

**THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION  
ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY****RULES OF PROCEDURE****1. NATURE, POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE ASSEMBLY**

1.1 The Constitution defines the nature, powers and functions of the Assembly as follows (Article VII):

1.1.1 The Assembly shall consist of representatives of the member churches of the Federation. As the principal authority of the Lutheran World Federation, the Assembly shall:

- be responsible for the Constitution;
- give general direction to the work of the Federation;
- elect the President and the members of the Council;
- act on the reports of the President, the General Secretary and the Treasurer.

1.1.2 The Assembly shall normally be held every six years with the time, place and program to be determined by the Council.

Extraordinary Assemblies may be called by the Council and shall be called at the request of one-fifth of the member churches.

1.1.3 The number of representatives to the Assembly and their distribution among the member churches shall be determined by the Council.

Each member church shall have the right to have at least one representative in the Assembly.

Due regard shall be given to the numerical size of member churches and their distributions by continents and countries.

1.1.4 The Council may invite representatives of the Lutheran congregations in union church bodies or of Lutheran associations and organizations to the Assembly in a consultative capacity if these are not represented by member churches.

The number of these representatives shall be determined by the Council.

1.2 The Constitution assigns to the Assembly responsibility for amending the Constitution (Article XIV), the right to receive churches into LWF membership, to terminate or suspend such membership, as well as reinstate a suspended church (Article V and Bylaws).

1.3 Additional purposes of the Assembly (as defined by the Executive Committee in 1980 and amended and adopted by the Council in 2007):

1.3.1 The Assembly shall enable Lutheran churches:

- to witness to the faith together and worship together;

- to confer with one another;
  - to speak together on fundamental concerns of the whole church;
  - to express their unity as part of the one, universal, new community in Christ;
  - to reflect more deeply on the shift from Federation to Communion.
- 1.3.2 The additional purposes of the Eleventh Assembly shall be:
- to explore ways to be God's instruments for healing, justice and reconciliation in the midst of brokenness in church and society;
  - to deepen the understanding and experience of the Lutheran communion by addressing differences and disparities, and by sharing gifts;
  - to commit to closer and deeper cooperation within the ecumenical movement and to life in communion as given in Christ by deepening a vision of communion;
  - to discern the challenges posed to Lutheran churches in today's multicultural and multi-faith contexts;
  - to address spiritual, social and environmental challenges provoked especially by economic globalization, the struggle against poverty, HIV/AIDS, water and food security.
- 1.3.3 The Assembly shall stimulate continuing consideration by member churches of the issues highlighted by it through its letter to member churches, message, resolutions and public statements.
- 1.4 The Assembly shall transmit to the Council its resolutions concerning the policy and program of the Federation. The Council shall be responsible for the implementation of these resolutions.
- 1.5 The Assembly may receive reports and statements and pass them to the member churches for study. It may or may not express its own opinion on the issues involved.
- 1.6 The Assembly may make public statements in its own name on public issues of concern to member churches. Such statements shall not be binding on the churches unless they themselves so decide (see Articles II and III of the Constitution).
- 2. COMPOSITION OF THE ASSEMBLY**
- 2.1 Categories of participants at the Eleventh Assembly shall be as follows:
- 2.1.1 *Delegates* are nominees from member churches as provided for in the Constitution. Delegates have the right to speak and to vote at the Assembly.
- 2.1.2 *Representatives* are from associate member churches as provided for in the Constitution. Representatives have the right to speak, but not to vote at the Assembly and can not hold elective office in the LWF.
- 2.1.3 *Observers* are representatives of LWF recognized congregations and Councils as provided for in the Constitution. They have neither the right to speak nor to vote.

