

E-Communique Special

- Instant Information for Church Leaders from the National Office of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

The following message is being forwarded from the Lutheran Office for World Community (LOWC) - a joint ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) at the United Nations. The ELCIC is a member of the LWF.

Lutheran Office for World Community

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<http://www.comminit.com/en/node/266027> **Update #12 - February 2008** - *An occasional bulletin of news, events and resources for LOWC partners.*

News

Subscribe to a 40-day reflection on our relationship with God's creation via email

This 40-day Lenten reflection series will offer a holistic approach to how we live as earthly companions, combining God's caring relationship with creation to our journey in the physical universe. Each e-mail emphasizes individual and communal solutions, resources for further learning and suggestions for how to act or become more educated. This is a limited subscription; the first e-mail will arrive on Ash Wednesday and the last e-mail will arrive Easter Sunday. Subscribe to the ELCA's daily 2008 environmental Lenten reflections at: www.elca.org/advocacy

Peace Building Commission adopts framework for Sierra Leone

The United Nations Peace Building Commission and the government of **Sierra Leone** have adopted a framework that will set the pattern for the work of the United Nations advisory body. The priorities are: youth employment and empowerment, justice and security sector reform, consolidation of democracy and good governance, capacity-building and the energy sector. Civil Society is seen as a key stakeholder in the Peacebuilding process and capacity building. The PBC and the government have committed themselves to facilitate and support capacity-building for civil society, especially women's and youth organizations to foster reconciliation and community-based socio-economic recovery. Civil Society will contribute to a semi-annual review process. The PBC was set up in 2006 to address post conflict peace building – all that is needed to help a country move from war to peace. The first countries in the program were Sierra Leone and **Burundi**. **Guinea-Bissau** is now considered the third country.

More about the PBC: <http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/questions.htm>

A blog on the PBC: <http://www.pbcupdate.org/> For more information you can email: Christian.Albers@elca.org

Ecumenical Women launch website; submit statement on financing for gender equality

Ecumenical Women, a coalition of churches and ecumenical organizations in dialogue with the UN, have launched a new website featuring a blog on current issues related to gender equality as well as worship, academic and advocacy. To prepare for the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2008, the website has a focus on the theme financing for gender equality. Go to the website to read Ecumenical Women's submission to the UN: "Justice for the

poor and care for life and creation continue to be at the heart of the matter". The statement lifts up the principles of the Beijing Platform for Action and connects gender justice to the six themes of the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development.

The website: <http://ecumenicalwomen.org>

The statement: <http://ecumenicalwomen.files.wordpress.com/2008/01/ecumenical-womenresubmitted-statement.pdf>

LWF members urged to act on human rights, illegitimate debt and climate change

In his New Year's Message for 2008, LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko cites human rights, illegitimate debt and protecting the earth as major challenges requiring churches' reflection and action. The year 2008 marks the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "Let this not be an empty celebration," says Noko, asking churches to insist on accountability and universal practical implementation for human rights. Noko highlights illegitimate debt as an additional obstacle to the full enjoyment of human rights, urging churches to seek new ways of ensuring that "economic relations between states are informed by ethical principles, and no longer result in debt bondage for generations of poor people." To mitigate climate change, Noko urges the churches to "promote new ways of relating to and living within creation that better reflect in practice our theological understandings of communion".

Read the full message: <http://www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/2150.EN.html>

New Research and Reports

Climate change is focus for latest Human Development Report

While there has been some progress on development in recent years, it is threatened by climate change – especially among the poorest and most vulnerable populations and countries. Climate change affects agricultural production and water security, threatens public health and contributes to the collapsing of ecosystems, such as coral reefs. But according to the report it is not too late to forestall dangerous effects, if agreement can be reached to reduce 50 percent of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 from 1990 levels. The country with the highest carbon dioxide emissions is the United States (6,045.8 Mt CO₂), followed by China (5,007.1), Russia (1,524.1), India (1,342.1) and Japan (1,257.2). The [Human Development Report](#) can be downloaded: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2007-2008/>

For God's sake, do something! How religions can find unexpected unity around climate change

In this report published in conjunction with the Human Development Report, British sociologist and political scientist Roman Krznaric explores the common ground shared by the world's major religions in their approaches to environmental issues, in particular climate change. While analyzing Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and indigenous cosmologies, Krznaric finds a general agreement on four key points: human-induced climate change is real and needs to be tackled now; the problem of climate change has partly resulted from human greed and a culture of over-consumption; by damaging the environment humans have sinned or acted immorally in the eyes of God or the cosmic order; and religious believers have a religious responsibility to take action. He asks for more collaboration on the common ground of the claim that God is green. Read it at: http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2007-2008/papers/krznaric_roman.pdf

