of and tremendous suffering caused by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and in view of the proven positive impact of faith based

organizations in the fight against this pandemic, we, the members of the LWF Council, strongly affirm the scaling up of the LWF HIV/AIDS Campaign.

We appreciate the reports from many member churches about the encouraging results of the AIDS Campaign both in the South and in the North. We observe with joy the positive changes in attitude of the leadership of Lutheran churches and their growing active contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

We confirm the need for further capacity building in order to honour the commitments made in the regional consultations and in order to scale up our programs of prevention, treatment, care and support.

We express gratefulness that the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) has granted substantial support to our approved programs as the only faith based multi-country initiative so far.

We, the members of the LWF Council, support the initiatives of the World Health Organization (WHO) to enable the treatment of three million people by the end of this year through its “3 by 5 initiative” and of the G8 to provide universal access to treatment by the year 2010 at the latest. We expect the funding gap of the “3 by 5 initiative” and of the GFATM to be covered immediately.

We were informed about the increasing problems in international trade with generics, especially from India, due to pressure to comply with the World Trade Organization (WTO) regulations. We urgently demand the WTO to ensure that trade rules do not hinder access to affordable, highly effective anti retro viral drugs, including generics from WTO accession countries.

We ask our member churches in the United States of America to approach the US government on our behalf in order to revise the conditions for the use of the Presidential Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) fund, especially to give freedom to recipients in the choice of prevention methods and in the use of the PEPFAR support for the import of generics and testing material from any supplier in the world market.

Next year, the United Nations will follow up the commitments made at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on AIDS in June 2001. We ask our member churches to request their governments and national parliaments to increase funding for the international fight against HIV/AIDS to the necessary level according to the latest UNAIDS estimate of needs.

Resolution on HIV-related travel restrictions (2008)

The Council voted to:

Draw the attention of LWF member churches to the existence in approximately 70 countries of travel and entry restrictions that explicitly or in effect discriminate against people living with HIV-AIDS;

Encourage LWF member churches to advocate for removal of such discriminatory travel and entry restrictions, and of other such examples of stigmatization of people living with HIV-AIDS; and

Request the General Secretary to write to the Government of the United States of America and other leading proponents of HIV-related travel and entry restrictions, seeking the elimination of such restrictions and their discriminatory effects.

Public statement on Attacks on Civilians (2004)

The Council of the Lutheran World Federation, meeting near Geneva on 1-7 September 2004, is horrified by the news of the bloodshed in Beslan, North Ossetia in the Russian Federation, perpetrated on 3 September 2004 by an international group of armed insurgents.

This awful incident follows a spate of other events around the world in recent days in which civilians have been deliberately targeted by armed groups pursuing a political cause: - the suicide bombing of two buses in Beersheba, Israel, in which 16 people were killed; the attack in Kirkuk, Iraq, in which 17 people were killed; the recent Israeli missile attacks in Gaza, resulting in civilian deaths; the execution of 12 Nepalese workers by militants in Iraq; the suicide bomb attack at a north Moscow train station which killed 10 people; and the deaths of 89 people in apparent simultaneous bomb attacks onboard two airplanes after leaving the same Moscow airport. And over recent weeks the international community has finally begun to address the ongoing attacks on civilians and communities in the Darfur region of Sudan. Many other incidents reflecting the escalating levels of violence against civilians in the world today have gone unreported and unremarked. In each case, however, the people most directly affected by these attacks were non-combatants whose only 'crime' was to be associated in the minds of their attackers with a perceived enemy, or to be seen as representative of 'the other'.

The atrocity in Beslan evokes a particularly strong sense of revulsion, because the armed insurgents who planned it and carried it out deliberately targeted children. No cause can justify such inhumanity.

All major faiths share the conviction that human life and dignity is to be valued and respected. Attacks on civilians are in violation of these fundamental religious and ethical principles, as well as of international humanitarian law. The LWF condemns all such atrocities regardless of the claimed justification.

We are also aware of the structural violence that affects political and economic relations within and between our countries, and which often constitutes an assault on human dignity.

We believe that when any member of the human family suffers in this way, all are affected. The perpetrators of violent attacks against civilians dehumanize themselves, and disgrace the cause for which they claim to struggle. Attacks which are designed to inspire terror in a whole community only serve to escalate the cycle of fear and

violence, in which the perpetrators are also trapped. Political objectives cannot be achieved through such inhumane means.

We pray for the victims of the violence in Beslan and their families, and for all those affected by such brutal and inhumane crimes, known and unknown to us. We wish to express our empathy with those who have been traumatized and bereaved. We call on all members of the global LWF communion to pray for an end to the violence in our world and in human hearts, and for the transformation of those whose hearts have been hardened by violence and the liberation of those trapped in its vicious cycle.

Public Statement: Disaster in the US Gulf States (2005)

The members of the Council of the Lutheran World Federation, meeting in Bethlehem on 31 August - 6 September 2005, have followed the news of Hurricane Katrina, and of its devastating impact on the communities of the Gulf States of the United States of America, with shock at the scale of the disaster and deep sympathy for the victims and their families. We have been deeply distressed by the extended suffering, predominantly of people living in poverty, particularly African-Americans, for days without essential care and aid.

