STATEMENT OF THE
ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. PREAMBLE

The AACC convened the Executive Committee in Nairobi on the 18\textsuperscript{th} May, 2012 mainly for the preparations for the Golden Jubilee celebrations and the tenth General Assembly which will be held in Kampala, Uganda in June 2013.

At this assembly the AACC member churches will gather in Kampala to celebrate the achievements of the ecumenical movement in Africa since its inception in January 1958 at Ibadan, Nigeria. At the inaugural gathering of our fathers and mothers in faith they observed” *The continent of Africa will see unparalleled events and changes during the rest of the century, welcomed by some, feared by others. We pray that the Christian Church of Africa will play its role as champion, teacher, counselor and shepherd during these crucial years*.” The assembly will be an opportunity to commemorate our past while acknowledging some of our painful experiences. It will also provide an impetus and galvanize the churches for the transformation of the continent in the next fifty years.

Founding African statesmen created the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in June 1963 three months after the founding of the AACC in April 1963. Now, the subsequent acknowledgement that Africa is the cradle of humanity strengthened the vision and commitment of the importance of this continent.

2 ACHIEVEMENTS AND SIGNS OF HOPE

We thank God for the role played by the Church and the people of this continent in the process of political liberation and the dismantling of apartheid and other discriminatory forms of governance. Indeed, there is no country in the world today that has a constitution that discriminates on the basis of one’s specificity.

2.1. Electoral Processes - There has been an increase in the democratic space in Africa. Indeed elections have now been held regularly and out of 54 countries only 4 have not held regular elections. We note that there is a need to strengthen democratic principles and values so as to promote free, fair and credible elections. It is also instructive to note that the people driven changes in Northern Africa have created space for democratization. However, we have also noted that elections in some cases have been used to legalize autocratic rule and illegal transitions.

There is need to improve the electoral processes by putting in place acceptable legal frameworks, credible election management bodies with people of integrity to manage the electoral processes. In addition it is noted that there is need to enhance and improve the content of civic and voter education and vet those who educate.
We congratulate the AU and regional organizations for acting promptly to avert unconstitutional transitions by coups. We condemn the emerging trend where elections have put coup perpetrators in government.

2.2. Reduction of Conflicts - The number of long running conflicts in Africa have reduced as compared to thirty years ago. However, we note that there are still a number of hot spots with the potential of developing into full blown conflicts. We urge the speedy development of appropriate and functional national peace mechanisms to link national and regional structures with the African Union peace architecture. However, these mechanisms must not undermine the peace initiatives of Religious Leaders. We also advocate for the strengthening of Church and secular initiatives in peace building and conflict prevention. We acknowledge the steps and responsibility taken by regional institutions in conflict resolution, peace building and promptly averting unconstitutional transitions.

2.3. Economic Growth and Development - African countries are experiencing single digit growth in their economies and the African Development Bank has contributed to this growth through its Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) and agricultural development through Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP). However, a lot more needs to be done to encourage, acknowledge and also promote industrialization and entrepreneurship to ease unemployment and reduce poverty.

While we laud efforts to reduce dependency on external aid and raise resources internally to cover budgetary needs we urge governments to ensure equitable distribution of wealth. We affirm and acknowledge the African people’s success and contribution in different areas such as ICT specifically mobile money transfers, science and culture. The process of regional integration at the regional levels should be hastened in order to open more trading opportunities and markets.

2.4. Gender Justice - We note that African governments have made significant progress in reducing the gap on issues of gender parity, in the reduction of maternal death and increase in the enrollment of the girl child. There has also been an increase of women in decision making positions. The development of the African women movement and the resilience of the African woman have contributed greatly to the general improvement of the well being of the African woman but these gains need to be consolidated. However these gains are being negated by the continuous assault on women and girls through rape, defilement and other inhuman crimes. The Church must speak out on these issues. We urge the African governments and the Church to seriously look into those factors that are leading to the derailment of the African boy child in the transition to manhood and the inability of most men to cope with the social changes thus putting men in disrepute.