Girls Count: A global investment & action agenda

Adolescent girls are frequently discriminated in terms of health, education, nutrition and labor force participation. Due to gender bias and cultural norms frequently they are not seen as worthy of equal investment as young boys by their families and in their society. This report from the Center for Global Development describes why and how to initiate effective investments that will give adolescent girls in developing countries a full and equal chance for rewarding lives and livelihoods. It outlines three key actions: count girls (disaggregate data to make girls more visible), invest in girls, give girls a fair chance. The authors have provided specific recommendations for civil society, governments, private-sector leaders, and donor agencies to create mechanisms for the meaningful participation of young women and adolescent girls in their programs and policy.

See: <http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/15154>

10-Year Strategic Review of “Impact of armed conflict on children”

Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, launched a ten-year strategic review following up the 1996 report “Impact of armed conflict on children” by Graça Machel. The review discusses the evolving and severe impact of conflicts on children and measures progress made since 1996. It pressure on all UN Member States to fulfill their responsibilities to children by giving them access to basic services like education, health, nutrition, water, and sanitation. Read it here:

http://www.un.org/children/conflict/_documents/machel/MachelReviewReport.pdf

***Will you listen?* Children respond to armed conflict**

A companion piece to the 10-year review of the impact of armed conflict on children, *Will you listen?* compiles the views and recommendations of over 1,700 children in 92 countries. Focus group discussions were conducted by in 18 countries, and involved over 1,385 participants in 125 groups to inform this comprehensive report of children’s experiences.

http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/720_filename_will_you_listen_090607.pdf

Education for all by 2015: Will we make it?

The 2008 edition of the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report is a mid-term review of progress towards the six EFA goals established in 2000. On the positive side, there is a rise in the number of children starting primary school, the number of girls in school, and spending on education and aid. However, poor quality, the cost of schooling and high levels of adult illiteracy rates need to be tackled in order to meet the EFA goals by 2015. For links and more information:

<http://tinyurl.com/ypuedw>

New edition of guide for NGO participation at UN The UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) has just released an updated version of their handbook on the UN: “Intergovernmental Negotiations and Decision Making at the United Nations: A Guide.” It’s a really useful (and actually quite interesting) resource.

Go to: http://www.un-ngls.org/site/IMG/pdf/DMUN_Book_PAO_WEB.pdf.

If you would like a printed copy, contact Emily.Davila@elca.org

World Economic Forum's measures global gender gap

This report measures the size of the gender gap in four critical areas of inequality in 115 countries. To do so, it examines: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment,

political empowerment and health and survival. Sweden holds the top rank, with 81 percent of the gender gap closed. The United States rank 31st at 70 percent, and Yemen holds the title for the biggest gap, with only 45 percent of the gender gap closed. To read more about the Gender Gap Index go to: http://www.weforum.org/en/media/Latest_Press_Releases/Global_Gender_Gap_2007

Applying human rights principles to sexual orientation and gender identity

In response to well-documented patterns of abuse, a distinguished group of international human rights experts met in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2006 to outline a set of international principles relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. The result was the Yogyakarta Principles: a universal guide to human rights which propose binding international legal standards with which all States must comply, based on previously agreed standards. Though not officially recognized by the United Nations, they promise a different future where all people born free and equal in dignity and rights can fulfill that precious birthright. The principles are presented here in all six United Nations languages: http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles_en.htm

Toolkits and resources

Free communications and planning toolkits offered to civil society organizations

This series of toolkits, aimed at organizations to improve their capacity in the areas of communication and planning, are provided by CIVICUS, an international alliance dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society. The toolkits are provided in English, French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic. The useful toolkits cover themes such as "Writing Effectively & Powerfully", "Developing a Financing Strategy" or "Writing a Funding Proposal" or "Strategic Planning".

For further information: http://www.civicus.org/new/civicus_toolkit_project.asp

Guide to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

Marking the 20th anniversary of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Commission), Amnesty International has published this report in order to foster greater participation by civil society groups and human rights defenders in the work of the African Commission. For more information, <http://www.amnestyusa.org/document.php?lang=e&id=ENGIOR630052007>

Subscribe to new newsletter on disability rights convention

The Enable newsletter is a service of the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to keep you informed about the work of the UN system on disability issues. To subscribe: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=312>

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