We have remembered in prayer the victims and all those affected by this disaster. We assure those in the midst of this crisis of the prayers of our churches around the world.

We recognize and encourage the important diaconic work of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in response to this crisis and encourage support from the LWF member churches and ACT members in the United States as appropriate.

Resolution on Dalit Liberation and Caste-based Discrimination (2005)

The Council voted to:

express strong support for the current initiatives of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India and the ecumenical church for Dalit liberation;

call on LWF member churches and related agencies to accompany and provide material support for the work of the LWF member churches in India and the field programs in India and Nepal for the welfare and empowerment of Dalit individuals and communities;

commend the Kathmandu Dalit Declaration of 2004 to the LWF member churches for study and action as appropriate;

acknowledge and express appreciation for the decision by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (2005/109) to authorize its Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights to undertake a study process on

'discrimination based on work and descent', with a view to the drafting of a set of principles and guidelines for the elimination of this form of discrimination;

express our appreciation to the LWF General Secretary and to Mr Peter Prove and all his colleagues for this significant and historic breakthrough; and

commend this study process to all LWF member churches, field programs and related agencies with relevant expertise on the situation of Dalits and other communities affected by discrimination based on descent and occupation (e.g. the Burakumin of Japan, the occupational caste groups of West Africa, and others), and to invite them to contribute their insights and recommendations to the LWF secretariat to be conveyed to the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

Resolution on Millennium +5 Review (2005)

The Council voted to:

affirm the important work of the United Nations on the occasion of its 60th anniversary and commend efforts toward reform which would further enhance its effectiveness;

express its deep concern that the Millennium Development Goals agreed to by the world's leaders at the United Nations nearly five years ago are at risk of remaining unachieved with grave consequences for the poorest, the marginalized and everyone in our global village;

endorse the Millennium Development Goals as stepping stones toward the alleviation of physical suffering, discrimination, inequality, and environmental degradation on behalf of all; and

to welcome the promise of donor countries during the G8 Summit at Gleneagles to substantially increase Official Development Assistance. We will support all efforts of our governments to allocate more funds in the fight against poverty. We expect that all OECD donor countries will follow the example of the European Union in accepting a clear timetable for reaching the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for Official Development Assistance.

Resolution on Female Genital Mutilation (2005)

The Council voted to:

affirm the work of the LWF World Service field program in Mauritania in addressing the issue of female genital mutilation;

affirm the work of the LWF member churches as they have sought to address this issue; and

call on LWF member churches and field programs, as appropriate, to continue to address the issue as outlined in the Council's resolution of September 2002 as well as previous actions.

Resolution on Poverty, the Responsibility of Governments and the Mission of the Church (2007)

The Council

affirms that in a world of plenty, the persistence of poverty—especially extreme poverty—is a scandal and an outrage;

declares that the first and most fundamental responsibility of governments is to assure the basic welfare and protect the God-given human dignity of their citizens and of all persons under their authority;

commends the new program in the Department for Theology and Studies on “Holding Governments Accountable: A Responsibility of the Churches with Civil Society,” and expresses the hope that this program will assist the churches in holding governments accountable to this fundamental responsibility;

welcomes the outcome of the LWF Consultation on Poverty and the Mission of the Church in Africa, held in Arusha, Tanzania, 4–8 September 2006, and encourages LWF member churches in Africa (and their partners around the world) in the implementation of the Arusha Action Plan defined at that consultation;

expresses support for the initiatives of all member churches to address poverty in their own contexts;

recognizes especially the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) in the coalition to promote the establishment of a "Basic Income Grant" in Namibia, and commends this initiative to all LWF member churches for consideration of its potential relevance to their own contexts; and

notes the potential for synergy between the work of the ELCRN with regard to the "Basic Income Grant," the work of the LWF-supported program on illegitimate debt, and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance's global trade campaign (in which the LWF and a number of its member churches participate), and encourages liaison and possible cooperation among them.

Resolution on the Philippines (2007)

The Council

expresses grave concern at the many reports of extrajudicial killings, disappearances and other serious human rights violations in the Philippines, including the recent report issued by the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (“Let the Stones

Cry Out: An Ecumenical Report on Human Rights in the Philippines and a Call to Action,” March 2007);

asks the General Secretary to write to the Government of the Philippines to give serious consideration to the issues identified in the NCCP report and to call upon them to respond to the concerns raised and to provide information on how they are protecting and promoting human rights in the Philippines; and

calls upon LWF member churches to pray for and act in solidarity with the people and the churches of the Philippines and to support and empower the Lutheran Church in the Philippines in its essential ministry to enhance human dignity.

Resolution on Climate Change (2008)

The Council voted to:

Call upon member churches to engage in and deepen their theological and ethical reflection on the human contribution to climate change (drawing on the resources being developed through the DTS program “Responding Theologically to Climate Change”), recognizing human beings as ‘co-creatures’ with moral agency rather than claiming the prerogatives of creators, and seeking to learn from indigenous practices and traditional wisdom for living sustainably as part of Creation.