- 2.1.4 *Official Visitors* are persons invited by the LWF to perform certain tasks, and ecumenical representatives from world communions with which the LWF has engaged in close relationships. They have the right to speak, but not to vote.
- 2.1.5 *Ex-Officio Participants* are members of the Council (voting and advisers) who are not otherwise delegates from their churches and three persons from the Project Committee and the Standing Committee for World Service respectively. They have the right to speak, but not to vote.
- 2.1.6 *Advisers* are representatives of LWF national committees, related agencies, invited experts and consultants. They have the right to speak, but not to vote.
- 2.1.7 *Guests* are persons invited by the LWF to participate in the Assembly part or full-time, i.e. former LWF presidents, general secretaries, ecumenical representatives, representatives from other faith communities, host church(es) guests, officials of the government in the host country or international organizations (e.g. U.N.). Normally, they have neither the right to speak nor to vote, except if requested to address the Assembly for a greeting etc. Former LWF presidents and general secretaries may be granted the right to speak during the entire Assembly.
- 2.1.8 *LWF Staff* are the LWF staff, either at headquarters or in the field who are needed for specific tasks. In some cases the right to speak is granted, but not to vote.
- 2.1.9 *Co-opted Staff* are persons other than paid staff who are invited to render certain specific staff tasks at the Assembly. In some cases the right to speak is granted, but not to vote.
- 2.1.10 *Local Staff* are persons invited from the host church(es) to provide staff work at the Assembly. In some cases the right to speak is granted, but not to vote.
- 2.1.11 *Interpreters/Translators* are persons invited by the LWF to facilitate discussion at the Assembly through interpretation and translation. They have neither the right to speak nor to vote.
- 2.1.12 *Stewards* are persons invited by the LWF from member churches which appointed them to serve as stewards at the Assembly. They have neither the right to speak nor to vote.
- In addition to the above-mentioned participants, the following groups of people shall be allowed to attend plenary sessions of the Assembly as shall be determined by the President of the Federation:
- 2.1.13 *Visitors* are persons attending the Assembly part of the time or full time. Normally these persons are individual members of a member church, from which an endorsement is requested. They have neither the right to speak nor to vote.
- 2.1.14 *Accredited Journalists and Broadcasters* are media persons invited from the member churches and secular press to cover the Assembly business. They are accredited through the Office for Communication Services. They have neither the right to speak nor to vote.

- 2.1.15 *Accompanying Persons* are spouses, children etc., who accompany persons accredited in other categories. They have neither the right to speak nor to vote.

### **3. ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSEMBLY**

#### **3.1 Structure of the Assembly**

The work of the Assembly shall be carried out through:

- 3.1.1 *Common Worship and Bible Study*: Bible study shall be an integral part of the morning worship. Worship and Bible study shall be open to all participants.
- 3.1.2 *Plenary Sessions*: Plenary sessions shall be held for receiving reports, for general deliberations and for final decisions of the Assembly.
- 3.1.3 *Village Groups*: Participants shall be assigned to one of five village groups for the duration of the Assembly. Each village group shall develop its perspective towards the message of the Assembly. Through the report of the village group to the Editorial Committee, participants may make suggestions of issues, commitments or concerns to be included in the letter to member churches, message, recommendations, resolutions or public statements as appropriate.
- Each village group shall have a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a recorder elected by the Council. The Council shall approve the composition of the village groups.
- 3.1.4 *Hearings*: Participants shall be informed about the work of the Federation, of churches in specific regions and units of the LWF and shall have the opportunity to discuss questions in connection with the information given. Upon request of the plenary, special hearings may be held to further discuss and clarify particular questions and issues. All hearings shall be open.
- 3.1.5 *Committees*: Some participants shall be assigned to committees to deal with the functioning of the Assembly and to prepare recommendations for decision (see 3.2).
- 3.1.6 *Individual or Group Initiatives*: Delegates may take up particular points arising out of the program and refer them to the Policy and Reference Committee for determination of appropriate inclusion on the agenda or referral to the appropriate committee. Such initiatives shall be submitted in writing to the Policy and Reference Committee at least 18 hours before action is to be taken.

