



# THE AFRICAN PULSE



**60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY & 12<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

THE LOVE OF CHRIST COMPELS US...2 COR 5:14



# CONTENTS

- 
- 01** OVERVIEW
- 
- 02** 9<sup>TH</sup> THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
- 
- 03** WOMEN PRE-ASSEMBLY
- 
- 04** YOUTH PRE-ASSEMBLY
- 
- 05** 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY
- 
- 06** 12<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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*The African pulse is published quarterly by the All Africa Conference of Churches as an information, educational and advocacy platform for the ecumenical movement in Africa.*

AACC is a continental ecumenical body that accounts for over 200 million Christians across the continent. AACC is the largest association of Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox and Indigenous churches in Africa and is a member of the worldwide ecumenical network. AACC is a fellowship of 208 members comprising of Churches, National Councils of Churches (NCC's), theological and lay training institutions and other Christian organizations in 43 African countries.

# MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY



*"Praise the Lord, you his servants; praise the name of the Lord. Let the name of the Lord be praised, both now and forevermore." Psalms 113:1-2 (NIV).*

My soul chants this Psalm every time I reflect on the great time we had in Abuja between 18<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023 as the AACC gathered there for its 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (12<sup>th</sup> GA), and it is within this Spirit of thanksgiving that I extend to you warm ecumenical greetings. This 10<sup>th</sup> issue of the African Pulse is entirely dedicated to AACC's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations and 12<sup>th</sup> GA events that took place in November 2023 on the theme, 'The Love of Christ Compels Us. The General Assembly (GA) is the largest policy and decision-making body of the All Africa Conference of Churches, and it meets every five years to evaluate and give direction to the fellowship's work. The 12<sup>th</sup> GA opened with the colorful commemoration of AACC's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Thanks be to God for the far we have come as an ecumenical family!

Following the commemoration, the GA worked for three days, deliberating on key and pertinent issues within the fellowship, relating to Africa, and Global Christianity. Through this time, the Spirit of God indeed inspired and guided our deliberations and decision-making processes. With immense gratitude, the GA received and approved the work done by the Secretariat and General Committee guided by the 2019-2023 strategy and also approved the proposed 2024 – 2028 strategy. Other key outcomes of the 12<sup>th</sup> GA included the adoption of the revised AACC Constitution, the election of the new General Committee, the AACC president, and the five Regional vice presidents. The 12<sup>th</sup> GA will always stand out in AACC's history because it elected the first female President of the Conference; the Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA). This was a history made!

The AACC members indeed worked hard to ensure that we run a successful GA without incurring debts or losing any property. The fellowship shall forever be grateful to the churches in Nigeria, the Christian Council of Nigeria, and the Christian Association of Nigeria who hosted the 12<sup>th</sup> GA for their great generosity and gracious gift of providing for all the assembly venues, delegates' accommodation, feeding, and transport in Abuja, among the many other 12<sup>th</sup> GA needs they met. Our Nigerian hosts indeed afforded us a very memorable and historic GA and I will always think about them with thanksgiving. I also deeply appreciate all AACC member churches for financing their delegates' travel costs to Abuja. Thank you so much for this gesture of love for the fellowship and commitment to its excellence. I thank the 12<sup>th</sup> GA Local Organizing Committee and AACC staff who worked tirelessly for the success of the Assembly, and all AACC partners whose mutual accompaniment has helped the AACC remain the spiritual pulse of the African Continent since 1963.

I welcome you to read this issue and appreciate the great milestones reached by the AACC. Africa: My Home. My future.

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

# **01**

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# **OVERVIEW**

# CONGRATULATIONS TO AACC

Founded in 1963, The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) made 60 years of existence and service last year; 2023. In addition to being the 60th Anniversary year, 2023 was also a year for another AACC General Assembly as per the organisation's constitution. AACC members in Nigeria took up the challenge to host the fellowship's 60th Anniversary celebrations and 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (12<sup>th</sup> GA). Taking on this responsibility was a bold step of faith made by the churches and Christian councils in Nigeria given the spiritual, financial, and technical needs of the assembly that they had to meet as hosts. To the Glory of God, AACC members in Nigeria indeed afforded the fellowship a remarkable 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration and memorable 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations and 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary took place from 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 at the National Christian Center in Abuja Nigeria on the theme: *"The Love of Christ Compels us. (2 Cor 5:14)"*. Ahead of the 12<sup>th</sup> GA, three main Pre-assembly events took place between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> November 2023, as we shall see in this magazine.



AACC President, Rt. Rev. Arnold C. Temple making his opening remarks during the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations

*"It is a feeling of great joy that our generation of African Ecumenists meet in Nigeria for this celebration. For it was sixty-five years ago, in January 1958, that our mothers and fathers in the ecumenical movement met in Nigeria, at the University of Ibadan, and conceived the idea of the All Africa Conference of Churches. Church leaders from this continent came to Nigeria, Ibadan to be precise, with a deliberate and intentional search for unity and identity. It was a search for the manifestation of the unity that Christ wills for his Church and a search for our African Christian identity."*

*"What we celebrate here today is not merely sixty years of existence, but sixty years of engagement in a united prophetic ministry for the good of our continent. Congratulations to AACC!"*

Noted Rt. Rev. Arnold Temple

# INTERVIEW WITH THE 12 GENERAL ASSEMBLY OVERALL COORDINATOR

**D**uring the preparation of this issue, the AACC communications department held an interview with the 12th General Assembly Coordinator: Ms. Evelyne Okunda, the executive office of the office of the ACC General Secretary. Before delving deeper into the details of the assembly, this issue provides to the reader some insights into the conversation we had with Evelyne about the assembly.



Ms. Evelyne Okunda receiving a gift from the leadership of the 12<sup>th</sup> GA local organizing committee

## **Greetings Eve, and Congratulations for coordinating such a historical AACC General Assembly**

*Thank you.*

## **Well I know that you are one of the staff at the AACC general secretariat but, tell us a bit about yourself. Who is Evelyne Okunda?**

*I am a highly motivated, experienced and dedicated professional. With over 15 years work experience, I have a successful and proven solid background in general management, office management, events and conferences management, in various fields both locally and internationally. I am results oriented and a champion for equality and equity. I am a mother and in my free time, I love cooking, travelling and spending time with family and friends.*

*Currently I work at the AACC as the Executive Officer in the Office of the General Secretary.*

## **Yes, Evelyne, maybe before we go very far, when did you join the AACC, and what inspired you to join the organization?**

*I joined the AACC in July 2019. The organizations' mission and values drew my interest as they align with my personal values. Also, I have always wanted to contribute meaningfully to the continent and AACC gives me the platform to do so.*

## **So when you joined, Did you know that you would be the one coordinating the 12th GA? I mean, was the task part of your JD right from the start?**

*Not at all, it came along the way. One of my tasks at the point of joining the organization was organizing some governance meetings. Based on my good organization skills I was given the great honor of organizing this memorable event.*

## **We learned during the staff retreat that this was the first time, AACC finished a General assembly without any debt or selling any property. What do you think contributed to this remarkable achievement?**

*This was indeed a remarkable achievement that was contributed by the generosity of the Nigerian Churches who paid for the accommodation, meals and local transport of the delegates (we will forever be thankful for this unmeasurable act of kindness). AACC member churches also contributed greatly to this success as they paid for the air tickets of their delegates.*

**How was your experience as the GA coordinator, acting as a bridge between the local organizing committee, secretariat and fellowship members and partners?**

*My experience was multifaceted, requiring effective communication, collaboration, problem-solving and support. The role was both challenging and rewarding, thus contributing to the success of the program.*

**Did you face any challenges? And if so do you mind sharing a bit of those challenges with us?**

*Certainly! Coordinating the GA was a complex task and various challenges often arose during the process. Some notable challenges faced included late registrations, last minute show ups and requests, logistics, planning, cultural differences, bi-lingual communication, visa issues, inclusivity and representation.*

**Briefly Evelyne, which strategies did you use to overcome those challenges and others that you may not have mentioned?**

*Flexibility, adaptability, clear communication, working extra hours, teamwork, remaining level headed and calm and smiling during the toughest of moments really helped. Also having a very able local coordinator on the ground was very important.*

**In the entire process of coordinating the 12<sup>th</sup> GA, what was your highest moment?**

*I had several high moments but the most notable one was when the first female AACC president was elected. History had been made! Also, when the event ended successfully without any major incidences.*

**What major lessons did your role as 12<sup>th</sup> GA bring into your life and career?**

*I gained valuable insights and experiences that have significantly impacted both my personal life and career. The experience enhanced my leadership, communication and organization skills: adaptability, flexibility, problem-solving, decision-making, time management, prioritization, networking, relationship building, resilience, stress management, attention to detail, cultural sensitivity and Inclusivity. These lessons continue to shape my approach to both personal and professional endeavors.*

**Evelyne, many young people especially young women desire to be transformative leaders of the church in Africa and across the world. I know many of them look up to people like you with great admiration. What advice would you give to them?**

*Wanting to see positive changes in the society is where it all begins. One has to equip themselves with knowledge about current issues, have the willingness to learn from diverse perspectives and the willpower to advocate for justice and social transformation. Attending meetings, conferences, and events organized by ecumenical bodies to foster dialogue, share insights, and build networks also helps. Finally, one has to keep upgrading their skill set and always remain committed and humble.*

**Having coordinated the 12<sup>th</sup> GA, what is your dream for the next AACC GA?**

*I dream of an assembly that will be more inclusive, collaborative, but most importantly, once again a debt free GA. One that will be a beacon of hope, reflecting the transformative power of faith in action.*

**Finally Evelyne, How do you envision the AACC in the next 40 years after the 12<sup>th</sup> GA.**

*My vision for AACC involves deepening its impact and remaining steadfast in its commitment to serving God, the church, and the people of Africa.*

**Thank you very much Evelyne for participating in this interview and for sharing with us your experiences, and a bit of your personal life. May God continue blessing you.**

*Thank you, comrade.*



**02**

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**9<sup>TH</sup> THEOLOGICAL  
INSTITUTE**

# THE 9<sup>TH</sup> THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

## Rev. Dr. John Ngige Njoroge

All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC-CETA) Theological Institute programme was instituted during the 9th General Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique 2008. It aims to promote intergenerational learning and mentorship of young theologians on ecumenical-related issues affecting Africa and beyond, to produce present and future ecumenical leaders for African churches and the world at large.