Impress upon member churches the critical urgency and unprecedented magnitude of the challenge of climate change and the threat that it poses to humanity and all living beings on Earth.

Urge member churches to move beyond lamentation to urgent and effective action, especially in relation to reducing the emissions generated by their institutional activities and operations (including travel) and promoting more sustainable lifestyles and behaviors among their members.

Request the General Secretary and LWF member churches to undertake targeted advocacy actions (together with the WCC and other ecumenical and civil society partners) in appropriate forums – including forthcoming sessions of the UN Climate Change Conference – in order to promote strong political commitments to achieving a 40% reduction compared to 1990 levels of CO₂ emissions by 2020.

Encourage advocacy by the General Secretary and LWF member churches for rapid transition from coal and other fossil fuels for power generation to non-nuclear renewable energy sources, and for the application of a “carbon tax”.

Call upon the General Secretary, LWF member churches and LWF field programs to consolidate and enhance their efforts to address the impacts of climate change on development and poverty in the most vulnerable communities, and to promote effective national and international responses to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Ask the General Secretary to implement a CO₂ emissions compensation system for

LWF air travel, using appropriate LWF projects, at the latest by the beginning of 2009, and invite all member churches to use this CO₂ emission compensation system for their air travel.

Request the General Secretary to take other actions necessary to reduce the carbon footprint of the LWF secretariat, including considering the following actions with regard to Assembly preparation:

- reducing the number of printed documents and offering the option of digital or paper documents;
- providing all digital documents on a memory stick; and
- preparing Assembly delegates and participants for a more digitalized Assembly by organizing as part of the pre-Assembly meetings, training workshops on on-line communication.

Request the General Secretary to produce and disseminate to member churches a briefing paper on climate change and possible responses by the churches.

Resolution on Global food crisis (2008)

The Council voted to:

Express its grave concern at the recent exceptional increases in the price of basic food commodities around the world and the impact on the poorest and most vulnerable communities and individuals in our societies, on efforts to promote human development in many of the poorest countries, and on political stability in the worst affected countries;

Emphasize that the current food crisis is a reality and not a short-term anomaly, but the result of longstanding and deeply entrenched policies, trends and structural injustices (related to land access and use, agricultural production methods and subsidies, diversion of productive agricultural land for bio-fuel crops, international trade and speculation in agricultural commodities, urbanization and growing demand resulting from rising living standards), exacerbated by climate change;

Declare that the essential tasks of providing basic nutrition to people and ensuring food security cannot be left to the mercy of the market, and insist that promoting and protecting the right to food is a fundamental responsibility of government;

Express concern and continue to study the ethical and distribution issues related to genetically-modified seeds and organisms in the context of the current food crisis, and to express serious reservations about whether such controversial technologies can provide a viable or acceptable solution to the problem;

Request the General Secretary to ensure that the LWF's portfolio of development projects and programs include a strong focus on promoting food sovereignty in staple foods;

Request LWF member churches and the General Secretary to engage in relevant advocacy and other actions to promote the localization (rather than globalization) of

agricultural production (especially of staple food crops), the elimination of subsidies for bio-fuel production, the recognition and implementation of the right to food, and international trade policies that do not undermine food sovereignty and the right to food;

Begin a process of gathering experience and insights of member churches and LWF field programs with regard to food production and food sovereignty as preparation for discussion and action at the LWF Assembly in 2010; and

Request the General Secretary to produce and disseminate to member churches a briefing paper on food sovereignty.

Resolution on Genocide – Impunity (2008)

The Council voted to:

Commend the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), in delivering justice for the victims of genocide in Rwanda, in advancing the scope and reach of international criminal law with regard to genocide and other crimes against humanity, and in dealing with impunity for such crimes;

Support the request of the ICTR for an extension of its mandate in order to complete its valuable work;

Call for reflection by member churches and LWF field programs with experience of situations of conflict, large-scale violations of human rights, and recovery from such situations, on the proper relationship between formal international criminal justice and traditional community-based methods of delivering justice and promoting reconciliation; and

Request the General Secretary to gather up such reflections and to consider appropriate policy responses and interventions by the LWF.

Resolution on the Responsibility to Protect (2008)

The Council voted to:

Request the General Secretary to produce and disseminate to member churches a briefing paper on the responsibility to protect.

Resolution on UDHR 60 (2008)

The Council voted to:

Reaffirm the support of the Lutheran World Federation for the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), as the seminal articulation of

modern international human rights law and a key instrument for the promotion and protection of human dignity;

Encourage all LWF member churches to observe the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the UDHR, in prayer, liturgy, preaching, teaching and advocacy actions leading up to and culminating on 10 December 2008;

Invite member churches to use this anniversary year as an occasion to reflect on how to enhance their ministries for human rights, in particular through activities in the field of human rights education and learning; and

Request the General Secretary to produce and disseminate to member churches a briefing paper on the UDHR, together with relevant liturgical resources.

Resolution on Human Trafficking (2008)

The Council voted to:

Request the General Secretary to organize a joint plenary hearing for all committees at the next Council meeting on human trafficking and to produce and disseminate to member churches a briefing paper on human trafficking and possible church responses.