#### **3.2 Assembly Committees**

Nominations for membership of the committees listed below (including nomination for chairperson and, where needed, recorder) shall be presented by the Business Committee to the first plenary session for election by the Assembly. Delegates and ex-officio participants shall be eligible for membership of Assembly committees. Appropriate LWF staff shall be assigned to assist these committees. Other Assembly participants may be requested by the

Business Committee to serve as resource persons for committees, without vote.  
Chairpersons shall vote only in the case of a tie.

### 3.2.1 *Business Committee*

The Business Committee shall consist of the members of the outgoing Executive Committee and the chairpersons of the Standing Committees for World Service, the Project Committee and the Assembly Planning Committee.

As the steering committee of the Assembly, the Business Committee shall have general responsibility for the timetable and functioning of the Assembly, including plenary sessions, village groups, hearings and initiative groups.

The Business Committee shall make proposals for amendments of the agenda to the Assembly as circumstances may warrant (see 3.3.2).

### 3.2.2 *Policy and Reference Committee*

The Policy and Reference Committee shall consist of a chairperson and eight other members. The chairperson of the Editorial Committee shall be an ex-officio member of the Committee during presentation, discussion and action on matters for which the Editorial Committee is responsible.

The Committee shall review the letter to member churches, the Assembly message, as well as all resolutions and public statements to be considered by the plenary, including those from the Business Committee, Editorial Committee, village groups, initiative groups and individual delegates. It shall facilitate the work of the Assembly by examining each recommendation and report so as to ascertain:

- that each resolution and/or public statement is clearly stated and appropriately presented;
- that there is no unnecessary duplication of points dealing with the same issue or concern;
- that the most crucial insights, reference points and concerns are articulated and highlighted;
- whether or not resolutions are in compliance with the Constitution and the existing policy of the Federation.

Where substantial editorial changes appear to be necessary, the Committee shall refer them to the Editorial Committee. The Committee shall have the right to make comments to the plenary concerning matters within the scope of its mandate and, when necessary, to propose a voting procedure to deal with conflicting recommendations.

In addition, the Committee shall work on general courtesy resolutions, resolutions of thanks and other resolutions of a general nature as assigned by the Business Committee.

The Committee may divide into sub-committees in order to work on several matters at the same time.

### 3.2.3 *Editorial Committee*

The Editorial Committee shall consist of a chairperson and the chairperson of each of the five village groups.

It shall be responsible for assimilating input from the village groups to draft a letter to member churches (see 5.1) and the Assembly message (see 5.2). All drafts shall be presented first to the Policy and Reference Committee for review before being considered by the Assembly in plenary.

#### 3.2.4 *Credentials and Elections Committee*

The Credentials and Elections Committee shall consist of a chairperson and eight members.

It shall examine the credentials and supervise the registration of all participants, and shall report to the plenary on the constituency of the Assembly.

It shall also supervise elections conducted during the Assembly and, when asked by the chair, shall count the votes taken on motions in the Assembly.

#### 3.2.5 *Minutes Committee*

The Minutes Committee shall consist of a chairperson and four members.

It shall supervise the recording of the minutes of the plenary sessions and certify them for approval at a subsequent plenary session.

The minutes of the last plenary or plenaries shall be certified for approval at the first meeting of the Council following the Assembly.

#### 3.2.6 *Nominations Committee*

The Nominations Committee shall consist of a chairperson and 14 members.

The Committee shall present to the plenary nominations for the office of the President of the LWF and for the Council, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. It shall further inform the Assembly that nominations for the office of the President may be made from the floor, in writing, and signed by at least ten delegates.

The Nominations Committee shall present its first report on nominations at least 24 hours before its final report is presented to the plenary.

After the first report, nominations from the floor may be received until the chairperson declares, in plenary or in writing, the nominations to be closed, which shall normally be at the end of the session following the one in which the first report was given. The list of nominations shall be closed before the end of the third day after the official opening of the Assembly.

When the nominations are closed, the Nominations Committee, after consulting with the delegates of the churches concerned regarding nominations made from the floor in order to ensure adequate church endorsement, shall incorporate such nominations in its list, making known its findings regarding the consultations with representatives of the churches concerned.