The 9th Theological Institute was officially opened on the 7th of November 2023 and ran until 16th of November 2023 at the First Baptist Church – Garki Abuja Nigeria. Fifty (50) young theologians below 35 years and (5) facilitators drawn from all over the continent participated in the institute.

According to Fr. Dr. John Njoroge, AACC's Executive Secretary for theology and interfaith relations, the 9th theological institute fostered a deep understanding of theological concepts, ignited meaningful dialogues, inspired participants to be transformative ecumenical leaders who build the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12).

After ten days of learning together, listening to one another, and exploring ways of applying gained theological knowledge to effectively contribute to Africa's sustainable development, and fostering ecumenical solidarity across the world, the 50 graduates expressed a joint commitment to grow the ecumenical movement.

In addition to the theological curriculum, students were engaged in extra-curricular activities. By visiting the city of Abuja, the National Christian Center, and the National Museum, students got exposure and experienced contextual ecumenism and interfaith dialogue. This was the 1st time for most of the students to visit a mosque and engage in inter-religious conversations.

Graduates of the theological institute are expected to lead the continent to the Africa We Want but also make the world a better place for all.



## 9<sup>th</sup> Theological Institute Pictorials



Rev. Dr. John Ngugi Njoroge, AACC Executive secretary for Theology and interfaith relations speaking to the students.



Rev. Israel Adelani Akanji, President, Nigeria Baptist Convention and Chairman, Local Organization Committee 12<sup>th</sup> GA officially opening the 9<sup>th</sup> Theological Institute.



The AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki addressing the institute



Some of the students during a lecture



Group presentation at the 9<sup>th</sup> Theological Institute



A light moment as 9<sup>th</sup> Theological Institute students pose for photos during the culture night.

# 9<sup>th</sup> Theological Institute Pictorials



Participants at the Abuja National Mosque



One of the students from Mauritius responding to a lecture



9<sup>th</sup> Theological Institute Lecturers and facilitators planting a tree at the First Baptist Church-Garki-Abuja



Prof. Benjamin Simon from the World Council of Churches Bossy Ecumenical Institute delivering a lecture.



Students showing off their certificates.



9<sup>th</sup> Theological Institute students at the 12<sup>th</sup> GA venue.

**03**

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**WOMEN**

**PRE-ASSEMBLY**

# WOMEN PRE-ASSEMBLY CHAMPIONS GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT

Rev. Dr. Lydia Mwaniki - AACC Director for Women and Gender



The AACC Program for Gender and Women organized a profound two-day Women Pre-assembly from 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at St. Matthias House in Abuja. This Pre-assembly was hosted by the Anglican Church of Nigeria. Preceded by three virtual sessions, the in-person gathering united over 100 participants from 30 countries. The theme, "*The Love of Christ compels us to Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE)*," guided the Pre-assembly discussions.

"One of the key objectives of this Pre-assembly is to offer a us a safe space as women leaders to interrogate issues that affect us and how we can ensure that the 12<sup>th</sup> GA address our concerns." Said Dr. Lydia Mwaniki as she welcomed the participants.

Dr. Lydia also emphasized he need for the women delegates to offer themselves for elction into AACC's governing bodies when that time of the GA comes.



Mrs. Angela Ndukuba making her opening remarks at the women Pre-assembly.



Rev. Dr. Lydia Mwaniki, the AACC Director for Gender and Women addressing the Pre-assembly.



The Most Rev'd Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba, Archbishop, Metropolitan & Primate of the Church of Nigeria welcoming the Pre-assembly participants



Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, AACC General Secretary addressing the Women Pre-assembly

## 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GBV LAUNCHED DURING THE WOMEN PRE-ASSEMBLY



*Nigerian women leaders presenting a song during the launch of the 16 days of activism.*

AACC's historic launch of the 2023 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) took place on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2023 during the closing ceremony of the Women Pre-assembly. More than 200 participants, including Youth and Male Champions for Gender Justice were part of the launch. Preceding the 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, this event aimed to synchronize with the Assembly, emphasizing the roles of women, youth, and church leaders in combating violence against women and girls.

Under the theme; "*UNITE! Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls,*" the event took place at the St. Matthias House Conference Hall. The launch featured a biblical reflection on ecclesial activism against GBV by Reverend Professor Miracle Ajah. He urged the church to address societal injustices that perpetuate GBV.

Among AACC members, the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence in Africa serve as a powerful annual platform for solidarity, dialogue, and tangible actions for gender justice.



**04**

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**YOUTH PRE-ASSEMBLY**

# THE YOUTH PRE-ASSEMBLY

Muyunga Brian, Executive Secretary, Youth



From November 16th to 18th, 2023, the Methodist Cathedral of Unity in Abuja, Nigeria, hosted AACC's 12th General Assembly Youth Pre-assembly on the theme, "*The love of Christ compels us to build the Africa the Youth Want.*" With the resounding slogan "*Africa: My Home. My Future.*" The Pre-Assembly aimed at preparing and accompanying Christian youth leaders for meaningful participation at the General Assembly, and enhancing the ecumenical youth contribution to Africa's sustainable development beyond the GA. One hundred and twenty-one (121) participants from AACC member churches participated in this gathering. Before the pre-assembly in Abuja, virtual preparatory webinars were held between 14th September 2023 and 9th November 2023, to prepare the targeted participants: Youth delegates and Stewards for the in-person gathering. In these webinars, the participants were equipped with knowledge about

AACC's history and mission work, the ecumenical movement in Africa and its role in sustainable development. Participants also evaluated the outcomes and impacts of the past 11 AACC General Assemblies on Africa's development and in the work of the ecumenical movement globally. During the Pre-assembly in Abuja, the methods of engagement used included open plenary discussions, group discussions, and team-building activities.

# SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE PRE-ASSEMBLY



*Some of the youth Pre-assembly participant during devotion*

The Pre-assembly was a time of building Christian fellowship and witnessing together among the participants. Each day began with an hour of devotion during which participants worshipped God together through music, Biblical reflection, and intercession prayers. In addition to the morning devotion, mid-day prayers were held every day between 12:00 and 12:30. These thirty minutes were fully dedicated to worshipping God through meditative music and intercession prayers. At the end of the day, the participants always sang one Christian hymn and then said a closing prayer led by any of the delegates who would volunteer to do so.



*Praise and worship session during the opening devotion*



*Rt. Rev. Dr. Micheal O. Akinwale, Bishop of the Methodist Cathedral of unity officially opening the Youth Pre-assembly.*



*Music performances during the opening devotion*



*Pre-assembly participants capturing a moment with Bishop Micheal*



*Mr. Oyonumoh Ukpong, national youth president of the Methodist Church Nigeria leading the opening devotion*

# PRE-ASSEMBLY THEME EXPOUNDED



*Ms. Afika Babazile Rwayi delivering the keynote address.*

**M**s. Afika Babazile Rwayi from the Uniting Presbyterian Church in South Africa began her keynote address by expressing her gratitude to appreciation to the leadership of the AACC, the steering committee of the pre-assembly, and all delegates for making the pre-assembly a reality.

"Today we are gathered here as young people from different parts of the African continent with only one agenda, and that is to develop a way forward to addressing youth issues faced across the continent and the diaspora, using nothing but the compelling love of Christ as driving force." She commenced.

She mentioned that throughout the history of humankind, Africa has made significant contributions to various fields, including art, science, mathematics, and philosophy through the agency of its young people. While urging the youth leaders to perceive themselves as actors in God's work of transforming injustices, Afika noted that "Africa as a continent is a victim of continuous exploitation of its wealth by the West, and African Pre-colonial agents. This injustice continues to deprive Africans of exploring their riches therefore improving the economic state of it and its people. She affirmed that

With Christ's love as our foundation, we can begin to reverse this trend and work towards a brighter, more equitable future for Africa. This means advocating for fair trade practices, fighting against corruption, and implementing sustainable development initiatives that prioritize the well-being of African communities.

"When we do this, then we are living out the real meaning behind our confession in the slogan: Africa: My Home. My Future."

Afika's keynote address triggered a hot conversation among the delegates promoting youth participation in church and society, through the several comments made and questions asked as participants reacted to the speech.

