



# World Council of Churches

**General Secretariat**

150 route de Ferney, PO Box 2100  
CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland  
Phone: +41 22 791 6111 Fax: +41 22 791 6099  
Email: [media@wcc-coe.org](mailto:media@wcc-coe.org) [www.oikoumene.org](http://www.oikoumene.org)

Direct phone: +41 22 791 6285  
Direct e-mail: [Beth.Godfrey@wcc-coe.org](mailto:Beth.Godfrey@wcc-coe.org)

To WCC member churches and  
ecumenical partners

Geneva, 25 August 2025

## **Re: WCC Central Committee, June 2025, Johannesburg, South Africa**

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The WCC central committee met in Johannesburg, South Africa from 18 to 24 June 2025. The central committee, which meets every two years, is responsible for the policies and strategies to fulfil the mandate of the 11th Assembly held in 2022. The central committee was hosted by our member churches in Southern Africa together with the South African Council of Churches. It brought together over 300 members, presidents, advisors, guests, stewards and participants from around the world.

The reports, statements, and livestream recordings of prayers and plenaries are available on the WCC website. In addition to its business, the central committee discussed important issues affecting the life and witness of the churches in their ongoing pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation, and unity. With this letter, I am writing to inform member churches and ecumenical partners about some of the main outcomes of the central committee.

The meeting was first and foremost a **pilgrimage encounter** with the churches in Southern Africa. It was an opportunity to experience the extraordinary legacy of the churches' courageous witness in overcoming apartheid and the continued commitment of churches everywhere to overcome racism in all its forms.

The central committee celebrated 1700 years of common Apostolic Faith professed in the Nicæan-Constantinopolitan Creed as a strong sign of the churches' visible unity in Christ. The central committee took stock of the climate crisis and the need for churches to amplify their efforts for climate justice. It also celebrated the rich ecumenical heritage of promoting gender justice, including the 'Thursdays in Black' campaign 'for a world without rape or violence'.

I am delighted to report that the WCC fellowship is growing. In South Africa, we welcomed four **new member churches**. We are now a fellowship of 356 churches representing over 600 million Christians. After prayerful preparation, the central committee welcomed the following churches:

- Apostolic Pentecostal Church International [Liberia], a Pentecostal church with 52,000 members
- Church of Central Africa Presbyterian [Malawi], a Reformed church with 3.2 million members
- Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, a Lutheran church with 2.2 million members
- Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany, a Baptist church with 80,000 members.

The central committee also received the application of the Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim, an African independent church with over one million members in Nigeria, for an “interim period of participation in the work of the WCC and for interaction with the local fellowship of member churches”. With this letter, I am informing the member churches with every hope that in the next two years, a consensus will develop and the central committee will complete the process in 2027.

The central committee launched an **ecumenical decade of climate justice action** in a bold and prayerful response to the growing climate emergency. The decade is an invitation for churches to deepen their engagement for climate justice, leading by example, promoting policy change, empowering resilient communities, and developing an economy of life. The decade calls for more than change, it calls for deep spiritual transformation – *metanoia* – a radical turning of hearts, minds, and practices.

Consequently, I want to encourage our member churches and ecumenical partners to remain steadfast in their work for climate justice. The churches have been at the forefront of the movement for ecological and economic justice. Our work and action for climate justice is more important than ever.

The central committee adopted a number of statements and minutes on **international concerns** for peace and justice. In response to the escalating crisis in Gaza, the central committee adopted a statement calling for an end to apartheid, occupation, and impunity in Israel and Palestine.

*“We recognize a clear distinction between the Jewish people, our siblings in faith, and the acts of the Government of Israel, and we reaffirm that the WCC stands firm against any kind of racism, including antisemitism, anti-Arab racism, and islamophobia. However, the unbearable suffering inflicted on the people of Gaza, and the escalating violence and oppression in the West Bank and in Jerusalem compel the global fellowship of churches to speak with clarity, urgency, and commitment to the principles of justice under international law and ethics.”*

The crisis was discussed in a special hearing, in standing committees, and again in plenary. The statement names and denounces the “system of apartheid imposed by Israel on the Palestinian people, in violation of international law and moral conscience”. The statement has received support and critique, helping to embolden the churches’ deep commitment to justice and peace. With this letter, I want to encourage the churches to continue praying and working for peace and end to war, conflict, and occupation.

The central committee launched preparations for the **WCC 12th Assembly** in 2030, electing planning committees and initiating the search for a host venue. In 2027, the central committee will select the venue and allocate seats and issue invitations to nominate delegates.

