

THE CONFERENCE STATEMENT OF THE 2ND ALL AFRICA BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Preamble

The second All Africa Bishops Conference, organised by the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa (CAPA), met in Entebbe, Uganda, from 23rd to 29th August 2010. Participants included 398 bishops representing the following Provinces: Burundi, Central Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Indian Ocean, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan, Southern Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, West Africa and the Diocese of Egypt. Also in attendance were some invited partners and guests.

The Anglican Provinces of Africa would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to Our Lord God for His mercy and guidance during this conference; our host Archbishop Henry Orombi and the members of the Church of the Province Uganda for their kind hospitality and warm welcome; to the President of Uganda His Excellency Yoweri Museveni and the Right Honourable Professor Apollo Nsubambi Prime Minister of Uganda, and the Government and people of Uganda; the leadership of CAPA especially the Chairman the Most Rev Ian Ernest supported by the Secretariat.

The first conference, with the theme 'Africa Has Come of Age', was held in Lagos, Nigeria in October 2004. The theme for our second conference in Uganda was 'Securing our Future: Unlocking our Potential' (Hebrews 12:1-2). Its aim was to mobilise bishops to overcome obstacles to their ministry and mission and provide them with the information, skills and tools to accomplish their ministry.

Our meeting was honoured with the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the head of the Anglican Communion, The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. Dr. Rowan Williams; the Chairman of the Global South, the Most Reverend Dr John Chew (Primate of South East Asia) and the Most Rev Bob Duncan, Archbishop of the Anglican Church in North America.

Our conference was rooted in the context of daily Eucharistic service, and challenging Bible reflections on the Beatitudes and on the formation and development of New Testament churches.

Presentations on the theme included:

1. Nurturing Family Life and Building Healthy Populations.
2. Nurturing Harmonious and Dignified Communities.
3. Securing Our Economic Future.
4. Empowering the Vulnerable.
5. Making Leadership work to secure our Future and unlock our Potential.

Commitments

1. The Anglican Churches in Africa have continued to witness growth so that the centre of gravity of Christianity today appears to be shifting to the continent. Nonetheless, the church's relevance and impact on global mission and to social, economic and political transformation of the continent remains a challenge.
2. The Anglican Churches in Africa will maintain its stand on the protection of Anglican orthodoxy and authority of Scripture as a rule of developing a Christ-centred life to uplift human lives and dignity.
3. The Anglican Churches in Africa recognises its historic contributions to the growth of Christianity right from its inception and propagation of the gospel throughout the continent and, in particular, the role of the African Church fathers and martyrs. We also recall its immense contributions during the missionary era to the provision of social facilities such as education, healthcare and the production of the African elite. Based on this, the Church mobilises its resources and takes its responsibility in shaping the Christian minds of the church worldwide in the third millennium.
4. We affirm the Biblical standard of the family as having marriage between a man and a woman as its foundation. One of the purposes of marriage is procreation of children some of whom grow to become the leaders of tomorrow.
5. Whereas we accept the rationale for an Anglican Covenant, we realise the need for further improvement of the Covenant in order to be an effective tool for unity and mutual accountability.
6. There is a more urgent need today for bishops to listen to their flock if they are to make this the African century of the Christian Church in terms of energy, growth and vision. To this end, lay participation in the ministry of the church is to be vigorously enhanced.
7. While we will always be prepared to listen to voices from other parts of the global Communion, it is pertinent that the rest of the world listens to the unique voice of the Churches in Africa. In this context, the Anglican Churches in Africa commit itself to a renewed engagement in global mission, recognising that in the 21st Century mission goes from 'everywhere to anywhere.'
8. The African continent continues to grapple with the problem of religious intolerance which, in many cases, negatively affects the rights, the ministry and the welfare of the church. While the conference calls upon Christians in Africa and elsewhere to be tolerant of other faiths, we must stand for the defence of the human and constitutional rights of Christians and churches in various countries. We will not compromise the commitment of the church to global mission.
9. After a long period of African underdevelopment and misconceptions of African identity, it has become increasingly pertinent for Africans to take their destiny into their own hands. By setting and achieving their own strategic goals, based on the Biblical

model of Christ's mission, African Christians can define their own identity, recover their self-esteem and reach their potential under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

10. We must be actively involved in working with partners at all levels to ensure equal access to medical care, food security and promoting good health practices to prevent the major causes of death on the continent, with particular attention to primary health care for African families, especially mothers, children and elderly.

11. We call for and actively work to bring about an end to all forms of abuse and forms of slavery. We demand the protection of our people, particularly our women and children, from human trafficking, sexual immorality, abuse and violence, and structural, cultural and domestic violence.

12. The successful hosting of the World Cup by South Africa, and other achievements in the continent, demonstrated how Africa's potential can be unleashed. This should inspire and motivate the Church as well as political leaders to proactively promote and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

13. The Anglican Churches in Africa must join the global movement that refuses to stay silent about the current socio-economic and political state of affairs. We should stop agonising over the deplorable state of African underdevelopment and start organising towards a proactive, pragmatic engagement with good governance and infra-structural development.