## THE GENERAL SECRETARY INSPIRES YOUTH DELEGATES TO BE BRAVE AND COMMITTED LEADERS OF ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT



The AACC General Secretary; Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki visited the pre-assembly and engaged in a dialogue with the delegates on their role and rights as delegates at the assembly. In his remarks, he passionately appealed to the youths to be brave, and very actively involved in all assembly discussions and events. He urged them to utilize their voices and votes for the benefit of all African young people in the continent and across the word as agents of God's transformative work.

The GS expressed the strategy that was adopted to get young delegates to attend the general assembly and encouraged all youth delegates to participate fully in all the discussions and proceedings of the general assembly. He encouraged the delegates to be confident while leading, moderating, and facilitating the plenary, business sessions, and side vents during the assembly. He affirmed the youth delegates that they have equal rights as all other delegates and encouraged them to offer themselves for election into AACC's governance bodies. "It would be great if a youth comes out to stand as AACC president." He said.

Appreciating the youth for championing AACC's campaign Africa: My Home. My Future. Dr. Fidon encouraged the delegates to be agents of this transformative campaign in their local communities such that they can inspire all youth to focus on building Africa into the prosperous, secure, and peaceful home they want it to be, and would love to have in the future and also pass on to their future descents rather than craving to leave the continent for other parts of the world where they can never be fully loved the way it is at home.

"It is sad when African young people strive to leave Africa and illegally migrate to Europe and other continents of the world without minding the risks involved, some even bear the risk of crossing deserts, or dangerous water bodies through very risky means of movement, claiming to be serving for greener passages." He noted. "Why don't we all concentrate on making the pasture greener here at home such that even those coming after us will find plenty of what they need to thrive here in Africa." He continued as he encouraged every youth listening to him to be committed to the ecumenical movement in Africa and an active ambassador of the campaign on Africa: My Home. My future.

Having engaged with the delegates in a very interactive session with the delegates during which he attended to their questions on the AACC membership, governance structures, elections, and constitution, the GS concluded his visit by having lunch with the young people.

# PRE-ASSEMBLY WORKSHOP ON ECONOMIC JUSTICE ENLIGHTENS THE PARTICIPANTS ABOUT THE UN TAX CONVENTION

The workshop was facilitated by Simbarashe Hunzvi, youth member of AACC general Committee. He began his presentation by expressing that Economic justice and tax justice are crucial components of the existence of young people within the continent. "Countries like Angola, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe are struggling with tax irregularities in tax systems. There is a serious gap between the wealthy and the poor in most African countries, which is ironic because of the resources in the countries can sustain citizens of such countries, and the resources in Africa are enough to take of the needs of Africans. In Africa, we live in a context where a single individual can be extravagantly wealthy than the whole population. A relevant example is the gold mafia scandal which went viral in Zimbabwe where there were serious irregularities

in gold exports. This Publix exposure hastens the need to have advocacy around resource monitoring." He taught. He emphasized that Socio-economic justice in Africa discourses in Africa by young people should involve addressing inequalities in access to resources, education, and opportunities. These issues are usually worsened by bad governance, poor accountability, corruption, and poor structures. According to Simbarashe, implementing progressive tax policies like the UN Tax Convention can contribute to a more equitable distribution of wealth, fostering socio-economic development across the continent. He explained the components of the Un Tax convention to his audience and encouraged the youth delegates to advocate for it at the General assembly as a tool for tax justice that churches can encourage their governments to embrace.



Mr. Simbarashe leading the economic justice workshop

# WORKSHOP ON ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE INVITES YOUTH TO INTERROGATE THEIR ROLE IN ECOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP

Heyman Jacques, a youth delegate from the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa facilitated this workshop. He began with a brief presentation on Ecological Stewardship, during which he defined ecology as the study of the intricate relationships between living organisms and their environment.

"It goes beyond scientific inquiry; it is a lens through which we can witness the interconnectedness of all life forms. In this exploration, we find ourselves contemplating the grandeur of God's creation." He noted.

He described the call to stewardship in the scripture as not just an obligation but an act of worship. To enable participants, to interact with each other in smaller groups while interrogating the prophetic role of the youth in promoting ecological stewardship, Heyman divided them into 10 discussion groups on the questions that he had formulated to aid their interaction.

*Group discussions at the Pre-assembly*





# Youth delegates rehearse for the General Assembly's Business Sessions

The session was facilitated by the Executive Secretary, youth. Building the General secretary's earlier session with the participants, Brian Enlightened the youth about the significance of the assembly in the life of the church in Africa and the ecumenical movement.

He also explained what the general Committee, Executive committee, and all other committees provided for by the AACC constitution are, their roles, and how they are constituted.

While stressing that the 12th General Assembly was happening in the last decade of implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and in the last year of the first decade of implementing the African Union Agenda 2063, he explained the purpose of the 12th General Assembly in the context of these development Agendas. He discussed with the Youth how the 12th General Assembly would run when to speak, and how to express oneself as a delegate during the assembly.

## DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMES EXPRESSES SOLIDARITY WITH THE YOUTH



Rev. Dr. Ezekiel Gibson Lesmore, AACC's Director of Programmes visited the Pre-assembly and expressed his solidarity with the youth, through an inspiring goodwill message. He appreciated the Executive Youth Secretary and the steering committee for their commitment and relentless effort in ensuring the success of the youth Pre-assembly. He expressed his expectation that the Pre-assembly would result into to a robust youth participation and conversation in the GA, but also advanced youth participation in the leadership of the Ecumenical Movement. While motivating all youth delegates to be ambassadors of AACC Pan African campaign on Africa: My Home. My Future., Dr Lesmore urged them to be champions of the church's contributions to Africa's sustainable development and the Agenda 2063.

# SAFE SPACE CONVERSATION CHALLENGES PARTICIPANTS TO PROMOTE THE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

Happening in the late evening at 19:00 – 21:00 Hours, the safe space conversation on Sexual and Reproductive health was aimed at achieving the following specific Objectives

- 1. To identify cultural and religious values, norms, and practices that harm the SRH of young people*
- 2. To challenge the participants to promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of the African youth in their spheres of influence*

The facilitator, Muyunga Brian invited the participants into a contextual bible study that would provide them with a frame to guide their conversation. The text chosen for the study was Genesis 29:11-30:15.

“If the events in the text we are studying were happening today, what are some of the Sexual and reproductive health-related repercussions to the people affected?” asked Brian, triggering the participants to mention the following.

- 1. Unwanted pregnancies and their consequences*
- 2. Possible Spread of STIs*
- 3. Rape*
- 4. Domestic violence*
- 5. Mental health challenges*

Brian spent time challenging the participants to transform cultural and religious values, practices, and norms that increase the abuse of Sexual and Reproductive Human rights, and all those that limit the sexual and reproductive health of young people in Africa.



*AACC Executive Secretary, Youth facilitating the conversation*

**05**

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**60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

# 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS AND 12TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPENING CEREMONY

*Ms. Ann Kioi, Programmes Development & Fund Raising Officer*

The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations and official opening of the 12<sup>th</sup> GA took place on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The three-hour event was filled with moments of singing and dancing songs of praise, jubilation, and Thanksgiving to God for AACC's 60 years of growth and active participation in God's holistic mission to the world. The event was attended by over two thousand people including the 276 delegates, 40 stewards from 43 African countries, and 200 general Assembly guests and observers from across the world.

While welcoming all guests at the function, Archbishop David Onouha, President of the Christian Council of Churches Nigeria, together with other church leaders presiding over the event performed the Nigerian traditional practice of welcoming guests by breaking and sharing with them the cola nut.

In his heart-warming remarks, the AACC President reminded the jovial celebrants that AACC was conceived in Nigeria in 1958 and birthed in Uganda in 1963.

"At the time the AACC began in 1963, there was no country whose member churches could organize such a magnificent event. We really thank God for the growth of this fellowship" Noted Rev Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, in his inspiring speech.

