



# ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES (AACC) CONFERENCE DES EGLISES DE TOUTE L'AFRIQUE (CETA)

AACC-CETA

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10<sup>th</sup> July 2020

## Statement By The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) On World Population Day

### **AACC CALLS ON CHURCHES IN AFRICA TO START ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF UNSUSTAINABLE POPULATION GROWTH AND OTHER CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH POPULATION EXPLOSION IN THE CONTINENT**

People of God around Africa

Arising from a high-level webinar consultation held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020, ecumenical and ecclesial leaders, theologians, representatives of PLWD, women and youth unanimously affirmed that the churches in Africa can no longer ignore the growing challenges facing its followers in the continent that are directly caused by unsustainable population growth.

This issue is central to the dignity of Africans, as unsustainable populations affect people's dignity directly. Unless the Church starts addressing the issue of population growth urgently and adequately, it will not be able to offer transformative accompaniment to its followers in the continent.

Africans deserve to live a life of dignity and happiness by exploiting the natural resources God has endowed the continent with.

The AACC would like to state that the issue of population growth is not a foreign agenda, but an everyday reality in the continent. Africa is facing mounting challenges of underdevelopment including congested classrooms, growing numbers of street children, and poor access to social services such as health and education.

Further, Africa is not enjoying a demographic dividend from its young population. Instead, it has a huge problem of dependency because the youth are either too young to be working, or lack job opportunities given the worsening economic conditions in the continent. This has made families destitute.

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The time has come for Christians to start asking themselves how many children they can afford to bring up in dignity. They must start seeing this as part of their spiritual responsibility, along with all the other obligations they have as Christians like going to church, and not sinning. We must start laying emphasis on responsible parenthood.

It is clear that smaller families fare better because there are fewer mouths to feed and take care of, enabling the limited resources to do much more in terms of facilitating better lives and empowering members of a family.

The AACC notes that this is not going to be easy because of the established theological teachings that have hitherto taken root in our churches in the continent. AACC proposes that the best theological approach to tackle this is from the basis of family. This raises the quest for us to look at the notion of “Theology of Responsibility with Dignity”

To make headway, the Church must start debunking the prevalent cultural and spiritual beliefs about multiplying and filling the earth. These beliefs perpetuate the myths associated with having many children even as parents cannot afford to give them a decent life.

The Church has a lot of influence, and it is imperative that it employs this towards this challenge. Further, the Church has a wide grassroots network, and is, therefore, very well placed to engage communities over this issue.

The AACC will work with churches in Africa by assisting them develop an advocacy framework for engaging governments, as well as theological tools for inter-religious dialogue and engagement around sustainable population for sustainable development.

World Population Day for 2020 is here again, 11<sup>th</sup> July, AACC calls on all members and people of goodwill across Africa to observe the day by praying, speaking, and acting rightly for sustainable family hood with dignity.

Living in Dignity is a Right and a Responsibility

**Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki**

**General Secretary**

**All Africa Conference of Churches**

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