14. The prevalence of poverty and underdevelopment on the continent is due mainly to mismanagement of resources and lack of effective leadership across the continent. For Africa to take its proper place among the continents of the world, our political leaders are urged to have a hard look at the style of leadership that has so far engendered corruption, poverty, insecurity and underdevelopment, and endeavour to exhibit the charismatic, visionary, and patriotic style of leadership. We encourage the leaders who are already making efforts in this direction.

15. We will build on our previous commitment to respond to HIV and AIDS realities by reducing stigma, shame, denial, discrimination, inaction and 'mis-action', and by promoting moral practices such as abstinence and marital faithfulness as well as access and availability of treatment, voluntary testing and empowerment of communities, in addition to other public health measures.

16. The children and the youth are the embodiment of the future and the church seeks to unlock the inherent potential in this generation. Therefore, the Church in Africa commits itself to providing biblical upbringing of children and youth and give a special attention to their needs and rights.

17. Africa is also suffering the devastating impacts of climate change: rivers and lakes are shrinking, animals are dying in large numbers, crops are failing, major flooding and an increase in killer diseases. With its reach and influence the Anglican Church in Africa, in

collaboration with its partners, will use its resources and energy to mitigate this major threat to our people. It will promote existing successful environmental conservation initiatives including tree planting and bio gas schemes, particularly through establishing 'knowledge centres' at the community level.

18. The Church has a crucial role to play to develop a theology for the total transformation of African communities. The existing inherited model of theological formation and education has been identified to be inadequate in addressing the emerging socio-cultural realities of the African Church. To this end, the church will develop theological curricula that will empower her leaders to be more relevant to the practical and spiritual needs of contemporary society.

19. The Anglican Church in Africa, guided by the Holy Spirit, will continue to work for unity among ourselves by growing actively in prayer and home fellowships in order to be able to reach out to the unreached and to work for unity with our ecumenical partners. In that manner, we can bear a visible presence of hope and healing among communities.

20. The Anglican Church in Africa is committed to a transforming servant-compassionate leadership that is determined to work tirelessly and diligently to reduce suffering on our continent by challenging all abusive structures and relationships.

21. The Anglican Church in Africa is grateful for the assistance it has received from its partners worldwide. We encourage the Church at all levels to make efforts to explore the various investment opportunities available so as to be financially self-sustaining in order that it can carry out its holistic mission successfully.

22. We express deep concern that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan could be undermined by unfulfilled commitments. We therefore call upon the international communities, particularly Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union and the United Nations to put more pressure on the National Congress Party and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement to hold a free, fair and peaceful referendum on the 9th of January and to respect the decision of the people of Southern Sudan as stipulated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. We also call upon the various rebel factions in Darfur and the Government of Sudan to return to the negotiating table to agree a peaceful solution to the conflict.

23. The Anglican Church in Africa is deeply concerned about the last bomb attack in Kampala, Uganda, that killed many innocent people. We take this opportunity to present our condolences and sympathy to the Government and the people of Uganda and especially to the families of the victims. We condemn in strong terms such criminal acts and will passionately pray against future acts of violence.

24. The Anglican Church in Africa expresses deep concern over the continued sexual violence against women and children by armed groups operating in the Eastern Congo. We call upon UN forces to do more in protecting civilians and assist the Government in stabilising the region.

25. We are concerned about the problem of insecurity, lack of democracy and freedom in Madagascar and appeal to the international community to support the ongoing peace process undertaken by the Malagasy actors.

26. Recognising the loss of life and great pains in Kenya associated with the post-election violence after the 2007 elections, we commend the recent peaceful referendum and the promulgation of the new constitution.

Appreciation

We give thanks to God for the ministry of our retired or retiring fathers Most Rev Bernard Malango – Province Central Africa, Most Rev Peter Akinola - Province of Nigeria, Most Rev Njonkulu Ndugane – Province of Southern Africa, Most Rev Bernard Mtetemela – Province of Tanzania, Most Rev Remi Rabenirina – Province of Indian Ocean, Most Rev Fidele Dirokpa Balufuga – Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Most Rev Robert Okine – West Africa, Most Rev Benjamin Nzimbi – Province of Kenya and Most Rev Emmanuel Musaba Kolini – Province of Rwanda. We pray for their continued good health and ministry.

We also honour the memory of the late Most Rev Joseph Marona – Province of Sudan.

We also want to express our profound appreciation of the Chairman of CAPA the Most Reverend Ian Ernest, CAPA's Secretariat and the Organising Committee, and all delegates, facilitators, rapporteurs and other guests.

"Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” – Matthew 5: 1-11

On behalf of the CAPA Primates:

Most Rev Ian Ernest
Chairman, CAPA

Most Rev Emmanuel Kolini
Vice-Chairman, CAPA