In addition to the 100-member mass choir that led worship and the anniversary song, Women, Youth, and people with disability spiced up the ceremony by telling the story of AACC's growth and impact through traditional and contemporary songs and creative dances



*AACC General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki making his welcome remarks at the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration*

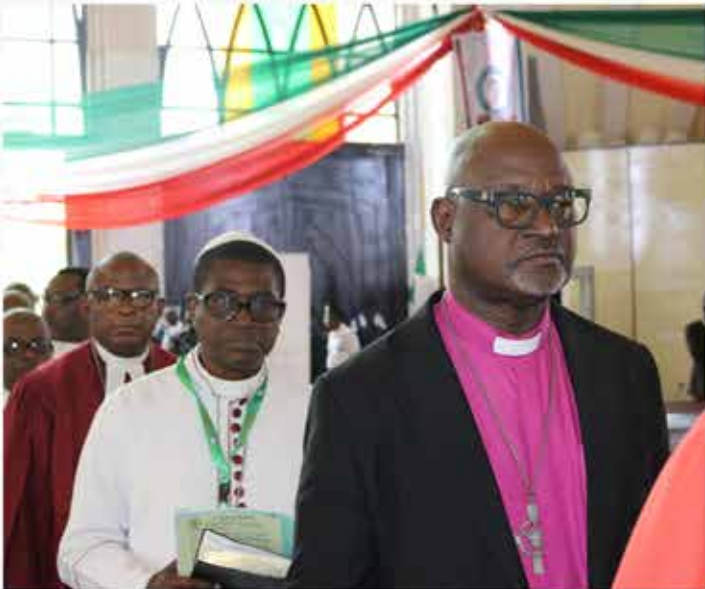




*Flag procession led by the stewards*



*AACC President and General Secretary followed by WCC President and General Secretary in the procession*



*Some of the Heads of the AACC member churches in Nigeria during the procession*



*His Eminence Dr. Daniel Okoh, President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) making his remarks during the celebration*



*Performance by the mass choir*



*A performance of the womens choir*

# YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

African Christian Young people, including the youth with disability, played key roles in the celebration of AACC's 60th Anniversary. Those serving as stewards devoted their time, energy, and skills in ensuring that the event ran smoothly. They were the main ushers, welcoming guests, registering them, and ensuring that they were comfortable in their seat allocations. As some stewards got deeply engaged in managing the communication and publicity demands of the event, others supported the work of the security forces to ensure the participants and all their property were safe. The over 70-member brass band that opened the assembly with a march and the parading of African flags was entirely made up of young people

The young people's pride in their identity as leaders of the AACC today and tomorrow, their gratitude to God for the success of this ecumenical body, and their commitment to the sustainability and continued growth of Africa's largest Ecumenical organization was not only expressed through their artistic and musical performances but also through an inspiring speech made by the youngest youth delegate to the 12<sup>th</sup> GA.

While delivering the speech, Ms. Wapalwa Musaba, from the United Church of Zambia noted that the celebration is a very precious moment for all the African young people. Musaba described the celebration as a moment that signified that the desire for freedom from all forces of destruction and the love for Unity among all people of Africa did not die with the African ancestors who found African communities on the principle of Ubuntu; and those whose labors of love founded the AACC with a vision of churches in Africa united for life, dignity, and justice.

**"Africa is My Home. Africa is My Future,"** she affirmed, and then continued expressing that, "In this celebration, we draw the inspiration to keep us focused and determined to build the Africa we want: An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena by 2063."



*Ms. Wapalwa Musaba delivering speaking on behalf of AAYN*



*Band performance during the anniversary*

*"In this celebration, we draw the inspiration to keep us focused and determined to build the Africa we want: An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena by 2063."*



*His Holiness Rev. Dr. Rufus Okikiola Ositelu leading prayers during the ceremony*



*Most Rev. David Onuoha, President of Christian Council of Nigeria welcoming the AACC to Abuja*



*Mrs. Juanita Chinyere performing at the commemoration*



*Women leaders presenting a thanksgiving song*



*Cake cutting in celebration of AACC's legacy*



*A steward serving cola nuts to the participants during the celebrations*



WCC General Secretary making the keynote address

## WCC GENERAL SECRETARY EXPOUNDS THE 12<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY THEME

While delivering his keynote address, Rev. Prof. Jerry Pillay, the WCC General Secretary noted that the synergy between the themes: Christ's love moves the world to justice, reconciliation, and unity, from the WCC Assembly in Karlsruhe, and the AACC's theme, *The Love of Christ Compels Us* highlights the centrality of Christ's love in our mission.

Speaking to the Nigerian context in which the 12<sup>th</sup> GA was taking place, Prof. Jerry stressed that AACC's work, with its focus on mediation, advocacy, humanitarian support, and peacemaking, is not just a flame of hope for Africa but also a testament to the transformative power of faith and unity in challenging times.

He mentioned six significant mega-trends of the dynamic global landscape amidst which the assembly took place. These were the *Pursuit of Justice and Equity, Climate Crisis and Environmental Stewardship, Interreligious and Interfaith Dialogue, Youth Engagement and Empowerment, Migration and Displacement, and Digitalization and Technological Advancement.*

He described the love of Christ as the source of compulsion, moving us to act, not for our own interests, but for the care of others which means radical transformation, identification with Christ and living for living for Others and a response to grace.



# CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF THE ELDER DR FRANCIS AKANU IBIAM



*AACC President, Rt. Rev. Arnold C. Temple handing over an award to a family member of the late Elder Dr. Francis Akanu Ibiam*

During the recent AACC 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, a posthumous award was conferred upon the family of the late Elder Dr. Francis Akanu Ibiam. This heartwarming gesture of Gratitude honored his remarkable contributions to in the life and history of the AACC, and ecumenism in Africa. In 1958 the the late Elder Dr. Francis Akanu Ibiam initiated a conference of Christian organisations and churches in Africa, which led to the foundation of AACC at its first assembly on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1963 in Kampala Uganda.

Presented to the late Dr Ibiam's family by AACC's President, Rt. Rev. Arnold C. Temple, and General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, the award served as a symbol of gratitude, and an inspiration to all current and future ecumenists to preserve the organization's rich heritage and carry forward its legacy of promoting unity and justice partly finding its roots in the Elder Dr. Francis Akanu Ibiam's vision of the AACC.

# SOME OF THE GOODWILL MESSAGES



WCC moderator: Bishop Heinrich Beldford congratulating AACC on its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



Dr. Jooseop Keum, Gen. Secretary Council for World Mission expressing his gratitude to AACC



The Rev. Marco A. Cable and Dr. Kahala Cannon from Global Ministries giving their goodwill message



Martin Krieg; Director, Engagement and Communication speaking on behalf of Bread for the World giving his goodwill message

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**12<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

# THE 12<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Ms. Evelyne Okunda, Executive Officer in the office of the General Secretary



AACC President Welcomes Assembly delegates, and other participants

Addressing the second business session of the 12<sup>th</sup> GA on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023, Rt Rev Anorld Temple expressed gratitude to God and, then all AACC members and partners for the success of the 60th Anniversary celebrations and the official opening of the 12<sup>th</sup> GA.

Remembering the pioneers Africa's ecumenical movement like father Akanu Ibiam and Dr. Donald M'timkulu, President Temple appreciated their efforts in the foundation of the AACC. He encouraged the assembly delegates and other participants to allow the transformative love of Christ to guide all the assembly deliberations. He also stressed the need for the assembly to deepen the sense of unity among African people, promote reconciliation and contribute to ending violence in Africa and across the world.

## 12<sup>TH</sup> GA RECEIVES AACC'S FIVE-YEAR REPORT (2018-2023)



AACC General Secretary, the Rev Dr Fidon Mwombeki

Among these included establishing the All Africa Youth Network, and AACC's transformative campaign for youth and Pan Africanism on the theme, Africa: My Home. My Future., the success of AACC's advocacy work at the AU, the impactful peacebuilding initiatives, life changing programs for Gender Justice and women empowerment such as the Justice or widows campaign, Eco-diakonia promoting programs, growth of the fellowship's membership, among others.

"Nevertheless, the AACC remained efficient and effective in its operations" He noted.

The report was presented by the AACC general Secretary, the Rev Dr Fidon Mwombeki right after the Presidents inspiring Remarks. While presenting the report, the General Secretary highlighted some of the key milestones reached by the organization since the Kigali Assembly.

"In the past five years; our work has been running under four main programmatic pillars," he said. "Theology, interfaith Relations and Ecclesial Leadership Development, Gender, Women and Youth, Peace, Diakonia and Development, and Advocacy at the African Union." He continued.

"On addition to the four programmatic pillars, there were two main organizational pillars: Governance, Membership Development, and Networking, and Effective Management and Sustainability."

Stories by Ann Kioi

# A GLIMPSE INTO THE 2024-2028 STRATEGY

In the third plenary session, the General Secretary unveiled AACC's proposed strategy for for 2024-2028. The strategy maps out eleven programmatic focus



The General Secretary's presentation on the strategy ignited a very lively discussion among the delegates as they reflected on the future of the organization's mission work. The discussion ended with unanimous approval of the strategy .

## Thematic Plenary on Ethical Leadership

The sub theme that guided conversations in this plenary was “the love of Christ compels us to Exercise Ethical Leadership” Some of the lessons learnt from this plenary include:

Ethical leaders must have strong ethical values, integrity and the ability to approach life or living things with patience.

A leader who treasures ethics will be conscious of adherence of ethical investments. Management of church assets needs ethical managers. Hence ethical leaders are needed to have ethical investment

Leadership formation should start from the Sunday school, use the youth movement, systematically to put leadership into the curricular

Ethical leaders are needed in the church to be able to love, be transparent, free from corruption, accountable, able to reach out to everyone, mindful of member’s needs, be in-



Ms. Vivian Ritho leading the discussion on ethical leadership

## EVENING WITH THE YOUTH

The second day of the General Assembly ended with an edutainment session during which the youth showcased the campaign on Africa: My Home. My future. The powerful Pan-African speeches from youth delegates expressing their commitment to build the Africa we want as articulated in Agenda 2063 punctuated with Pan-African musical performances lighted up the evening in ways that made the session stand out.

In a panel discussion, the delegates and stewards who formed part of the 1000 youth leaders who participated in the inaugural All Africa Youth Congress reported to their audience full of African church leaders the positive impact that the 2022 congress had on their life and spirituality.