### 3.3 Rules of Procedure, Agenda and Timetable

3.3.1 The rules of procedure, agenda and timetable shall be proposed by the outgoing Council for discussion, possible amendment and adoption by the Assembly.

3.3.2 Subsequent amendments to the agenda may be made by the Business Committee with the consent of the Assembly. Proposals from delegates for amendments or additions to the agenda shall be directed to the Business Committee, which shall inform the Assembly of such proposals and of its recommendations.

3.3.3 The timetable and order of business as presented by the Business Committee may be altered by common consent.

## 4. ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

### 4.1 *Plenary Sessions*

#### 4.1.1 *The Chairperson*

The chairperson of a plenary session shall be the President of the LWF, a Vice-president or another member of the Business Committee designated by the President.

The chairperson shall:

- convene the meeting;
- announce the order of business;
- guide the proceedings;
- declare the opening and closing of debate on a matter;
- make suggestions as to actions which the plenary may wish to take;
- receive suggestions from the floor as to action or procedure;
- ensure observance of the applicable rules of procedure;
- call recesses and declare adjournments.

#### 4.1.2 *Translation and Interpretation*

Full translation and interpretation facilities shall be provided in English, German, French and Spanish. A person may speak in some other language on the condition that arrangements are made for interpretation into English, German, French and Spanish.

#### 4.1.3 *Admission to Sessions*

All Assembly participants shall be admitted to Bible study and worship, to open plenary sessions and to hearings. Visitors shall be admitted as space permits. Participation in committees and village groups shall be limited to assigned members. Other participants may be admitted to village groups without the right to speak and to vote if space permits. Village group meetings shall be open to the press unless the chairperson decides otherwise.

Closed sessions may be convened by the chairperson of the plenary at his/her discretion, or be called by majority vote of the Assembly upon a motion from the floor. The chairperson shall announce who besides the delegates and Business Committee members may attend the closed session.

#### 4.1.4 *Right to Speak and to Vote*

Delegates shall have the right to speak and to vote in plenary sessions. Business Committee members who are not also delegates shall have the right to speak in plenary sessions. Representatives from churches which hold associate membership, ex-officio participants, official visitors and advisers shall have the right to speak but not to vote. Other guests, observers and staff may be given the right to speak at the discretion of the chairperson.

#### 4.1.5 *Election of the President and Members of the Council*

4.1.5.1 *Timing:* Election shall take place in the plenary session following that in which the final report of the Nominations Committee was presented. The time for election shall be announced to the plenary in writing at least one day in advance. Election shall take place before the end of the fifth day after the official opening of the Assembly.

4.1.5.2 *Quorum:* A minimum of three-quarters of the registered delegates shall be present for voting to proceed.

4.1.5.3 *If only one candidate is nominated:* An affirmative majority shall be required for election. (An “affirmative majority” means more than half of the votes, with blanks and spoiled ballots counting as “no” votes.) If an affirmative majority is not achieved, the Nominations Committee shall be asked again to nominate one or more candidates.

4.1.5.4 *If two candidates are nominated:* An affirmative majority shall be required for election on the first ballot. If neither candidate achieves an affirmative majority, a second ballot shall be held. In the second ballot, the candidate with the greater number of votes shall be elected. In case of a tie, the chairperson shall draw lots to determine the winner.

4.1.5.5 *If more than two candidates are nominated:* An affirmative majority shall be required for election on the first ballot. If no candidate achieves an affirmative majority, a second ballot shall be held between the two candidates with the largest number of votes. In the second ballot, the candidate with the greater number of votes shall be elected. In case of a tie, the chairperson shall draw lots to determine the winner.

#### 4.1.6 *Rules of Debate*

All remarks shall be addressed to the chairperson.