I would like to encourage member churches in every region to consider hosting the next WCC assembly. The ideal venue will accommodate between 2000 and 4000 people in one location, have dedicated spaces for worship, a plenary hall for up to 1500 people, and break-out spaces for committees, workshops and fellowship. The churches offering to host the assembly should exhibit strong ecumenical cooperation. They should be able to offer logistical and financial support and ensure that both the preparations and the event are accompanied by prayer. Guidelines for hosting the assembly are attached.

The central committee meeting in Johannesburg was a significant pilgrimage encounter. Below are more highlights and outcomes. I remain grateful for the commitment of our member churches and ecumenical partners to the life and work of the WCC.

Let us together strengthen our Pilgrimage of Justice, Reconciliation and Unity.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jerry Pillay', written in a cursive style.

Rev. Dr Prof Jerry Pillay  
General Secretary

## **69th meeting of the WCC central committee**

The reports and statements issued by the central committee as well as the video archive of the prayers and pilgrimage encounters are available on the WCC website. What follows is a brief update on additional outcomes of the central committee.

- [Central Committee, June 2025 | World Council of Churches](#)
- [Moderator's Address to the Central Committee, June 2025 | World Council of Churches](#)
- [Report of the General Secretary to the WCC Central Committee, June 2025 | World Council of Churches](#)

## **Public Issues – Statements and Minutes**

The central committee issued the following statements on peace, security, and the role of the church:

- [Statement on the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations: The heritage of the ecumenical Life and Work movement, and the current multilateral cooperation crisis](#)
- [Statement on Threats to Peace and People's Security: A Kairos Moment for Just Peace](#)
- [Statement on Guarding Against Atrocity Crimes](#)
- [Statement on Palestine and Israel: A Call to End Apartheid, Occupation, and Impunity in Palestine and Israel](#)
- [Statement on Renewing Prophetic Witness: The Role of the Church in South Africa's Journey Towards Justice and Unity](#)
- [Statement: Call for Churches to Act on Threats to Public Health](#)

The central committee issued minutes on the following concerns:

- [Minute on St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt](#)
- [Minute on Juneteenth 2025](#)
- [Minute on Latin America and Caribbean Concerns](#)
- [Minute on Bomb Attack on Mar Elias Church, Damascus](#)

## **Programme and Communication**

Since the assembly in 2022, the WCC has continued its programmatic work as a pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation, and unity inspired by a theology of companionship. In June 2023, the central committee elected commissions and established reference groups to accompany the work of the Council. The meeting in Johannesburg received updates on the work of these bodies and their efforts to collaborate in more integrated ways.

In addition to launching an ecumenical decade on climate justice action, the central committee, through its programme committee, initiated a mid-term evaluation of the WCC strategic plan and elected a working group to lead the process. The evaluation will include an analysis of collaboration with ecumenical partners with an interest in creating new ways of working together. The report will be presented to the central committee in 2027.

The central committee approved plans for a Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in 2028 under the theme 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit' (Zach. 4:6). The conference is a three-year process of collaboration culminating in 2028 and seeking to ensure a strong mission contribution to the next WCC assembly in 2030.

The central committee also received communication strategies for the 2025 World Conference on Faith and Order, the Ecumenical Decade for Climate Action, as well as for the work of the WCC as pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation, and unity. The central committee reviewed guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in WCC communications, recommending further theological reflection on the use of AI.

- [Report of the Programme Committee, 2025 | World Council of Churches](#)
- [Report of the Communications Committee, 2025 | World Council of Churches](#)

### **Governance, Policy, Finances and the Green Village Project**

There is a rotation of membership in the executive committee at the mid-term between assemblies. The central committee elected a second executive committee, which begins its mandate in November 2026. The central committee also elected a governance review working group to review the governance structures and matters referred by the assembly and central committee related to the WCC constitution and rules. It will report to the central committee in 2027 and 2029.

The central committee reviewed WCC finances, taking stock of progress with the WCC financial strategy approved by the central committee in 2023. It revised the general reserves policy, affirming the purpose of the reserves – to respond to unexpected opportunities or emergencies. The central committee clarified the method of calculating the reserves as six-months total salary expenses plus two-months other operating expenses based on the last audited accounts.

To strengthen the financial support of the member churches, the central committee reviewed the report of a membership contributions working group and revised the reimbursement policy to clarify that a church is eligible for reimbursements for travel, board and lodging to attend WCC meetings, only if the membership contribution for the previous years has been paid.

The central committee received an update on the Green Village Project and authorized the executive committee to decide on the forward aspects of the project.

- [Report of the Governance and Nominations Committee, 2025 | World Council of Churches](#)
- [Report of the Policy Reference Committee, 2025 | World Council of Churches](#)