2.5. The Nation/State - The change of OAU to AU has resulted in a paradigm shift that has contributed to a more focused African identity and emphasis on good and
accountable governance. The NEPAD planning and coordinating agency is an example of an African development initiative. The AACC lauds the work of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) noting that so far 30 countries have acceded to the mechanism and appeal for the remaining governments to oblige to this process. We acknowledge the African States and people for taking charge of their destiny as well as ownership of their problems. However the African state remains largely an alien institution to its citizens and there is great need to demystify this relationship through governments accountability and respectful relationship between governments and its peoples.

3 WORRYING TRENDS

3.1. Peaceful co-existence – Africa is home to many religious traditions that have co-existed peacefully over the centuries. Recent developments have been perturbing. We have noted that religious extremism with external links and the formation of illegal groupings have continued to contribute to increased insecurity in some parts of the continent. There is need for Christians and Muslims to enhance peaceful co-existence and tolerance. We encourage African governments to have the responsibility to guarantee freedom of worship and security for everyone.

3.2. Corruption – Corruption is SINFUL and evil. Everything we have, life, time and resources, come from God. The way to honor God and to live a meaningful life is to avoid appropriating to ourselves what does not belong to us. Therefore, corruption is SIN, not only against God but also against our dignity and integrity.

3.3. Resources – Africa is endowed with many types of resources but sadly the African people have not benefitted fully from these resources. Oil extraction has been embroiled with external influences resulting in minimal benefit accruing to the local people. The same case applies to minerals in many parts of Africa. The churches must stand up, condemn the alienation of land through long term leases or outright sales to foreigners and advocate for the displaced and better land policies that take the interests of the people at grass root level into account. We urge governments to put in place effective mechanisms and legal frameworks for revenue collection and extraction of the resources.

3.4. Human and people’s rights - Despite improved governance Africa still experiences abuse of human rights. We appeal to African governments to create more job opportunities to avert migration of young people and the brain drain syndrome. Human trafficking leading to slavery continues unabated, the Church must advocate for the deliberation of this issue at the national and continental level. As a people and nations who have been humiliated and exploited, we are in a better position to understand how the abuse of the dignity and rights of others is SINFUL. All human beings have inalienable rights and freedoms and the role of the Church is to speak on the abuses and promote the protection of human rights.
3.5. **Climate change** – The planet is a life giver and sustainer and we all have a responsibility to protect, care and nurture it. The geographical location of Africa makes it more vulnerable to the effects of global warming and climate change. The recent phenomenon of floods, displacement of communities, increased health hazards, change in rainfall patterns and droughts are direct consequences of environmental degradation and climate change. This has had adverse effects on food production and the whole question of food security in Africa. We urge African governments and churches to acknowledge this fact and take mitigating measures to reverse the negative trends. As African nations, church and individuals we are responsible as stewards to make reduction in the gases that are raising temperatures. Adaptation to climate change is not an option but a priority for the peoples, churches and nations of Africa.

3.6. **Media** - The liberalization of airwaves and the emergence of social media has resulted in a tool for information, education and awareness creation for the people of the continent. We welcome ICT and social media. However, in certain cases this freedom has been abused by promoting negative ethnicity, undermining the moral fabric of the African society and by being monopolized by the political class. The use of media has to be informed by ethical values and promotion of harmony.

4 **ADVOCACY PRIORITIES**

4.1. Development of code of conduct for the Church to act as guidelines for engagement in the electoral processes.

4.2. Research and draw up all regional protocols and examine the extent of compliance by nation/states in order to develop rapid response mechanisms, preventive diplomacy and strengthening of the Church engagement with the relevant bodies.

4.3. Publication and publicizing the work of the AACC in the different realms of peace, capacity development of church leaders, theology and advocacy in order to make known the identity of the AACC.

4.4. The AACC to promote the role of the Church in higher education and in processes of research, quality and quantity of education.

4.5. To promote interfaith dialogue for mutual respect and peaceful co-existence.


4.7. Promote inter-generational encounters and dialogue to bridge the gap between the different generations.

NAIROBI, 18 MAY 2012