4.1.6.1 *Recognition to Speak:* A person desiring to speak (for or against an item under discussion such as a motion or resolution; to a portion or portions of a document or report; to introduce an amendment to a motion, a substitute motion, or an additional recommendation or resolution) shall indicate this by handing to the chair the appropriate form indicating the exact purpose for which he/she wishes to speak. The person shall wait until recognized by the chairperson and then shall stand and first state his/her name, the name of his/her church, and the language he/she will speak.

In general, speakers shall be recognized in the order in which requests are received. However, with the consent of the plenary, the chairperson may modify the order to provide for the expression of various points of view within the time allotted.

No person shall speak more than once to the same item of discussion until all who wish to speak have been heard.

A delegate may at any time ask the chairperson for a ruling on a question of procedure by calling for a point of order. Such a request shall have precedence over other calls for the floor.

4.1.6.2 *Time Limit on Speeches and Questions:* Speeches and questions shall be limited to three minutes, unless otherwise agreed upon by the Assembly. When the speaker's time is up, a bell shall be rung, and he/she shall be seated, unless the chairperson authorizes an extension of time.

4.1.6.3 *Motions:* Motions on agenda items may be proposed by delegates and/or assembly committees. Motions by delegates shall be proposed and seconded. All motions shall be handed to the chairperson in writing and read by the chairperson before a vote is taken.

The person presenting a report, document, recommendation or resolution to be debated and acted upon by the Assembly shall specify in a provisional motion, the Assembly action which is proposed (see 4.1.6.4). This motion proposing action shall not be debated until there has been full discussion, within the time limit prescribed in the schedule, of the content of the report, document or resolution.

4.1.6.4 *Possible Assembly Actions:* Motions may be made to take the following actions on reports, statements, messages, recommendations and resolutions:

- to receive a report: the Assembly recognizes that it has knowledge of the matter but does not state whether it agrees or disagrees with the opinions expressed therein;
- to adopt a letter, message or public statement: the Assembly declares itself in agreement with the opinions expressed therein (see 4.1.6.7);
- to adopt a motion, recommendation or resolution: the Assembly declares its approval of the proposal and orders that the necessary actions be taken to carry it out;
- to refer a matter back to the committee or working group presenting it: the Assembly indicates that what is presented is not acceptable and that it wishes the committee to refine or change the substance in light of the discussion which has taken place; the Assembly may indicate specifically what changes it desires;

- to transmit for a purpose to a body or group: the Assembly declares that it wants that which is transmitted brought to the attention of a particular body or group for its information, study, opinion, action, etc.

4.1.6.5 *Substitute Motions and Amendments from the Floor:* At the time a motion proposing action is open for discussion, substitute motions or formal amendments from the floor shall be admissible.

Substitute motions shall be considered simultaneously with the original motion. If there are several substitute motions with reference to one item on the floor, the chairperson shall decide which motion proposes the most substantial change and that motion shall be discussed and voted upon first.

In the course of the debate, editorial amendments may be made by common consent. Substantial amendments to any motion shall be voted on before the original motion is voted on. Only one amendment shall be considered at a time.

In case of uncertainty concerning the proposed action, it is the duty of the chairperson to give a clarifying ruling.

4.1.6.6 *Closing Debate:* When the time allotted in the schedule of debate on a report, document, recommendation or resolution has expired, the chairperson shall put the question, “Shall we conclude this debate and proceed to the consideration of what action shall be taken on this (report) (document) (recommendation) (resolution)?”

A motion to close debate may be made from the floor. Such motion takes precedence over further proceedings. After the motion to close the debate has been seconded, the secretary shall read the names of those who had asked to speak but have not been heard. The chairperson shall then put the question. A two-thirds majority of those voting is required to close the debate in this manner.

4.1.6.7 *Voting on Motions:* A minimum of half of the registered delegates shall be required for voting to proceed. An affirmative majority of those voting shall be required to pass a motion. The number of those abstaining from voting shall have no effect on the result of the vote (see Council 1994 minute 366). In case of a tie, the motion is lost. If the chairperson is a delegate, he/she shall be entitled to one vote.

