



# *The African Christian Pulse*

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AACC Youth for Peace during the General Committee meeting.

African Christian Pulse



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**ACT ALLIANCE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 18-22 OCTOBER 2010  
ARUSHA, TANZANIA**

## THE ACTALLIANCE ASSEMBLY IN AFRICA



*The WCC General Secretary*

The newly-formed organization aimed at managing emergency & development programs for and with Protestant churches, held its inaugural assembly in Africa, more specifically in Arusha, Tanzania, on the 19 – 22 October 2010.

ACTAlliance was formed as a result of a process that started a few years ago, and comes to play a role which was mainly played by the World Council of Churches (WCC) as an expression of the

diakonal mandate of the Church. This does not mean that the Church, at the global and local levels, has wholly delegated this vital mission, which is part of its very nature.

The tone of the assembly was competently and clearly set by the WCC General Secretary Rev. Dr. Olav Tveit, who sufficiently highlighted that ACT (Action by Churches Together) Alliance has the challenging responsibility to take churches seriously; not only by working for them, but

also by working with and through them, if the new organization is to raise its credibility.

He also said that we need to be aware that the task is not easy because we may face conflict of interest and competition among key players, but whatever is to be done has to be based on mutual accountability, contributing to the unity of the Church, and to the expression of God's love. The WCC General Secretary challenged the assembly to examine the place of mission-organizations because there is no church without a mission and diakonia.

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) is a member of ACTAlliance, but many African churches that are playing a critical role in crisis-management and development in Africa are not yet members, even if it was said that Africa has the largest number of members in ACTAlliance.

AACC and African churches are looking forward to clearly seeing the added-value to be brought by the new organization. We wish it success.

## AACC's PRESIDENT SPEAKS AT THE ACTALLIANCE ASSEMBLY

I feel greatly honoured to have been invited to this Great Inaugural Assembly of ACT Alliance which takes place in my own country and in our beloved continent of Africa. On behalf of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome to Arusha and KARIBU to Africa.

When ACTAlliance was launched on March 24<sup>th</sup> 2010, the entire world took note of the event and Reuters said, "One of the world's largest humanitarian bodies is launched today. It went further to say that "the alliance works for the world's poorest people, fighting the causes of humanitarian suffering and injustice." This means that the coming to existence of ACTAlliance has raised a lot of expectations.

Distinguished participants, brothers and sisters, this Assembly of ACTAlliance takes place at a critical time when the ecumenical movement moved from viable programmes which were enabling people and communities to experience change and have access to better conditions,



Right: Archbishop Valentine Mokiwa, AACC President  
Left: Hon. Fredrick Sumaye, former Prime Minister for Tanzania

programmes such as scholarship, multilateral sharing and human solidarity. These programmes have been replaced by an era of workshops and seminars which cannot bring any change but takes from people the only thing they have, the time spent without any viable result. We have never seen any situation changed by workshops and seminars.

Another concern I want to share with this inaugural assembly is the whole damage made against African Dignity by people raising funds by using shocking images of Africans and creating an afro-pessimist mind set, and by so doing

undermining the image of God which every individual and community are endowed with. I strongly hope that this Assembly will adopt a common code of conduct against this practice. Africa has a lot of positive stories and doesn't have the monopoly of misery. We are called together to invent and create a conducive environment and agree on strategies to express Gods' love through a diakonical engagement which shows Gods' love and human solidarity by people who confess to the same Father and therefore who are brothers and sisters.

There is need to focus on the

fact that ACT means “Action by Churches Together”. When the visibility of the Church is missing, when whatever we do is not grounded on theological reflections, when the Church feels marginalised, then we will be going outside our mandate and the *raison d'être* of our Alliance.

Having this Assembly in the continent of Africa when the image of God has been spoilt may constitute a special opportunity for the ecumenical family and to all

members of ACTAlliance to work together by dealing with root causes behind current situations and reverse it radically by creating hope and dignity for everyone. The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) reminds this Alliance that time has come to work with Africans instead of working for them. As a member of ACTAlliance, AACC will do its best to keep the vision of the diakonical mandate of the church and cooperate with whoever wants to promote the values of God’s kingdom namely

Peace, Justice and Joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).

I want to conclude these remarks by wishing all of you a blessed stay in Arusha and Gods inspiration for a fruitful Assembly of the ACTAlliance organization.

May God Bless you richly.

*The Most Rev. Valentine Mokiwa,  
Archbishop of the Anglican Church  
of Tanzania  
and  
President of the All Africa  
Conference of Churches*

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## ACTALLIANCE: OPEN QUESTIONS

### 1. Membership and participation

**A** number of top leaders of Protestant specialized ministries participated fully in the Arusha Inaugural Assembly and many organizations in other continents working in the area of emergency and development are already members of ACTAlliance.