Additionally, they urged fellow youth to localize the campaign on Africa: My Home. My Future. to nurture active youth participation in church and society, put an end to irregular migration and human trafficking and inspire all African youth to offer themselves, resources and abilities to transform Africa into that prosperous, peaceful and secure continent they want it to be.



Mr. Stanley Toddison giving a speech on Pan-Africanism

# THE LAUNCH OF THE CHURCHES' CAMPAIGN AGAINST GBV

In its commitment to end all forms of GBV in Africa, AACC launched the new campaign at the 12<sup>th</sup> GA on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023 as a youth focused initiative towards the Africa we want. The campaign would run with the theme: let love lead, end GBV now! and use the hashtags #LETLOVELEAD and #ENDGBVNOW.

While introducing the campaign to the general Assembly, Brian Muyunga, AACC Executive Secretary, Youth noted that "The Agenda 2063; The Africa we want; envisages a non-sexist Africa, where girls and boys can reach their full potential, and where men and women contribute equally to the development of their societies.

To achieve this, all forms of SGBV must have been eliminated by 2063, and this means putting an end to all harmful social practices."

Brian argued that this is possible given that the majority of Africa's Population are young people capable of unlearning the social, cultural, and religious values, norms, and practices that propagate SGBV, and learn new ways of living built on the core of Christ's love that compels us to see ourselves in each other. He disclosed that the campaign is a response to the young peoples' request to the AACC to continue accompanying their efforts to eliminate GBV, during the All Africa Youth Congress, in Accra Ghana, in 2022. Ms. Ann Kioi, AACC's Programs Development and Fundraising officer affirmed that the campaign focuses on young

people as major stakeholders and beneficiaries with a strong conviction that accelerating the realization of SDG 5 and Aspiration 6 of the Agenda 2063 requires continuously engaging and empowering young people to advocate for an end to all acts of SGBV and promote gender justice in all their spheres of influence.

"Riding on the young people's desire to build Africa into the kind of home they want to have now and, in the future, as expressed in the AACC's campaign on the theme: Africa: My Home. My Future., the campaign will be run on Pan-African principles and values." She said.

The Rt Rev Arnold Temple, AACC president launched the campaign to run for 2024-2025.



Ms. Ann Kioi sharin on the focus of the campaign



Ms. Lindiwe Princes sharing her incites

## SIDE EVENTS AT THE 12<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY



The 12<sup>th</sup> GA featured fourteen side events in form of workshops and exhibitions. These ran on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023. Mostly organized by AACC partners, the side events gave all the GA participants an opportunity to have group conversation on various development topics in line with the Assembly theme. Some of the themes of the various side events include: Faith and Science in conversation on Climate Change, Migration and Trafficking in Persons the Participation of People with Disability in Church and Society, Deepening the Culture of Peace in Africa, Sustainable Families for Sustainable Population, Health-Promoting Churches, Misleading Theologies and Modern Cultism, Peace, Security and Diakonia, Mission and Evangelism today: Church and Community Transformation (CCT), Pan Africanism and Faith: Featuring Ecumenical History, Trends, Policies, Women and Climate, Ethical Investment and Church Assets management and Economic Justice and Debt Crisis in Africa.



## HEALTH AND HEALING

Religious leaders, being respected figures in their communities, hold significant influence over attitudes and behaviors, making them essential advocates for health initiatives. However, several challenges, including self-medication practices, poverty, and illiteracy, pose significant barriers to effective healthcare delivery. The side event on health and healing was led by Richard Neci from the Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network and it sought to empower religious leaders to advocate for health, particularly in addressing HIV & AIDS and other public health challenges. It provided a platform for dialogue on the pivotal role of religious leaders in bridging the gap between faith and science in public health management.



## BUILDING SUSTAINABLE FAMILIES FOR A FLOURISHING GLOBAL POPULATION

Recognizing the profound connection between family dynamics and population sustainability, participants at the side event; Sustainable Families for Sustainable Population; interrogated the intricate interplay between family sustainability and population dynamics. The event was facilitated by Rev. Dr. Lydia Mwaniki, AACC's Director for Gender and Women. Against the backdrop of demographic shifts and environmental concerns, participants explored how sustainable family structures contribute to a balanced and thriving global population. She encouraged churches to open up their spaces for Christians to be supported to make informed choices on family planning to establish sustainable families.

The participants engaged in a heated but informative discussion on the theology of sustainable families, and the importance of family planning in individual, national, and regional economic growth



## EMBRACING INCLUSIVITY: RELIGIOUS LEADERS' ROLE IN SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

"Religious leaders wield significant influence in shaping societal attitudes." Noted Miss Angeline Okola, while facilitating the side event on People with disability in church and society. The event provided the General Assembly Participants an opportunity to examine and understand the challenges faced by people with disabilities (PLWD), but also share ideas on how such challenges can be effectively addressed, and proposed strategies for inclusivity.

Further, the participants pledged to raise awareness about the need to make the church a safe space for people with disabilities, create inclusive worship spaces, provide sensitive pastoral care, advocate for policy changes, develop inclusive community programs, and challenge social stigma.



## ADDRESSING MISLEADING THEOLOGIES

The side event on 'Misleading Theologies and Modern Cultism'; addressed the pressing challenges arising from divergent interpretations of religious doctrines and the proliferation of modern cultism.

Led by Fr. Dr. Njoroge, the session aimed at identifying, analyzing, and confronting misleading theologies prevalent across Africa. The event involved conversations on the negative impact of the various types of misleading theologies and occult practices that harm God's people and creation. Participants engaged in robust discussions on the role of ecumenical formation in addressing combating misleading theologies.

The importance of educating religious leaders, conducting awareness about misleading theologies and their impacts, promoting contextual biblical understanding, and fostering collaboration between churches and governments to regulate misleading teachings were recommended as means of addressing the challenge.



## NURTURING PEACE: THE CHURCH'S VITAL ROLE IN AFRICA

The side event; Deepening the Culture of Peace in Africa; gave an important platform for discussions on advancing peace-building efforts in the continent. It underscored the church's proactive engagement in promoting peace, particularly in pursuit of Aspiration 4 of the AU Agenda 2063: A Peaceful and Secure Africa.

While facilitating the side event, Rev Charles Berahino, AACC's Executive Secretary for Peace and Diakonia emphasized the biblical basis of peacebuilding as a key component of the Holistic Christian Mission. The participants explored the multifaceted role of the church in peace-building, emphasizing the need for collaboration with state and non-state actors and aligning faith-based peacebuilding initiatives with Sustainable Development Agendas.

The event ended by highlighting the church's pivotal role in nurturing a culture of peace in Africa by fostering dialogue, advocacy, and collaboration. The church was named an institution well placed to play a transformative role in realizing the aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063 and building a more peaceful continent.



## EMBRACING CHURCH AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION (CCT) FOR HOLISTIC IMPACT

During the side event on 'Mission and evangelism today' Gbati Kossi Agbo and Jennipher Sakala, the facilitators shed light on the transformative essence of Church and Community Transformation (CCT) in contemporary mission and evangelism. This approach was presented as transcending conventional methodologies, aiming not only at spiritual enlightenment but also at nurturing social, economic, and cultural dimensions within communities.

Recognizing the all-encompassing nature of Christ's message, CCT was shared as endeavoring to bring about holistic transformation, underpinned by Biblical principles and divine guidance. The participants discussed the significance of community-centered evangelism and the importance of engaging with communities in a relevant and responsive manner.



## SHEDDING LIGHT ON MIGRATION AND TRAFFICKING

The side event on; Misleading Theologies The side event titled; Migration and Trafficking in Persons; served as a crucial opportunity for engaging participants in conversations that interrogated the causes and impacts of migration and human trafficking. It was facilitated by Barrister Justice Oman Ayiku and Rev. Angele. The importance of educating religious leaders, conducting awareness about misleading theologies and their impacts, promoting contextual biblical understanding, and fostering collaboration between churches and governments to regulate misleading teachings were recommended as means of addressing the challenge.

Migration, defined as the movement of people from one place to another, was explored in depth. Participants discussed the various pull and push factors driving legal and illegal migration. The event concluded with participants proposing strategies through which churches can combat human trafficking and illegal migration. These included the formation of an AACC Anti-Trafficking Task Force, integration of anti-trafficking education into faith-based institutions, and advocacy for policy changes addressing the root causes of migration and trafficking.



## NURTURING HEALTH-PROMOTING CHURCHES: A PATH TO HOLISTIC WELL-BEING

This side event was a unique platform for exploring strategies for churches to become catalysts in health promotion. "Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, which forms the cornerstone of human flourishing." Noted Dr. Mwai Makoka as he facilitated the event. Recognizing the all-encompassing nature of Christ's message, CCT was shared as endeavoring to bring about holistic transformation, underpinned by Biblical principles and divine guidance. The participants discussed the significance of community-centered evangelism and the importance of engaging with communities in a relevant and responsive manner.

He underscored the nature of holistic health, encompassing social, physical, and biological dimensions centered on a One Health approach and recognizing the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health, and its relevance in addressing contemporary health challenges.

The discussions in this event centered around:

1. Understanding Major Health Challenges in Africa
2. The Concept of Health-Promoting Churches
3. Equipping Churches for Effective Health Promotion
4. Cultural Sensitivity in Health Promotion.