In wishing to adopt a public statement, thereby making the statement its own, the presence of a two-thirds majority of those entitled to vote is required. The chair shall announce that this shall be the case before the vote is taken. When the statement pertains in a special way to a church or a country of a church its delegates shall be consulted during preparation.

A motion that has been passed or defeated may be reconsidered at the request of a delegate who has voted with the majority, provided that a two-thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote favor such reconsideration.

When there are several motions pending on an item where the Business Committee has made a recommendation, voting shall first take place on that recommendation.

4.1.6.8 *Editorial Changes:* Final disposition of a report or document by the Assembly shall not preclude necessary editing which shall take into account any approved editorial suggestions made in the course of debate.

4.1.6.8 *Rulings by the Chair:* The chairperson shall rule on matters not covered by these Rules of Procedure. A delegate may challenge the ruling of the chairperson, in which case the ruling shall be subject to confirmation by majority vote. If the ruling is defeated, the chairperson shall confer with the Business Committee and then present their common proposal for vote.

#### 4.2 *Non-Plenary Sessions*

The rules of debate for Assembly plenary sessions shall be followed in all other sessions which deal with recommendations or resolutions, unless those present agree on simplified procedures. Only limited translation and interpretation shall be provided in non-plenary sessions.

### 5. **ASSEMBLY OUTCOMES**

#### 5.1 *Letter to Member Churches*

A pastoral letter of encouragement, in light of the experience and actions of the Assembly, shall be distributed widely among congregations and laity. The letter shall be brief (no longer than one page). The letter shall be initially drafted by the Editorial Committee, in light of the reports from village groups and the Assembly proceedings. The Editorial Committee shall submit the first draft of the letter to the Policy and Reference Committee which shall review the draft and forward it to the plenary for consideration.

#### 5.2 *Assembly Message*

This shall be descriptive and representative of the experience of the Assembly, lifting up the diverse viewpoints of participants. It is intended to provide a collective memory of a particular historical moment in the life of the Lutheran communion. It shall also provide an opportunity for the Assembly to invite member churches to commit themselves to action, study, consideration, etc., on matters of importance to the Assembly. This invitation shall also be offered to ecumenical partners and other stakeholders.

##### 5.2.1 The message shall be characterized as follows:

- faithful portrayal of the momentum of the Lutheran communion;
- offering a prophetic voice for the current context as appropriate;
- strengthening the relationship among member churches;
- appreciating the location of the Lutheran communion within the wider ecumenical movement as contextually appropriate;
- written for member churches and other stakeholders within the communion and the ecumenical movement;
- brief and concise (i.e. no more than ten pages), so that the message is easily shared and widely considered by member churches and other interested persons.

## 5.2.2 The message shall be drafted as follows:

- Village groups shall submit a report detailing priority issues into three points in order of priority. This shall be a short document of no more than four pages.
- The Editorial Committee shall receive the reports from all village groups and shall write a first draft of the message, taking into account priority areas of concern.
- The Editorial Committee shall submit the first draft of the message to the Policy and Reference Committee which shall review the draft and forward it to the plenary for consideration.

5.3 *Resolutions*

Resolutions shall be binding commitments for the life and work of the LWF. There are two forms of resolutions:

- policy resolutions define the guidelines for how the LWF carries out its work;
- programmatic resolutions define explicit direction for the work of the LWF through concrete and specific action.

Resolutions shall describe goals or commitments which are attainable within a particular time frame (e.g. by the following Assembly) and feasible with the resources available to the LWF. The Council shall be responsible for the resolutions adopted by the Assembly. Resolutions may be proposed through the reports of village groups, or by individuals, member churches, regions or Assembly committees (see 3.1.3, 3.1.5, 3.1.6).

5.4 *Public Statements*

A public statement shall be a focused document intended for widespread public release. It shall describe a particular issue or concern and the position of the Assembly on that issue. Public statements may be proposed through the reports of village groups, or by individuals, member churches, regions or Assembly committees (see 3.1.3, 3.1.5, 3.1.6). They serve as the official statement from the Assembly.