



### **Contents**

- 2 The world we seek to change is itself changing
- An alliance-wide promise
- 4 Who we are
- 5 We are inspired by

- Strategic aim 1
- Strategic aim 2
- Strategic aim 3
- 12 Enabling aim

# We know the world can be changed for the better

We believe that the world must be transformed for the better. What looks impossible can become possible if we all seek transformation. This includes those with power, wealth and influence, as well as those most affected by injustice.

Transformation is about change in ourselves and in our relationships with one another. Right relations are needed in all levels - locally, nationally and globally. We need to actively seek these social, economic and political changes, but can only do so with the help of God.

With this second global strategy for ACT Alliance, we commit to doing our part in this transformation to attain full life and dignity for all. This will require every part of the alliance - all members and all alliance structures – to find their place and do their utmost to make this strategy successful. As such, all parts of the alliance will be asked to develop work plans that operationalise this strategy in their particular context.



A framework for action Introduction A framework for action



# The world we seek to change is itself changing

Our generation is the wealthiest in human history. Yet ironically, wealth is more unevenly distributed worldwide than ever. There is no excuse for the continued presence of poverty, hunger, deprivation, over-consumption and exploitation of the most vulnerable. Inequalities and lack of social protection – especially in middle income and poor countries – continue to rise.

We see how economic power is gradually shifting from the US and Europe to the growing economies in the global East and the South. Emerging economies play new roles as donors and in international trade, and are challenged with growing inequalities within their own countries. The increasing mobility and power of capital makes it more difficult for governments to safeguard human dignity and the common good for its populations through public policies and taxation and for global institutions to govern effectively.

Several countries and regions are plagued by protracted resource conflicts, war-lordism, large displacements and shrinking space for civil society organisations, adding to the already growing complexity of emergencies and sustainable development. These realities result in human rights violations and protracted emergencies. Political motives and militarisation of aid remains a concern. Major changes in development and humanitarian finance are foreseen.

Climate change, population growth, rapid and unplanned urbanisation as well as food and water insecurity leave communities increasingly at risk of crisis. Extreme weather events are reported to intensify and cause increasingly climate-induced displacement. These developments signal that planetary boundaries have been surpassed, posing a great challenge for protection of the global commons and the rights of future generations.

Many look inwards, to their cultural or religious values, to make sense of these developments. For some it means fundamentalism or a return to national interests; for others it means a renewed sense of purpose, community and direction. We believe that interfaith religious leadership can become a game changer, shifting the context from one of deprivation to one of development, from conflict to reconciliation and peace, and from consumerism to citizenship and dignity.

It is in this changing world that we must engage and commit ourselves in order to bring about positive change to those most affected by poverty and injustice.

# An alliance-wide promise Full life and dignity for all

ACT Alliance has its roots firmly planted in strong, faith-based communities, a structure that values local ownership. We engage in quality, life-saving action and we work with communities, providing accountable assistance as they recover from emergencies, rebuild their livelihoods and transform their lives.

We have all been promised, through Jesus Christ, a life of abundance (John 10:10). This fullness of life is meant for all people – including those oppressed, living in poverty, struggling with disease or suffering hunger. This promise is made for current and future generations.

and communities themselves. This is why we build resilience, why we base our work within a firm commitment to maintaining human dignity, and why we seek sustainability. We make this promise together. This strategy is for every part of the alliance.

2 ACT Alliance Global strategy 2015-2018 3

A framework for action Introduction

Introduction



### Who we are

Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance is a global alliance of churches and church-related organisations committed to working ecumenically in the areas of humanitarian response, development and advocacy.

ACT Alliance membership includes 146 churches and church-related organisations from over 70 countries, the majority from the global south. ACT members work in 140 countries around the world. Being present in poor and vulnerable communities and having local knowledge makes it possible for our members to operate in difficult and sensitive contexts. ACT Alliance is rooted in the ecumenical movement, and as a specialized ministry in relief and development, we have a strong and deepening connection with the World Council of Churches.

## **Our vision**

United in the common task of all Christians to manifest God's unconditional love for all people, ACT Alliance works towards a world community where all God's creation lives with dignity, justice, peace and full respect for human rights and the environment.