At the event, participants advocated for the use of traditional healing methods alongside modern medicine, acknowledging the importance of indigenous knowledge systems. They also urged churches to become safe havens for health education, advocacy, and practical support, aiming to promote holistic well-being among their members.



## BRIDGING FAITH AND SCIENCE: ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

Facilitated by Mr. Abu Stephen and Mrs. Tendai Rebecca Gurupira, the side event aimed at fostering dialogue between faith leaders and scientists, recognizing their interconnected roles in combating climate change.

The discussions covered several key themes: Interconnectedness of Faith and Science, Moral Imperative for Environmental Stewardship, Role of Science in Informing Faith-Based Action, Community Engagement and Education and Identifying Practical Collaborative Measures. The event concluded with tangible commitments, including the participants; declaration of commitment to foster collaboration between faith actors and scientists in climate action.



## ETHICAL LEADERSHIP FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: AFRICA CHURCH ASSETS MANAGEMENT AND ETHICAL INVESTMENT

African churches and church-related institutions possess significant assets, including land, buildings, infrastructure, hospitals, schools, and human resources. However, traditional revenue sources like donations are dwindling, necessitating innovative, transparent, and accountable asset management to generate income. This side event brought participants into a deep conversation on the role of ethical leadership and responsible stewardship of assets in the sustainability of African churches.

The participants endorsed 12 resolutions for churches to promote ethical leadership and management of their assets. These include holding leaders accountable, integrating asset stewardship into church life, promoting innovative asset development, and implementing ethical leadership trainings and mentorship.



## TACKLING AFRICA'S ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

This side event provided a platform for in-depth discussions on Africa's debt crisis and tax justice. The panelists highlighted the impact of Africa's debt crisis on its economic development and governance. Participants explored how the debt crisis worsens inequality and injustices. One of the participants expounded on the role of the existing international financial architecture in perpetuating the debt crisis, mobilizing participants to advocate for the UN tax Convention and Zac Tax Campaign.



# AACC DECIDES: ELECTIONS AT THE 12TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY



**A** day before the Presidents election, delegates met in their regional blocks to elect General Committee members. During the regional meetings, Southern Africa and Western Africa Region also elected one nominee each to stand for the AACC Presidency. In During the last business session on 22nd November 2023, the nominations committee presented to the assembly two candidates out of which one would emerge AACC president and the other Vice President. These were:

- 1.Rt. Rev. Lawson Kpavuu D. Godson (West Africa)
- 2.Rt. Rev. Lydia Neshangwe (South Africa)

Soon after the two candidates addressed the Assembly, delegates began casting their votes by secret ballot and in the process, the Rt. Rev. Lydia Neshangwe emerged the winner, making history as the first woman to be elected AACC President.

Rt. Rev Dr. Lydia is an ordained minister from Zimbabwe where she ministers in a diverse congregation at St Columbas Presbyterian Church in the mountainous city of Mutare. She is the first black female Moderator of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA), a transnational denomination in four countries: South Africa, Zambia, DRC, and Zimbabwe. She is an ecumenist at heart and is currently the Moderator of the Council for World Mission (CWM), a global organization that brings together 32 church denominations from around the world. She serves as the Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) Advisory Board, and the Zimbabwe Country Coordinator for Hope's Promise, an orphan care organization.

According to the AACC constitution, the president is the official spokesperson of the fellowship, oversees the planning for both the General and Executive Committee meetings in consultation with the General Secretary, promotes consensus building in order to reach amicable decisions and maintains unity amongst members of the General and Executive Committee.

# GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS ELECTED AT THE 12TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ABUJA ON 22ND NOVEMBER 2023

No	NAME	GENDER	COUNTRY	CHURCH	LANGUAGE	PROPOSED POSITION	REMARKS
<b>GENERAL COMMITTEE</b>							
<b>CENTRAL AFRICA</b>							
1.	<b>BOUBA VICTOIRE</b>	F	CAR	EP-CHRIST ROI	FRENCH	VICE-PRESIDENT	Lay
2.	Rev. Dr. NZOGA Job Salomon	M	Cameroon	Eglise Presbyterienne Camerounais	English	Member	Clergy
3.	Rev. ALLOGO Engo Louis Sylvain	M	Gabon	Eglise Evangélique du Gabon	French	Member	Clergy
4.	Bishop NYABOHO Martin Blaise	M	Burundi	Eglise Anglicane du Burundi	English/French	Member	Clergy
5.	Rev. Dr. Pascal BATAYINGANG	M	Rwanda	Eglise Presbyterienne au Rwanda	English/French	Member	Clergy
6.	MONGO-BOUYA Grace	M	Cong. Brazz	Eglise Evangélique du Congo	French	Member	Lay, Youth
7.	Mgr. KAMWANYA Marie Baloji	F	DRC	Eglise du Christ Lumière du Saint-Esprit	French	Member	Clergy
8.	Mr. KASEREKA Victoire	M	DRC	COMMUNAUTE BAPTISTE AU CENTRE DE L'AFRIQUE (CBCA)	French	Member	Lay, Youth
9.	Miss. YENWO Harriette Peunwonokeh	F	Cameroon	Presbyterian Church of Cameroon	English/French	Member	Lay, Youth
<b>EASTERN AFRICA</b>							
1-	<b>REV TESHOME AMENU</b>	MALE	ETHIOPIA	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus	ENGLISH	VICE PRESIDENT	CLERGY
2-	Rev Nicole Armand	Female	Mauritius	Presbyterian	French	Member	Clergy
3-	Rt Rev Jeremiah Ngumo	Male	Kenya	African Christian Church and Schools	English	Member	Clergy
4-	Rev Canon William	Male	Uganda	Anglican Church of Uganda	English	Member	Clergy
5-	Happiness Yoram Gefi	Female	Tanzania	Evangelical Lutheran Church Tanzania	English	Member	Lay
6-	Betty Mutunda	Female	Uganda	Reformed Presbyterian Church Uganda	English	Member	Lay
7-	Dr Agum Rin Mabenye Adut	Female	South Sudan	South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical	English	Member	Lay
8-	Wondmagegn Udessa	Male	Ethiopia	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus	English	Member	Lay, Youth
9-	Vivian Wanjiku Ritho	Female	Kenya	Anglican Church of Kenya	English	Member	Lay, Youth
<b>ORTHODOX COMMUNION</b>							
1)	<b>H. G. BISHOP PAUL YOAKIM</b>	MALE	KENYA	COPTIC Orthodox Church .	ENGLISH	VICE-PRESIDENT	Clergy
2)	Dr. Legesse Nigussu	Male	Ethiopia	Ethiopian Orthodox Church	English	Member	Lay

SOUTHERN AFRICA							
	<b>RT. REV. LYDIA NESHANGWE</b>	Female	ZIMBABWE	United Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa	ENGLISH	PRESIDENT	Clergy
	Rev Prof. Edwin Zulu	Male	Zambia	Reformed Church in Zambia	English	Member	Clergy
	Neo M. Mosima	Male	Botswana	Anglican Church of Botswana	English	Member	Lay, Youth
	Rev. Fay Van Edeen	Female	South Africa	Dutch Reformed	English	Member	Clergy
	Morapelo L. Ramoleko	Male	Lesotho	LESOTHO EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA	English	Member	Lay, Youth
	Tendai Gurupiro Makono	Female	Zimbabwe	United Methodist Church	English	Member	Lay
	Jackson Janson	Male	Namibia	Uniting Reformed Church	English	Member	Lay
	Bishop Kenneth Sibanda	Male	Zimbabwe	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe	English	Member	Clergy
	Augusto Faife	Male	Mozambique	Igreja Methodista Unida de Mocambique	Portuguese	Member	Lay
	Rev. Alex Maulana	Male	Malawi	Church of Central African Presbyterian	English	Member	Clergy
WEST AFRICA							
1-	<b>REV. LAWSON-KPAVUVU D. GODSON</b>	Male	TOGO	Eglise Méthodiste du Togo	FRENCH	VICE PRESIDENT	Clergy
2-	Rev. Dr. Samuel Reeves	Male	Liberia	Liberia Baptist Missionary & Educational Convention	English	Member	Clergy
3-	Mrs. Keziah Kargbo	Female	Sierra Leone	United Methodist Church	English	Member	Lay
4-	Most. Rev. Bannie Manga	Male	The Gambia	Methodist Church of The Gambia	English	Member	Clergy
5-	Primate Henry Ndukuba	Male	Nigeria	Anglican Church of Nigeria	English	Member	Clergy
6-	Territorial Envoy Dr. Levi Monanu	Male	Nigeria	Salvation Army Nigeria	English	Member	Clergy
7-	Rev. Dr. Israel Akanji	Male	Nigeria	Nigerian Baptist Convention	English	Member	Clergy
8-	Rev. Fiabu Felix Yao	Male	Ghana	Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana	English	Member	Clergy, Youth
9-	Rev. Dare Akpaki Clement	Male	Benin	Methodist Church in Benin	French	Member	Clergy
10-	Rev. EWOVOR Honore	Male	Togo	Eglise Evangélique Presbytérienne du Togo	French	Member	Clergy
NORTH AFRICA							
1-	<b>MS. ROZET REFKI</b>	Female	EGYPT	Presbyterian Church in Egypt, Synod of the Nile	French	VICE-PRESIDENT	Lay
2-	Rev. Dessalegn Nafkot Mamuye	Female	Morocco	Eglise Evangélique au Maroc	French	Member	Clergy

