

An Urgent Cry for Ecological Justice: Reclaiming the Gospel Imperative for All Creation

We, bishops, women leaders and young leaders, united by a passion for climate justice, gathered during the Season of Creation 2018 at the Good Shepherd Retreat Centre in Hartebeespoort, South Africa. We came from 17 dioceses in 14 African countries and met under the auspices of the Anglican Communion Environmental Network. Our worship, reflection and discussion were guided by the theme 'Adaptation, Mitigation, and the Witness of the Church in an Era of Climate Change'.

We affirm and celebrate our heritage:

- Scripture, which beckons us to bear witness, with words and works, to the Good News of the redemption and restoration of all creation according to God's purpose and will - Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.
- The sacramental tradition, which celebrates the gifts of creation for the nourishment of life and godliness, and embodies new creation in Christ.
- The liturgical tradition of Eucharist and devotion to prayer, which centre us on the death and resurrection of Christ and God's reconciling love for all humanity and all creation.
- The diversity of our cultures and contexts reflected in the global Anglican Communion.

We acknowledge and lament:

- our failure to live true to the Gospel imperative to steward creation for the glory of God and for the flourishing of humankind and creation
- our gravitation to the greed systems of the world that have resulted in gross inequalities and poverty, and continue to rape the earth, erode the dignity of humanity, and break genuine communion
- our sometimes turning the rich sacramental and Eucharistic tradition, and devotion to prayer, to mere ritual, thereby failing to serve the cause of justice for all humanity and creation
- our distortion of the Gospel by focusing narrowly on individual salvation rather than the redemption of all creation
- our failure to harness our diversity for a truly global witness to ecological justice, and

We are committed to:

Theological education

- holding eco-theology trainings at all levels (clergy, laity, guilds, youth)
- popularising available ecological resources
- including ecology in theological education curricula
- including ecology in liturgies
- organising refresher courses/conferences in ecology
- making budget provision for ecological activities in our Dioceses and encouraging such provision in our Provinces.

Youth:

- initiating and increasing environmental consciousness and awareness among children and youth
- empowering children and youth to initiate or take part in tree planting and re-planting programmes and to desist from contributing to pollution
- enhancing the capacity of school teachers, confirmation teachers, youth workers and children in ecological matters
- creating an African Youth Eco-Movement
- encouraging budget provision for youth engagement in ecological justice.

Sustainability:

- planting indigenous and environmentally friendly species and removing alien vegetation which degrades the environment
- exploring ways to restore degraded land and enable natural regeneration
- using church land productively, for example, for solar energy, and increasing green cover and bio-diversity
- establishing waste management projects, including collection and productive use of waste
- promoting organic, climate smart, agriculture
- engaging proactively with urban planning systems with a view to addressing degraded human habitation, and advocating for the provision of clean water, sanitation and accessibility
- ensuring that our church buildings and property provide an eco-model for the community
- stop using single-use plastics on our church properties.

Partnerships:

- promoting the establishment of environmental desks in every diocese
- encouraging the inclusion of environmental issues on diocesan websites, sharing challenges and successes
- initiating resource mobilisation strategies to promote ecological justice
- promoting active networking on environmental issues through twinning with other dioceses and Provinces, and encouraging exchange programmes in order to learn from one another.

Our urgent cry is to the Anglican Communion:

- our Dioceses, Provinces, CAPA, and Lambeth 2020, that Good News for creation and ecological justice be placed at the top of the agenda. All of us are invested in this and all are part of the problem, whether in the north, south, east or west. Our Communion provides opportunity for global witness and resources to tackle this global challenge together.

22 September 2018

Participants:

Anglican Church of Southern Africa

Bishop of Swaziland, ACEN Chair

Bishop of Angola

Bishop of Lebombo, Mozambique

Rt Revd Ellinah Ntfombi Wamukoya

Rt Revd Andre Soares

Right Revd Carlos Simao Matsinhe

Bishop of Lesotho	Right Revd Adam Mallane Taaso
Bishop of Namibia	Right Revd Luke Pato
Bishop of Christ the King, South Africa	Right Revd William Mostert
Bishop of Niassa, Mozambique	Right Revd Vicente Msossa
Bishop of Ukhahlamba, South Africa	Right Revd Moses Madywabe
Bishop of Kimberley & Kuruman, South Africa	Right Revd Oswald Swartz
<i>The Church of the Province of Uganda</i>	Rt Revd Dr D Zac Niringiye
<i>Church of the Province of Central Africa</i>	
Bishop of Harare, Zimbabwe	Rt Revd Chad Nicholas Gandiya
Bishop of Botswana	Rt Revd Metlhayotlhe Rawlings Beleme
Bishop of Eastern Zambia	Rt Revd William Mchombo
Bishop of Upper Shire, Malawi	Rt Revd Brighton Vitta Malasa
Bishop of Manicaland, Zimbabwe	Rt Revd Erick Ruwona
Environmental Coordinator, Church of the Province of Central Africa	Revd Sam Sifelani
<i>Province of the Anglican Church of Congo</i>	
Bishop of Katanga	Rt Revd Bertin Subi
<i>Anglican Church of Tanzania</i>	
Bishop of Shinyanga, Tanzania	Rt Revd Johnson Chinyong'ole
<i>Anglican Church of Kenya</i>	
Bishop of Thika, Kenya	Rt Revd Julius Njuguna Wanyoike
<i>Women representatives</i>	
World President, GFS	Ms Thembeke Pama
Chair, International Anglican Women's Network	Ms Pumla Titus
<i>Youth representatives</i>	
Green Church Movement, Central Africa	Ms Norah Magaya
Green Anglicans, South Africa	Ms Boipelo Tau
Green Anglicans, South Africa	Mr Bino Makalanyane
<i>Anglican Communion Environmental Network Steering Group members</i>	
ACEN Secretary, Anglican Church of Canada	Very Revd Ken Gray
Environmental Coordinator, Anglican Church of Southern Africa	Revd Dr Rachel Mash
Hon Director, Department of Ecological Concerns, Church of South India Synod	Professor Dr Mathew Koshy Punnackad
<i>Anglican Communion Office support</i>	Revd Canon Terrie Robinson

Notes to news editors:

The meeting took place 19 to 22 September 2018

For the Anglican Communion Environmental Network, see <http://acen.anglicancommunion.org>

For the Season of Creation, see <https://seasonofcreation.org>

For Green Anglicans, see <http://www.greenanglicans.org>