### **Our mission**

As churches and church-related organisations, we work together for positive and sustainable change in the lives of people affected by poverty and injustice through coordinated and effective humanitarian, development and advocacy work.



# We are inspired by

**Love** We express God's unconditional love for all people and for all creation

**Hope** We inspire action to transform the world to reflect the kingdom of God

**Humanity** We address human suffering and believe all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights

**Impartiality** We do not take sides in conflict, but build bridges between people and stand with the poor and oppressed

**Non-discrimination** We make no distinction and strongly oppose any discrimination on the basis of nationality, race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious belief, class or political opinion

**Accountability** We are accountable to affected communities, partners, donors, churches and one another

**Effectiveness** We maximise effective action by combining the skills, assets and capabilities of local communities and ACT members through partnerships and evidence-based learning

**Partnership**: We are encouraged by our strength together, and in our journeying together we strive for transparent and honest partnerships.

ACT Alliance is a member of the Standing Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), one of the original sponsors of the Sphere Project and is a signatory to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief. The ACT Alliance secretariat attained HAP certification in 2013.

4 ACT Alliance Global strategy 2015-2018 5

"We believe that all persons are created in the image of God.<sup>1</sup>



We believe God created all people as equals, with dignity, worth and the right to fullness of life. We uphold people as agents of change in their own lives and place human dignity at the core of our work by promoting human rights, addressing inequalities, ensuring accountability and overcoming discrimination, stigma and exclusion. Human dignity is inherent and inalienable to all. It compels us to promote the norms and principles of human rights as common standards of achievement for all people and nations.

With particular focus on bridging the gender gap for women and girls, we promote the universal enjoyment of humanitarian law and international human rights for all. We will actively address unequal relationships and recognise the need to empower women and girls and actively involve men and boys in working towards gender equality.

In our work, we focus on securing the protection of vulnerable people by creating conditions of empowerment to thrive, not merely survive. Equally, we help bring people's voices into power structures and global processes that affect them now and for future generations. We strongly oppose repression of civil society and limitations to its space to work for social justice, human rights and participation, and foster an enabling environment for development through active inclusion of civil society.

ACT Alliance exists within, among and in solidarity with those living in poverty, the oppressed and silenced, those seeking justice and access to political processes. We stand for fair distribution of resources and opportunities. There is no human dignity for any of us while great inequalities and on-going need and suffering proliferate in a world of plenty.

### **STRATEGIES**

- Rights-based approach Promote and speak out for human rights in national, regional and international arenas. We prioritise activities that advance equality and inclusiveness, particularly for women and girls, so that all people can realise their full potential and enjoy their rights protected by international law, customs and norms
- Principled practice Apply internationally recognised humanitarian principles and standards to ensure the protection of human dignity
- Accountability Implement and advocate for policy and practice at all levels to ensure accountability to local communities by all stakeholders including ourselves, governments and donors

<sup>1</sup>These are ACT Value statements taken from the ACT Founding Document, 2009





Resilience goes to the heart of our shared belief that people are actors in their own development as well as in overcoming hardships they have to confront; it speaks about the inner strength and the resources. knowledge and skills we all have. Outside assistance can and should be aimed at strengthening this, but any outside assistance that fails to take into account people's own agency is doomed to fail. We see people's faith and spiritual resources as key parts of their resilience.

The concept of community resilience has the potential to bridge the divide between development and relief. We believe community resilience is about long-term development processes that inspire transformative change, led by vulnerable populations and communities themselves. It also comprises disaster preparedness and prevention, emergency response, recovery and rehabilitation in order to stabilise affected communities. Regardless of how donors and governments may define resilience, we believe we ought to promote it in its true meaning of "strength and development from within".

Guiding our work in community resilience, ACT places human dignity at its centre. The alliance will hold local, national and regional decision-makers accountable for their actions, when those actions are seen to be detrimental to community resilience, including decisions concerning climate adaptation and mitigation.

ACT is committed to improving its joint relief efforts to ensure that when external assistance is required it can be immediately and efficiently provided, transitioning to long-term community resilience measures when short term needs have been met. ACT's humanitarian and development work aims to strengthen communities' resilience to adverse events or systems that may otherwise destroy lives, livelihoods and the foundation of a peaceful existence.

