



A Press Release

27th February 2020

UMC Africa Initiative Consultative Meeting on the Future of the Global UMC

Clergy and lay leaders from the three Central Conferences of Africa, representing the UMC Africa Initiative from thirteen annual conferences, gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 24th to 27th February 2020 to discuss the future of the global United Methodist Church. Our discussion was centered on the proposed *Protocol for Reconciliation and Grace through Separation* that is expected to come before the 2020 General Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in May 2020.

After vigorous discussion and critique, the leaders of the UMC Africa Initiative have decided to support the passage of the implementing legislation of the *Protocol for Reconciliation and Grace through Separation*.

Our discussion on the Protocol became necessary because of the concerns it had raised among members and delegates from the three central conferences. Following a critical evaluation of the proposed Protocol and its implications for the UM Church in Africa, we felt deeply disappointed that Africa was not adequately represented at the negotiating table to present the concerns of the African church. We also felt that the Protocol, in its current form, is unfair to United Methodists in Africa due to its alignment of us with the post-separation UM Church by default, its attempt to deprive the traditionalist church in Africa from maintaining the “United Methodist” name and the cross and flame, and its allocation of resources.

Despite these concerns, in the common interest of the global church and the church’s need for an amicable separation, we decided to support the passage of the implementing legislation of the Protocol at the forthcoming 2020 General Conference.

At the same time, the UMC Africa Initiative urges the following amendments to the proposed protocol.

1. **That the traditionalist church in Africa may maintain the “United Methodist” name and cross and flame, with modification.** For United Methodists in Africa, the name “United Methodist” and the cross and flame have indelible history and legacy. They have become a great symbol and witness to our ministries across our continental connection and bear significant spiritual and legal impact on our missional activities in Africa. The ability to continue using a form of the name and logo would greatly benefit the mission and ministry of the church in Africa.
2. **That a vote of 57 percent be the basis for determining the decision of a central conference to join the new traditionalist Methodist Church.** We consider it unreasonable for United Methodists in Africa to have to vote to maintain our traditional beliefs. Nevertheless, for the sake of furthering amicable separation, we urge a 57 percent vote to determine a central conference status. This change would yield consistency with the annual conference threshold and place the central conferences on an equal footing with annual conferences in the United States.
3. **That the Protocol implementing legislation ensure that every central conference, annual conference, and local church be permitted to vote when it desires to do so under the processes of the legislation without any form of suppression or coercion by anyone.**

The leadership of the UMC Africa Initiative reiterates its support for the passage of the implementing legislation for the *Protocol for Reconciliation and Grace through Separation*.

Signed

1. Rev. Dr. Jerry P. Kulah, General Coordinator
2. Rev. Dr. Kimba K. Evariste, Congo Central Conference Coordinator
3. Mr. Simon Mafunda, Africa Central Conference Coordinator
4. Rev. Dr. John Pena, West Africa Central Conference Coordinator

5. Dr. Muriel V. Nelson, Women's Wing vice- chair
4. Dr. Pacis-Alarine Irambona, Active secretary Women's Wing and Young People Representative
5. Rev. Forbes Matonga, Member, Zimbabwe West Annual Conference
6. Rev. Dr. Julius Sarwolo Nelson, Member, Liberia Annual Conference
7. Rev. Dr. Henriette Lokoto Okele, Member, Central Congo Annual Conference
8. Mrs. Khuliswa Masiso, Member, South Africa Annual Conference
9. Rev. Philip Adjobe, Member, Cote D'Ivoire Annual Conference
10. Rev. Lazare Bankurunaze, Member, Burundi Annual Conference
11. Mr. Louis Aboua, Member, Cote D'Ivoire Annual Conference
12. Mr. Rukang Chikomb, Member, South Congo Annual Conference
13. Mrs. Dorothée Abedi Tulia, Member, North Katanga Annual Conference
14. Rev. Odongo Wilton, Member, Kenya-Ethiopia Annual Conference
15. Rev. Bartolomeu Dias Sapalo, Member, East Angola Annual Conference
16. Chief Prosperous Tunda, Member, East Congo Annual Conference