

Guidelines for Council Membership

(This document is offered as a guideline that seeks to support churches in their process to propose nominations for Council members. It supports nominees to understand the expectations and commitments involved in Council membership. It outlines for both Council members and their member churches the understanding for their interactions and relationships during the time of the Council members' tenure.)

Preamble

In God's word we seek guidance for life and also to better understand our role and service in the world. The Good News is that God's grace reaches us first, and all what we do is a response of faith to divine grace.

In the Scriptures we learn that God called people to carry out God's purposes - which are good and full of love and mercy.

Jesus calls people and invites them to join in his work and they are identified as followers or disciples (Mark 10:35-45). The disciples are called to faith and to intensively experience communion with Jesus. Jesus' teachings are different from what happens in society. To follow Jesus is to grow in another way: "who wants to be important, should serve others and who wants to be the first, should be the slave of all" (Mark 10:43-44). Jesus reverses the human logic and makes it clear that the exercise of authority and leadership is not related to privileges, if not for the privilege to serve.

This teaching of Jesus to the disciples is extended to all leaders of Christian communities in all times, who continue following the one who "did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life to save many" (Mark 10:45)

Leaders are called to "take care of the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock." (1 Peter 5:2). The task by excellence is to take care of the flock. People and their needs are central, not merely from a human point of view, but from the perspective of what God wants for each person. All the powers given to the leaders at all levels of the church are given in order to care for the flock in servant leadership. The aim of servant leadership is that the community as a whole experiences the good news of the Gospel in all its dimensions. This is also true for leadership and governance in the Lutheran World Federation, a communion of churches.

About the Lutheran World Federation and its Council

The Lutheran World Federation – A Communion of Churches (LWF) is a global organization with 144 member churches and diaconal programs around the world.

The Council is composed of 48 members, plus the President and the Chairperson of the Finance Committee (if elected from outside the Council). It is elected by the LWF Assembly, which is normally held

every six years. The Assembly acts upon nominations presented by the regions of the LWF. These nominations shall observe due representation of lay and ordained persons and comply with LWF's policies adopted by previous Assemblies regarding the participation of women, men, and youth (at least 40% women, 40% men, and 20% youth. The LWF is committed to work towards gender balance also within the youth representation). The Council is the highest governing authority in the LWF between Assemblies.

It belongs to the Council's responsibilities (from LWF Constitution Article VIII):

- To define the strategy of the LWF according to decisions and actions made by the Assembly;
- To ensure that the LWF is satisfactorily organized and run according to its defined purpose and in accordance with resolutions made by the Assembly,
- To decide on the budget of the LWF and safeguard the proper control and management of the LWF's assets;
- To receive the audited annual financial statements of the LWF and approve them;
- To elect the Vice-Presidents from among its members

The LWF Council works through Committees, which oversee the programmatic work of the LWF. The LWF Council works in four languages: English, German, French and Spanish. The prevailing language during sessions and the standard language of Council documentation is English. Simultaneous interpretation is provided during the plenary sessions of the LWF Council.

The LWF has an annual budget of around 100 million Euro. The LWF employs approximately 70 staff in its LWF Communion Office, which is based in Geneva, Switzerland, and more than 4,000 staff in its World Service programs around the world (as of the year 2015).

Expectations of a Council Member

General expectations:

Serving on the LWF Council is both a joyful privilege and a responsibility: an LWF Council member is offered the opportunity to contribute with the wealth of knowledge, experience and particular features of Lutheran churches in his/her region and how they express the gift of communion. At the same time he/she is responsible for leadership and oversight within the governance structures of the LWF. He/she seeks to offer his/her leadership in the spirit of the LWF Assemblies, with an understanding for the LWF's vision and mission as a communion of churches. He/she is acquainted with and helps shape the LWF's history, its ongoing journey and witness, its theological identity and its values.

A Council member must be in a leadership role within his/her own setting. The concept of leadership, as understood in the LWF, includes both ordained and lay leaders active in the various dimensions of the churches' participation in God's holistic mission (proclamation, diakonia, advocacy). It includes women and men, as well as youth.

A Council member must be a person with a strong commitment to the LWF, firmly grounded in his/her church, well acquainted with his/her local and regional context, and open and willing to engage in the gift

and the task of nurturing a global communion of churches for the future. A Council member is expected to uphold the constitution and the bylaws of the LWF.

