

16.12 REPORT 7: DEPUTIES ECUMENICITY ABROAD – NORTH AND EAST AFRICA DESK (Artt 52, 64)

- A. Rev HS Coetzee tables the Report.
- B. The Report will be concluded during the Synod session.
- C. The chairperson, dr DG Breed, welcomes rev R Mabonga of the RPCA.

D. REPORT

Deputies representing this desk: Revs HPM van Rhyn and CB Swanepoel.

1. Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA)

Ecumenical unity

For notice

1.1 *Mandate*

Ecumenical unity is to be upheld and promoted with these churches.

Decision: Noted.

1.2 *Execution of the mandate*

Only e-mail contact could thus far be made with the churches.

Decision: Noted.

For decision making

1.3 *Recommendation*

Contact is to be made and ecumenical unity upheld. It remains a worthwhile endeavour, since the GKSA could still have a significant impact here and also assist in the training of ministers.

Decision: Approved.

2. African Evangelical Presbyterian Churches (AEPC)

Ecumenical unity

For notice

2.1 *Instruction*

Ties of ecumenical unity is to be upheld and promoted.

Decision: Noted.

2.2 *Execution of the mandate*

Contact was made and discussions held at the ICRC meeting in Cardiff.

Decision: Noted.

For decision making

2.3 *Recommendation*

Ties of ecumenical unity is to be upheld and promoted.

Decision: Approved.

3. Sudanese Reformed Churches (SRC)

Ecumenical unity

For notice

3.1 *Mandate*

3.1.1 The Synod accepts the Sudanese Reformed Churches as a Scripturally sound Reformed Church and ecumenical unity is to established with them.

3.1.2 Rev Patrick Jok Ding is to be invited to attend the General Synod of the GKSA in January.

3.2 *Execution of the mandate*

These churches were visited in 2012. The need created by the civil war was brought to the attention of all the churches of the GKSA.

Decision: Points 3.1.1 to 3.2 noted with a word of thanks to rev HPM van Rhyn for his travels to Sudan and the support there.

For decision making

3.3 *Recommendations*

3.3.1 Unity is to be upheld and promoted.

3.3.2 The need, created by the civil war, is to be continually brought to the attention of the churches.

Decision: Points 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 approved.

4. Ruanda

Ecumenical contact

For notice

4.1 *Mandate*

"The Deputies Ecumenicity: Abroad are instructed to regularly make contact with international Reformed church communities about urgent and common matters of interest, in accordance with CO, art 49." The eventual unity of Reformed churches must be considered our most urgent and important ecumenical calling (cf. Acta 2009:162).

4.2 *Execution of the mandate*

Bishop Gapira Jean Faustin, Christian Light Churches in Africa/Rwanda was contacted (fdrationprotestantrwand@yahoo.co.uk)

Decision: Points 4.1 and 4.2 noted.

For decision making

4.3 *Recommendation*

Contact with these churches are to be upheld and promoted.

Decision: Approved.

5. Reformed Presbyterian Church in Africa (RPCA)

For notice

5.1 *Instruction*

"The Deputies Ecumenicity: Abroad are instructed to regularly make contact with international Reformed church communities about urgent and common matters of interest, in accordance with CO, art 49." The eventual unity of Reformed churches must be considered our most urgent and important ecumenical calling (cf. Acta 2009:162).

5.2 *Execution of the mandate*

5.2.1 Dr PJ Buys and rev HPM van Rhyn attended the first General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Africa (RPCA) in Mbale, Uganda on 17 August 2013. The Deputies were accompanied by dr G van Wyk, who represented Agrimico.

5.2.2 The RPCA is still a young church of approximately 14 congregations and seven ministers, most of whom received their diploma from the Knox Theological Seminary in Mbale. Seven of the congregations are located in Uganda and there are also congregations in Kenya, Tanzania and Ruanda that form part of this denomination. The churches expressed the need for further training of current and aspiring ministers.

5.2.3 Rev Robert Mabongo (reformedrpca@yahoo.com) was appointed chairman of the Synod and rev Clifford Mwalye as scribe. (Please see attached invitation to the Synod for contact details.)

5.2.4 Although the Synod verbally indicated that they accept the Three Formularies of Unity, it would seem from their official documents that they follow the Westminster Confession (including the Larger and Shorter Catechisms) and have a Presbyterian church governance system. The Synod expressed the wish to establish ties that may lead to church unity.

Decision: Points 5.1 to 5.2.4 noted.

For decision making

5.3 *Recommendation*

Ecumenical contact is to be upheld and the possibility of further ecumenical ties is to be explored.

Decision: Approved.