

GENERAL ASSEMBLY STATEMENT

Celebrating 60th Anniversary Breaking the Walls, Building Bridges, and Projecting the Future

Proverbs 29:18 KJV Where there is no vision, the people perish: But he that keepeth the law, happy is he

1. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) convened its 47th General Assembly from the 25th to the 26th of July 2024. The General Assembly was convened in line with the ZCC Constitution under the theme, *'Breaking Walls, Building Bridges, and Projecting the Future'*.
2. The General Assembly was preceded by a series of meetings; The Advisory Board on the 17th of July; the Supervisory Council on the 24th of July; and the Youth, Men's, and Women's Leadership Development Programmes. The meetings produced recommendations that were submitted for consideration and adoption by the General Assembly.
3. The delegates also had an opportunity to reflect on issues affecting the nation which include the State of the Church; Constitutionalism, Democracy, Rule of Law and Elections; National Values, Unity, Peace and Reconciliation; Climate Change, Drug and Substance Abuse, Economic Justice and Tax Justice and the El Niño induced drought.
4. The Assembly also took the opportunity to reinforce its organisational capacities by electing its Presidium, and appointing the Advisory Board for the next 2 years.
5. The Assembly further reflected on the prevailing operational context of the Council in an endeavour to provide it with direction in light of the Accelerating National Dialogue to Reinforce Opportunities for Inclusive Development-ii (ANDROID-ii) Strategy (2021-2025).
6. The Council reflected on its 60-year journey and reaffirmed its commitment to work across the ecumenical divide towards attaining its vision for a united, just, peaceful, and prosperous Zimbabwe where everyone experiences holistic salvation.
7. ZCC has strived to ensure that the Church is persuasive and of weighty influence in attending to the life sustaining and developing needs of people in the country during the past 60 years. These efforts have resulted in increased recognition of the church nationally in all life endeavours, ecumenical activities, public processes, and humanitarian spaces;

- The Church was instrumental in calling for justice before the country's independence and participated immensely in the development of both the Lancaster House and the 2013 constitutions;
- It has positively influenced civic participation in national processes including policy formulation and implementation.
- The Church continues to influence the national discourse on promoting good governance and through partnerships culminating in formidable forces such as the ZHOCD, it has continued to lead the 'Zimbabwe We Want' call which has stimulated further debate towards building a national vision and dialogue.
- The Council has intensified its Electoral Accompaniment since 1980 through electoral observation, mobilizing citizens, and calling for peace before during, and after elections.
- The Council birthed the Christian Care humanitarian organisation, in 1967 as a way to proactively respond to the immediate needs of the citizens before, during, and after the liberation struggle.
- ZCC is currently engaged in Actions of Hope which have given hope to communities through responding to disasters such as Cyclone Idai, and Drought among others. Returning Migrants coming back from far away countries have been assisted to settle home in a dignified manner.

8. The General Assembly offered the Church leaders an opportunity to reflect on the internal and external environment, celebrating the efforts and focus of the ZCC in mobilizing the Church and working across the ecumenical divide towards building a united, just, peaceful, and prosperous Zimbabwe where everyone experiences holistic salvation.

9. During the assembly, Church leaders noted with concern that the current national context is characterized by numerous threats to our Hope.

- A politically fragile and polarized political environment failing to attain constitutional democracy and socio-economic transformation. This is mainly due to the negative politically motivated violence and Gukurahundi atrocities.
- The election in Zimbabwe continuously disturbs the peace and cohesion of our society as we fail as a country to tolerate political diversity.
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- The election in Zimbabwe continuously disturbs the peace and cohesion of our society as we fail as a country to tolerate political diversity.
- The economic situation in the country is complex being characterized by several threats and challenges despite huge opportunities for socio-economic transformation.
- The period under review saw an increase in drug and substance abuse, especially from the distraught youths due to unemployment and social instabilities they are facing. There was also a noticeable migration of the people in search of greener pastures abroad.
- The president of the Republic of Zimbabwe declared the country in the state of disaster on 03 April 2024, following a failed agricultural season. Communities are visibly feeling the impacts of climate change as drought frequency increases.
- There are also global issues hindering global peace and unity, which include amongst others wars in Ukraine, Israel, and the protest in Kenya which has received heavy-handedness by the government and disturbances in Burkina Faso, and South Sudan, due to political instability.

10. The Church has commended the President of Zimbabwe's stance of upholding constitutionalism in Zimbabwe through his pledge to retire after his second 5-year term ending in 2028. As we celebrate our 60th milestone, the Church impresses the President and people of Zimbabwe to respect this Constitutional provision and facilitate a peaceful process of selecting the President's successor both internally in the Party and for the nation.

11. The Church is challenged to be visionary and be the custodian of the future. This calls for the Church to lead and start to create the future that everyone want.

Calling the Church to Action.

The Church being guided by its vision to promote a strong Christian ecumenical fellowship for a united, peaceful, just, and prosperous nation, where all citizens experience holistic salvation reaffirms its mission of enhancing the self-supporting capacity of vulnerable people, the empowerment and renewal of its member churches so that they are a sustainable and transforming Christian presence in Zimbabwe. The Church will strengthen its action in the following areas.

- The church will continue to mobilize internal resources for immediate response to the El-Nino Induced Drought and will maximize utilization of the available assets and capacities within the church (Farms and mission institutions, skills,) to build church sustainability and community socio-economic transformation

- Member churches to facilitate access to information for the member church institutions mapping and capacity assessment currently being conducted by the ZCC secretariat.
- The Church will intensify its call for Constitutionalism, rule of law, and justice. It will also support peaceful and democratic mechanisms of electing the future President in all political parties and for the nation.
- The Church will lead in building national values and cultivate a spirit of nation-building starting at the family level to promote a culture of peace and tolerance at the national level.
- The Church will occupy spaces of decision-making at both local and national levels to influence policy formulation and implementation in the country.
- The Church will stand with the Nation and continue to fight against Drug and Substance Abuse.
- The Church will strengthen its action in addressing Climate Change.
- The church will Strengthen the ministry of ZCC to men within the church, paying particular attention to leadership development, mental and physical health, provision of Psycho-Social Support and strengthening the Men's fellowship structure.
- The church will Strengthen the call for social and economic justice which can only be achieved through equitable tax systems at local, national, and global levels and good stewardship of the national resources that God has given us.

END !!!