Specific expectations:

- Attends all Council meetings. The Council meets every 12 months, normally alternating between Geneva and the location of a member church. Council members must be able to travel long distances and have the time to attend the Council meetings. (Plan on at least one week per year; two weeks in the case of LWF Officers and members of the Committee for World Service.)
- Prepares for the meetings, having read the documentation and materials and being prepared to actively participate in the content of the full agenda. Pre-Council meetings are offered to youth and women as a way to support their own preparation processes.
- Participates fully in Council meetings, including his/her willingness to also serve on a Committee of the Council.
- Engages attentively and respectfully in interaction and discussions with other Council members, aware of the fact that they represent a variety of different cultural backgrounds, theological traditions and practices of piety and devotion.
- Stays informed about the LWF outside of meetings by regularly reading press releases, Lutheran World Information and committee communications.
- Is an ambassador for the LWF's mission, accomplishments, and goals, as well as of its vision, mission and values, interpreting the concerns, needs and perspectives of his/her church and region within the Council, and of the LWF back to his/her church and region.
- Is active in sub-regional and regional meetings, as well as in specific LWF related networks, contributing to give shape to the regional voice at the LWF Council meetings, and communicating back to the regional platforms the global voice as expressed at Council meetings.
- Participates in, and takes responsibility for making decisions on issues, policies and other matters.

Members of the Council and Council advisers are expected to attend the meetings (see above). In case of impediment, they are requested to give timely notice. Those who are absent for two consecutive meetings may be requested to resign. Those who are absent for three consecutive meetings shall be considered to be "no longer present for his/her term of office" (LWF Constitution, Section VIII 1).

Areas of expertise required in the LWF Council

The LWF Council deals with complex matters and its decisions have far-reaching implications. This level of complexity, and also of specialization in the matters and actions of the LWF Council, requires an important level of expertise among Council members.

In general terms, expertise is desirable in the following areas:

- The work and functioning of governance structures
- Strategic planning processes
- Organizational plans, objectives and policies

- Financial management, budgets, financial reports

Due to the nature of the work of the LWF and in light of its current committee structure, the following specific areas of expertise are desirable:

- Theology
- Ecumenical relations
- Interfaith relations
- Gender justice
- Advocacy for justice, human rights and ecological issues
- Mission of the church
- Diakonia
- Youth participation
- Specialized humanitarian and development work
- Communication
- Finances
- Constitutional and legal issues
- Organizational development and management

Of course, no one person will have expertise in all these areas. However, it is important that these areas of expertise be represented among the Council members overall.

Legal liability of Council members

LWF Council members do not have, as Council members, any legal liability under Swiss law (Sections 60ff of the Civil Code, relating to associations).

Considerations for a church when proposing a candidate for the LWF Council

There is no leader in the communion who becomes a Council member with the knowledge of how to actually be a member of the LWF Council. Everybody needs to be willing to learn and to grow, jointly with other Council members, into that responsibility, drawing from existing experience, expertise, motivation, and commitment to the Communion. The LWF is developing a structured induction plan that would support Council members in the fulfillment of the tasks the LWF communion of churches is entrusting them with.

The requirements for expertise and experience mentioned above need to be seen in conjunction with the LWF's strong commitment to uphold the LWF's understanding of leadership. In the LWF, the concept of leadership includes lay and ordained leadership in its governance structures, among them women, men, and youth. Churches are invited to understand the identified areas of expertise as a support and guidance while identifying possible candidates for Council members across the leadership categories of youth, women and men, lay and ordained.

Proposing a candidate for the LWF Council has important implications not only for the person involved, but also for the whole church. The LWF understands that by granting an endorsement or by proposing a candidate for the LWF Council the proposing church is committing itself to:

- Grant the required leave for attendance at Council meetings of the LWF (in case of the Council member being an employee of the church), or support according to possibilities the request for leave of the Council member, if he/she works outside the church.
- Support the Council member with travel arrangements such as visa applications or the purchase of tickets. The LWF Communion Office supports these procedures when requested by the local church (letters of invitation for visa purposes, the actual purchase of tickets if this is not possible for the church).
- Grant access to leadership and governance structures of the respective church for briefing / debriefing, and for seeking advice and direction on issues related to the LWF.
- Involve the LWF Council member in case of activities of the LWF in the local level, and regionally when requested so by the LWF.
- Practical administrative support, such as facilitating travel, visas, and financial transmissions.
- With the endorsement to become a Council member, the proposing church accepts that the LWF may call upon the Council member for specific assignments such as task forces, ad-hoc committees, and visiting teams, without the requirement of further endorsement by the church.

Furthermore, it needs to be noted that a Council member has a double task: he/she represents and interprets local and regional issues in the global setting of the Council; at the same time, he/she represents and interprets global issues to the regional and local realities. The proposing church understands therefore that a Council member will represent his/her church when performing his/her duties, while at the same time also representing the regional and global processes, discussions, decisions and policies of the LWF (see above, under specific expectations).

Ethical Guidelines for Council Members

LWF Council members are bound to high ethical standards. In concrete terms, Council members are bound to:

- Adhere to the LWF Code of Conduct on Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Power
- Abstain from voting on a particular matter giving rise to a conflict of interest.