## AACC PRESIDUM

No	NAME	GENDER	COUNTRY	CHURCH	LANGUAGE	PROPOSED POSITION	REMARKS
1.	RT. REV. LYDIA NESHANGWE	Female	ZIMBABWE	United Presbyterian Church Of Southern Africa	English	President	Clergy
2.	BOUBA VICTOIRE	Female	CAR	EP-CHRIST ROI	French	Vice-President	Lay
3	REV TESHOME AMENU	Male	Ethiopia	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus	English	Vice President -	Clergy
4	H. G. BISHOP PAUL YOAKIM	Male	Kenya	Coptic Orthodox Church.	English	Vice-President	Clergy
5	REV. LAWSON-KPAVUVU D. GODSON	Male	TOGO	Eglise Méthodiste Du Togo	French	Vice President	Clergy
6	MS. ROZET REFKI	Female	EGYPT	Presbyterian Church in Egypt, Synod of The Nile	French	VICE-PRESIDENT	Lay

### Executive Committee

No	Name	Region	Country	Church	Gender	Status	Designation
1.	Rt. Rev. Lydia	PRESIDENT	Zimbabwe	United Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa	F	CLERGY	PRESIDENT
2.	Bouba Victoire	V.P CENTRAL AFRICA	CAR	EP- CHRIST ROI	F	LAY	VICE PRESIDENT
3.	Ms. Rozet Refki	V.P NORTH AFRICA	EGYPT	Presbyterian Church in Egypt, Synod of the Nile	F	LAY	VICE PRESIDENT
4.	Rev. Lawson-Kpavuvu D. Godson	V.P WEST AFRICA	TOGO	Eglise Méthodiste du Togo	M	CLERGY	VICE PRESIDENT
5.	H. G. Bishop Paul	V.P ORTHODOX COMMUNION	KENYA	COPTIC ORTHODOX	M	CLERGY	VICE PRESIDENT
6.	Rev. Dr. NZOGA Job Salomon	CENTRAL AFRICA	CAMEROON	Presbyterian Church of Cameroon	M	CLERGY	MEMBER
7.	Vivian Wanjiku Ritho	EAST AFRICA	KENYA	Anglican Church of Kenya	F	LAY	MEMBER
8.	Rev. Dessalegn Nafkot Mamuye	NORTH AFRICA	MOROCCO	Eglise Evangélique au Maroc		CLERGY	MEMBER
9.	Morapelo L. Ramoleko	SOUTHERN AFRICA	LESOTHO	LESOTHO EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA	M	LAY	MEMBER
10.	Rev. Dr. Israel Akanji	WEST AFRICA	NIGERIA	Nigerian Baptist Convention	M	CLERGY	MEMBER
11.	Mrs. Keziah Kargbo	WEST AFRICA	SIERRA LEONE	United Methodist Church	F	LAY	MEMBER
12	Rev. Teshome Amenu	EAST AFRICA	ETHIOPIA	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus	M	CLERGY	MEMBER

### Finance and Personnel Committee

No	Name	Country	Church/ Email	Gender	Status
1.	Mr. Sovoessi Jacobs	Benin	Protestant Methodist Church of Benin (EPMB)	Male	Lay
2.	Rev. Canon William ONGENG	Uganda	Anglican Church of Uganda	Male	Clergy
3.	Mr. Neo Michael Mosima	Botswana	Anglican Church of Botswana	Male	Lay
4.	Rev. Fay Van Edeen	South Africa	Dutch Reformed	Female	Clergy
5.	Rev. Dr. Pascal Batayingang	Rwanda	Eglise Presbytérienne au Rwanda	Male	Clergy

1. **Mr. Jacobs Sovoessi (Chairperson) expert**
2. Rev. Canon William ONGENG Member of GC
3. Rev. Dr. Pascal Bataringaya Member of GC
4. Mr. Neo Michael Mosima (Member of GC
5. Rev. Fay Van Eden Member of GC



# 12<sup>TH</sup> GA CLOSING CEREMONY



*Induction of the new AACC leadership*

The 12<sup>TH</sup> GA ended with a colorful closing ceremony during which the new AACC leadership was inducted, and Prayers to invoke God's blessing and guidance to the General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki. It was during this ceremony that the AACC General Secretary expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the AACC members in Nigeria for their outstanding contribution to the success of the General Assembly. Special prizes were given to those members who stood out in their contributions.

Before the function came to a conclusion, the Local Planning Committee also gifted the AACC and other individuals who tremendously contributed to the success of the Assembly.

In his biblical reflection, the Rev. Dr. Dibisa Yonas Yigezu from the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus urged all Assembly participants to live as ambassador of Christ. Following the closing prayer, the participants exchanged warm Christian greetings as they bid farewell to one another, with hope that they will remain connected in body and spirit through the strong structures that exist to ensure that the AACC fellowship is alive.

# INTERVIEW WITH THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY LOCAL COORDINATOR



**Seasonal Greetings Dr Williams, and praise be to God for all the work He does through you.**

**Dr. Uzoaku:** *Thank you my brother.*

**You are very welcome, and thank you for accepting to participate in this interview. Before we go very far Rev, let me ask you to take a minute to introduce yourself to our readers who will be reading about this interview. Who is Dr Williams?**

*My name is Rev. Dr. Uzoaku Juliana Williams. I am the Assistant General Secretary of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the National Women leader of the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN). As you know, CCN is the first Protestant ecumenical body in Nigeria that was founded in 1929. CAN was founded in 1976 to be a body of all Christians in Nigeria.*

**Congratulations for successfully pulling through AACC's 12th GA as the Local Assembly Coordinator. How was it like serving the ecumenical family in this capacity?**

*Thank you my brother. I cannot simply explain how I felt when the mandate of AACC 12th Assembly Local Coordinator fell on me. It was an honor for me to be able to serve not just a national ecumenical body but a regional ecumenical body with visitors from outside of the African continent.*

**What were your major high moments during the preparation process?**

*Oh, this assignment gave me multiple high moments. Perhaps it is difficult to grade them as high and low, but I was greatly delighted by the cooperation and spirit of oneness in the Local Organizing Committee and the sense of history that all desired to be part of. I saw sacrifices of time, energy, and resources from the people and their Churches and these are not what you see often.*

**Which part of the Assembly were you most proud of?**

*I must say I was proud of all parts of the Assembly. Again, when you enjoy many aspects of an assembly, you will find it difficult to point safely to one as that in which you were most proud of. Are you going to mention the opening ceremony, with all the aesthetic, liturgical, ecumenical and enthusiastic outbursts of joy and satisfaction? Or are you going to mention the business sessions that were full of dignity and wisdom. The Pre-Assemblies of women and of youth gave both women and youth occasions to celebrate the goodness of God in their lives. Or should I mention my joy in having a woman emerge during the elections with overwhelming votes as President of the AACC? God indeed showed us mercy. Believe me, all the events had fruitful outcomes and I am proud of the teams that worked with me.*

**Did you experience any challenges in your role as the Local Assembly Coordinator? If so what are some of those challenges?**

*Of course, there were many challenges. This was the first time an Assembly of this magnitude was being hosted by CCN in Nigeria, and I did not want business as usual.*

**How did you address these challenges to ensure that the AACC could be afforded such memorable 60th anniversary celebrations and General Assembly?**

*We addressed these challenges on four levels. One was systemic; we tried to allow every system to do its work so that the whole Assembly processes were on course. The other was personal; we had to make everyone feel important to play their role as expected. The third was practical – we pushed all those who had responsibilities to face them adequately and encouraged them with many thanks. Fourth and perhaps most important, was spiritual – we knew that unless God builds a house, the laborer would only build in vain. So, we set ourselves on the path of prayer so seek God's help.*

**During the Abuja assembly, AACC's General Secretary mentioned, many times, that the AACC member churches in Nigeria fully financed the 12 General Assembly. How were they able to achieve this?**

*When the CCN, under the leadership of Most Rev. Dr. Benebo Fubara Fubara-Manuel in December 2020 accepted to host the AACC Assembly and 60th anniversary, they did it as a faith venture in full and complete trust in the provision of the Almighty God. To God be the glory that when the leadership in CCN changed to the current President, Archbishop David Onuoha, the whole CCN family and all the AACC Member-Churches stood by him to make it a possibility. His great leadership made them task themselves, some even beyond their strength and God provided to make this history a story to be remembered with joy and gratitude to God.*

**Having coordinated AACC 60th Anniversary celebration and 12th General Assembly, where do you see this ecumenical organization that you love so dearly in the next 10 years?**

*I must say I was proud of all parts of the Assembly. In the next ten years, I see greater networking among the Churches in the sub-regions of AACC. With the present President being a woman, I see more recognition of the place of women in the AACC leadership and in their regional and national representations.*

**Thank you very much Dr Williams for giving us a glimpse into your life and ministry. May God continue blessing you abundantly.**

*Amen, my brother and may God bless you too, very much.*



# A GLIMPSE INTO THE 12<sup>TH</sup> GA STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMME



*Stewards having a round table conversation to share roles and responsibilities*



*Some of the stewards posing for a photo after preparing the plenary hall*



*Some of the stewards on duty*

# INTERVIEW WITH THE AACC PRESIDENT



**1. Greetings President, and Congratulations upon your election as the new AACC president. Maybe to begin us off, who is Rt Rev Lydia Neshangwe?**