Along corridors and during breaks some questions were raised : “Where are the top leaders of African specialized ministries which are churches managing more than 60% of

*schools and health centres? These are the expression of diakonical work and the best instrument for sustainable development in Africa.”*

### 2. Advocacy approach and themes

The spirit of the meeting tended to convey a message that we need to say together, that rich countries have the moral obligation to increase the aid and help to reach the millennium development goals to reverse the situation of poverty. Participants especially Africans said clearly that we don't believe at all in Aid as the answer to the

question of poverty. The message we are ready to convey is; Africa should reverse the situation from within and agree to stop making people believe that change of the situation will come from outside. We cannot close our eyes on the reality that countries who continue to exploit us, none of them is willing to dedicate at least one percent of its wealth for solidarity with the poor.

### 3. The image of Africa

It continues to be evident that poverty and misery has been given a colour and identified with Africa. As said by the

AACC President, this spoiling of the African image through shocking photos continues to

be a reality which is morally unacceptable. Statistics show that the big number of

desperate people who commit suicide is not in Africa.

## THE THEOLOGICAL NETWORK IS TAKING SHAPE

**“When the body moves it does not make noise, but it can reach somewhere.”**

**A**fter the Maputo Assembly the AACC programmatic priority started by promoting and reinforcing contact with member churches especially through training of newly elected leaders. Up to now, 157 leaders have come to Nairobi and gotten closer to the AACC. This effort was complemented by a number of visits to the constituency. The churches in the following countries have been visited either by the General Secretary, other delegations sent by AACC:

### 1) East Africa

Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Madagascar.

### 2) Central Africa

Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central Africa Republic, Rwanda and Burundi

### 3) West Africa

Liberia, Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Mali, Senegal and Niger.

### 4) Southern Africa

Lesotho, Botswana, South Africa, Zambia, Angola and Mozambique.

### 5) North Africa

Sudan and Egypt

Shortly after member churches had met, a meeting for National Councils of Churches was organised in January 2010. This time round, the focus was the reinforcement of Theological Networks in the whole continent. This process started by the Francophone Theological Institutions which met in Yaoundé and Kinshasa. From those meetings, theologians in Francophone Africa engaged in a reflection which will culminate in a publication on the theme “*The church and state in Africa*”. After the Francophone, the network of theological institutions in East Africa met in Nairobi from 7-8 October, 2010. Similarly, East African theologians committed to reflect on the theme “*Theological Response*

to the Challenge of Ethnicity”.

From 12-13 October 2010, the AACC hosted a meeting of theological institutions in West Africa, in Accra, Ghana. The meeting was also aimed at revitalizing theological institutions in West Africa and the theologians present committed to reflect on the theme “*Disability, Inclusiveness and the response of the church in Africa*”. The last meeting of this kind which will gather theological institutes in the South is set to take place in Gaborone, Botswana from 11-14 November, 2010, just before the advisory committee meeting of the AACC theological department.



The meeting for theological institutions in West Africa, held in Accra, Ghana.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION WORKSHOP



*A session during the Zimbabwe workshop*

The workshop took place in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, on the 5–8, October 2010. There were 26 participants, mainly

representatives of Churches and NGOs in South Africa and Zimbabwe. AACC was represented by the Director of Empowerment and

capacity building, Mr. Arthur Shoo. The objective of the workshop was to introduce the Climate and Disaster Risk Toolkit.

It is a fact that climate change is coming with many disasters. The question is how to reduce the disaster risks? This calls for design of different methods of adaptation including: use of the pulpit to convey the message of care for creation; choosing energy saving solutions for households; construction of rain-harvesting structures; growing drought-resistant crops that mature in a short period; afforestation and prevention of deliberate fires.

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## LUSOPHONE LEADERSHIP & CLIMATE CHANGE COURSE

The course was facilitated by the AACC Directorate of Empowerment and Capacity Building. It took place in Maputo, Mozambique, from the 11–14, October 2010. AACC has previously facilitated five Capacity Building courses reaching more than 160 church leaders. This time round, it was an opportunity for the



*Participants of the Lusophone meeting*

Lusophone countries.

The course brought 11 church leaders from Angola and 20 church leaders from Mozambique. It focused on five major topics:

- Stewardship of church resources
- Strategic planning for churches
- Climate change and care for creation.

- New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).
- Resource mobilization.

At the end of the course participants expressed appreciation, saying that it was very relevant and would help improve their work back home.

Thereafter, we received communication from Rev. Felicidade Chirinda (AACC Vice President for Southern Africa) and Rev. Marcos Efraim (Mozambique Council of Churches General Secretary) commending AACC for the work well done for the Lusophone countries.

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## MAJOR DECISIONS OF THE AACC GENERAL COMMITTEE

The committee met from 23-24 September, 2010 at the AACC headquarters and made the following decisions:

1. The General Committee chose Kampala, Uganda as the venue for the next 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly set to take place in 2013. The precise dates and theme will

be decided in March 2011 and communicated.

2. Mr. Arthur Shoo from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and the Director of Empowerment and Capacity Building Programme at AACC has been appointed as the coordinator of the next 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.



Mr. Arthur Shoo

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## WE INVITE YOU ALL TO SHARE YOUR STORIES AND EXPERIENCES THROUGH THE AFRICAN CHRISTIAN PULSE

To join the mailing list or comment, please write to [secretariat@aacc-ceta.org](mailto:secretariat@aacc-ceta.org)

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