



The United Methodist Church in Africa

02/23/2022

Re - Africa Initiative's Position Statement on the Holding of 2022 General Conference

To:
Ms. Kim Simpson
Chairperson
Commission on General Conference
USA

Bishop Cynthia Harvey
President
Council of Bishops
The United Methodist
Church

Grace and peace of God be with you, we hope you are doing well and staying healthy. We appreciate the work you are doing to ensure that the United Methodist Church has a safer and inclusive General Conference. We have seen evidence of the Holy Spirit in your work and pray that God will continue to give you wisdom as you are planning to make further safe and inclusive decisions regarding the 2022 General Conference.

The Africa Voice of Unity (AVOU), and other African General Conference delegates wish to write to the Commission and the Council of Bishops in response to the letter sent to you by the Africa Initiative who claim to be speaking for African delegates.

Before going further in our responses, we wish to make the following points very clear to all United Methodists:

1. The Africa Initiative does not represent Africa and this group does not speak for all African delegates.
2. The claim that they conducted a survey among 286 Africa Central Conference delegates and that they are ready for General Conference is not true, as a majority of African delegates from Nigeria, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and other African delegates were not contacted.
3. Africa Initiative with its Wesleyan Covenant Association allies is selective in their vaccine and visa initiatives, as many of our delegates were never contacted.
4. We have noticed a ploy to use non elected persons as delegates in some Annual Conferences.

We are equally saddened by the fact that, Covid-19 continues to pose several challenges to the possibilities of holding General Conference. We want the Commission to note that vaccines remain a huge challenge to many of our delegates, now doubled on is the challenge of obtaining a travel visas. For example in Nigeria the first group of 7 delegates who completed their visa applications have interviews scheduled for October 12th, 2023. This is the first available visa interview dates both in Lagos and Abuja applications centers. See attached delegates visa portal.

To say that the majority of Africa delegates are ready to participate in the 2022 General Conference does not represent the reality of all Africa delegates. We are aware of the funding the Africa Initiative is getting from the Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA) to speed up this process and we want to make it clear that not

all African delegates have access to the resources the Africa Initiative has been getting from the Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA).

On these grounds we are calling on the Commission to do the following for the interest of fairness and justice:

1. To further delay the General Conference to a more appropriate time when all delegates can truly get vaccinated and secure a travel visas from the embassies.
2. Conduct a thorough investigation on the list of all African delegates to ensure that elected delegates are not replaced by non elected delegates.
3. Write to all elected General Conference delegates in Africa to confirm whether they are vaccinated and are able to obtain travel visas.

The Africa Voice of Unity is praying for the continued leadership of the Holy Spirit as you meet to make decisions that will ensure a safer and inclusive General Conference meeting on behalf of the United Methodist Church. We request the Commission to consider further delaying the General Conference August meeting to a later date when it is possible for everyone to get vaccinated and obtain travel visas.

Signed by the Coordinating Council and other General Conference Delegates

1. Rev. Ande I. Emmanuel – Coordinator, Africa Voice of Unity, Nigeria
2. Mr. Senesie Roger – Council Member , Sierra Leone
3. Rev. Betty Kazadi - Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
4. Mrs. Catherine Ama – Liberia Annual Conference
5. Rev. Eli S. Yakku – General Conference Delegate
6. Rev. Dr. Isa Dunah – General Conference Delegate

7. Mr. Japheth Aliyuda – General Conference Delegate
8. Mr. Godwin John – General Conference Delegate
9. Mrs. Safiya Amos Davidson - General Conference delegate
10. Mrs. Jetai Pepsy – General Conference Delegate
11. Mr. Luther Aliyuda – General Conference Delegate
12. Rev. Gloria I. Dogara – Alternate delegate
13. Rev. Ignatius Jesse – Alternate delegate
14. Mrs. Sarostina P. Johnson - Alternate delegate
15. Rev. Dr. Danladi Dikko - Alternate delegate
16. Rev. Dr. Abel Lamido – Alternate delegate
17. Rev. Danladi Danburam – Alternate delegate
18. Mrs. Hurare Ishaya – Alternate delegate
19. Mrs. Janet Garba – Alternate delegate