*I'm a follower of Jesus who was born as the first-born child in a very supportive family network. I am married with two sons, and have many more non-biological children whom we are parenting. I have a multi-cultural background having lived and studied in various countries and continents. And I'm stimulated by working in diversity, creating leaders, and doing healing and wholeness work.*

*I am an ordained minister currently serving as the Moderator of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA), a transnational denomination in four countries - South Africa, Zambia, DRC, and Zimbabwe.*

*I am an ecumenist at heart, thanks to the input of multiple church denominations in my life from my childhood. I'm currently the Moderator of the Council for World Mission (CWM), a global organization that brings together 32 church denominations from around the world. I'm also serving as the Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) Advisory Board.*

*My husband, Paul, and I have a passion for orphans, and we are Co-Country Coordinators for the Zimbabwe arm of Hope's Promise, an international orphan care organization.*

**2. Rev Lydia, there has never been a female AACC president until your election. What inspired you to offer yourself as a candidate for this post?**

*There is a song I love with a refrain that says:*

*Here I am, Lord, Is it I Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go Lord, if You lead me,  
I will hold your people in my heart.*

*These words are part of my heart's cry to God. And so when I was nominated for this position from various quarters, I was already submitted to God's call. After the nomination, I got confirmation from various people encouraging me and I decided to submit to the call of God to accept this role.*

*This call is a humbling opportunity to serve at a broader and wider level with many fellow African leaders, and I take that as a great responsibility and a blessing.*

**3. For someone reading this article may be wondering what it means to be AACC president, Which responsibilities come with this call?**

*As the AACC President I have the leadership roles of representing the AACC on various platforms, promoting the AACC profile among its members and in public, chairing the General Committee meetings, helping to promote consensus building, and maintaining unity among the members of the AACC. My presidency will also be encouraging fellow women to take up the challenge to serve God in leadership positions.*

#### **4. In your view, how does your election speak to the realities of ecclesial leadership in Africa?**

*in Africa and beyond is plenty and requires a diversity of gifts, personalities, competencies, and abilities, all of which God has spread out among men and women. The church and society need both male leadership and female leadership because we complement each other in achieving God's mission. At different times in the Bible, God appointed both men and women to lead and serve God's people, and God is continuing to do so even now. I love it when in Acts the words of the prophet Joel come true that God will pour out his spirit on both males and females for his mission. And so, for such a time as this, I am taking my place in serving God in this leadership capacity.*

#### **5. How do you envision your leadership journey as AACC president for the next five years?**

*I envision a leadership journey that has three elements: collaboration, transformation, and revival.*

- a) Collaboration of working together at all levels of the AACC membership and stakeholders' body because we are "stronger together."*
- b) Transformation that comes with relying on the power of God to transform our witness and mission, while transforming me as a vessel of the Lord in this role as president.*
- c) And finally, a spiritual revival because the challenges that Africa faces will be overcome, "not by might, and not by power, but by my spirit says the Lord."*

*I also look forward to sharing my passions in healing, wholeness, and reconciliation.*

#### **6. Rev Neshangwe, you are a woman who has come first in so many spaces: First black female Head of your church (UPCSA), the first black female Moderator of the Council for World Mission, first female AACC president, please share with us, what some of the factors that have contributed to this great success?**

*Coincidentally, I am also the firstborn in my family, and I love the fact that this position has no term of office!*

*When it comes to my being first in the various spaces where I serve, I believe firstly, that it is purely the favor and call of God upon me. I can see God's hand at various stages in my history in preparing me, training me, and equipping me towards these spaces where I'm now serving.*

*Secondly, I stand on the shoulders of many who have gone before me and worked hard over the years to build the pillars towards the recognition of female gifts and abilities. In the fullness of time, God birthed the fruit of all that labour in my being appointed into the leadership positions where I currently find myself 'first.'*

*Thirdly, I stand amidst many great encouragers, chief of whom is my husband, the Rev Paul Neshangwe, who believes in me and supports me in my various roles. Many others have accompanied me along the way, and I am grateful for their love. I also have my secret service - a team of intercessors - who do the job of praying for me and keeping me plugged into God's will upon my life because I believe in the saying 'the perfect place in the whole wide world is in the will of God.'*

#### **7. Wow! Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for taking part to participate in this interview, and May God continue to bless your leadership.**

*Amen, I am so humbled, dear.*

# DESMOND TUTU CONFERENCE CENTRE



Nestled within the ever growing Westlands Business District of Nairobi, and boasting of 104 delectably and comfortably furnished double and twin rooms, Desmond Tutu Conference Centre is your "MUST STAY and MEET" destination. Complemented by 9 conference rooms with meeting capacities of between 10 - 800 participants and state of the art facilities, the hotel is ideal for both business and leisure. An onsite restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner, while the gym within the compound can help you kick start the day or flex your muscles after a tiring day. Desmond Tutu Conference Centre is an affiliate of the All Africa Conference of Churches, the ecumenical body for all churches in Africa, and the hotel prides itself in this association as it is the pillar and guidance under whose visionary leadership, value is added to hospitality.

## ROOMS

All the 104 rooms at Desmond Tutu Conference Centre combine comfort and simplicity to offer our guests peace and quiet after a day's long travel experience or business meeting. Each room is equipped with high resolution digital TV's and high speed complementary WIFI connectivity

## CONFERENCING

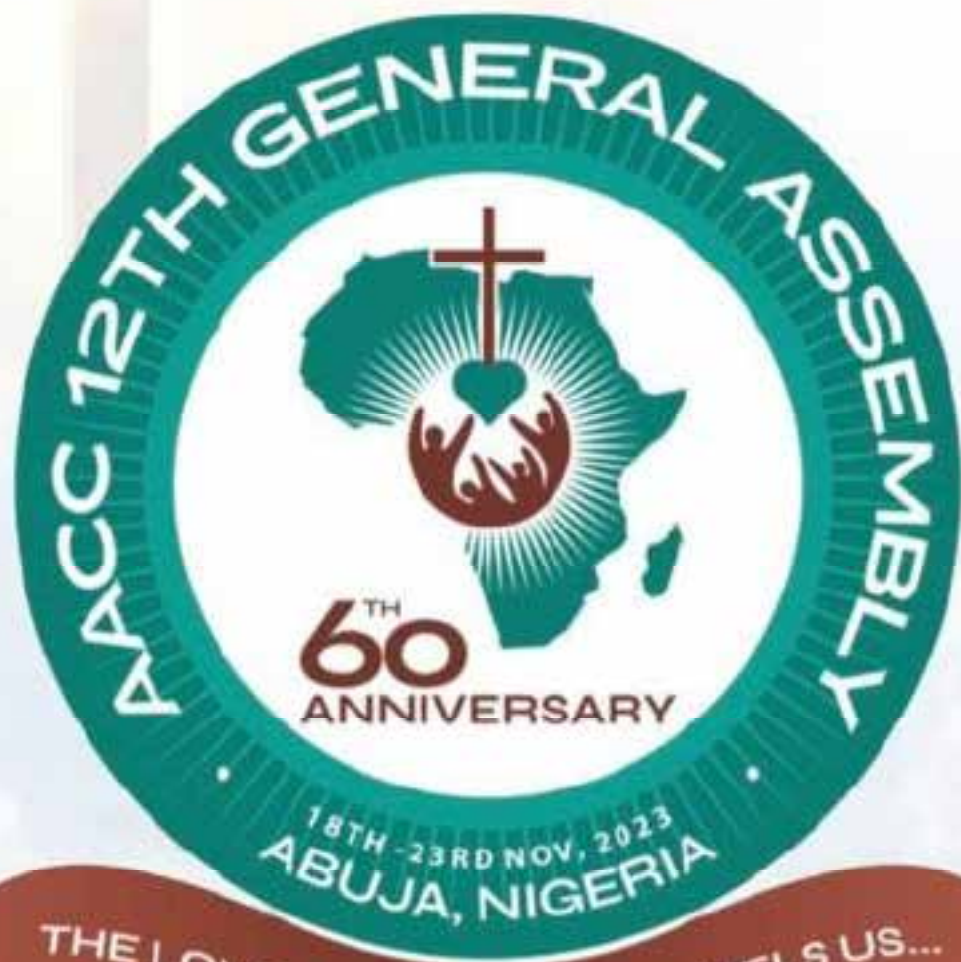
Hotel boasts of a combined 1,169.5m (12,588 ft) of meeting space spread out across 9 rooms, all with natural lighting. Perfect venue for both small and intimate meetings of less than 10 to large gatherings of over 800 participants. Facilities include state of the art Audio Visual equipment, Air Conditioning, Video conferencing services, Translation Booth and Simultaneous Voice Interpretation Equipment

## RESTAURANTS

The hotel has 2 onsite restaurants with a combined sitting capacity of 200 guests at any one time serviced by a team of professional chefs and service staff ready to deliver authentic dishes from the kitchens of Desmond Tutu Conference Centre. The hotel equally provides an array of dishes for Off-Site Clientele

## CONTACTS

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THE LOVE OF CHRIST COMPELS US...  
2 COR 5:14