"We believe that God the Father as known through his Son Jesus Christ and revealed through the Holy Spirit and Scriptures, is the God of love who stands beside

the poor and oppressed."

### **STRATEGIES**

- **Development effectiveness** Promote and implement principles of development effectiveness within the alliance and through engaging other faith communities
- Risk reduction Integrate disaster risk reduction and resilience into humanitarian and sustainable development programmes, including community climate adaptation and mitigation activities
- Humanitarian preparedness and response Respond to disasters with improved coordination and timeliness in line with international standards and best practices, and ensure ACT forums have joint preparedness response plans
- Good governance ACT members will engage local government in effective community resilience activities



"We believe that the earth and all it contains are God's gifts, given out of love and care for all created beings."



### **STRATEGIC AIM 3**

# **Environmental sustainability**

We seek sustainability in our actions so as to protect God's creation for future generations. ACT sees environmental destruction and climate change as key contributors to poverty. Continuous pressure on our shared resources deprives the poorest and the most vulnerable – who depend on sustainable access to natural resources - of sustainable and dignified livelihoods. The current climate crisis and climate injustices clearly show that a sustainable environment, human dignity and improved community resilience of the most vulnerable are closely related and mutually dependent.

We seek to influence policies and decisions within and outside the United Nations to support and improve sustainable environment and climate resilience, in particular of the most vulnerable communities and people. This includes aspects of advocacy, with the voice of those most vulnerable helping to define the future climate and environment agenda, public mobilisation and education, particularly in partnership with others within the ecumenical and faith family.

In addition, ACT will encourage and inspire best practices and shared learning on programmes that improve and safeguard the environment and enable communities, particularly the poor and vulnerable, to attain sustainable development whilst caring for God's creation. ACT considers the current development model,

based on infinite economic growth, unlimited extraction of natural resources and the burning of fossil fuels as the key cause of climate change and environmental destruction, leading to exclusion, marginalisation and widespread human rights violations. If we continue development this way, there will be little to leave our future generations.

### **STRATEGIES**

- Lobby and advocacy Carry out targeted lobby and advocacy work on key topics of sustainable environment, including climate change negotiations under the UNFCCC and other international and multilateral processes and platforms
- Awareness-raising Educate and mobilise members and constituency through campaigns and public awareness in favour of climate justice. Priority themes are adaptation - including risk management, loss and damage, climate finance and low carbon development
- Developing technical capacities Promote capacity building, shared learning, partnerships and best practice on transformational change and sustainability programmes among ACT forums, including low carbon development, adaptation and resilience partnerships across the alliance





We believe we are stronger when working together to achieve greater impact in advancing the global mission of our alliance. Each member shares the commitment to adding value to our alliance, through effective partnerships, through influencing and seeking ways of broadening and deepening trust within the alliance.

"We believe that the resources available to us are not our own, but are a gift from God, and our vocation to service calls us to be faithful to principles of good stewardship."

We share identity and aspiration. By working together and by connecting to one another effectively we can move forward and achieve even more together. This requires leadership at all levels; united leadership that is, acts, and relates as an alliance, strengthening our abilities to uphold a common identity and to go the extra mile to reach the communities with whom we work.

Members will feel inspired to, and are expected to, set the joint direction of the alliance, making full use of our governance and forum structures. A transformed global secretariat structure will facilitate, coordinate and support the Alliance, getting closer to the membership than ever before. The cost of the global and regional secretariats will be funded by the members and, in addition, new approaches to fund the joint work of the alliance will be sought.

Our alliance is only as strong as our collective ability to communicate and demonstrate our brand through action, through influencing key decision-makers, and through mobilising our combined forces. Branding is about more than attracting media, donors and press coverage. It is about communicating to all stakeholders what we stand for and that we are a trusted steward of dedicated resources whenever they see the name ACT Alliance.

All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) Angolan Council of Christian Churches (ACCC/ CICA) Association of Reformed Evangelical Churches of Burkina Faso (AEERB) Centre Oecuménique pour la Promotion du Monde Rural (COPROMOR) Christian Care (CC) Christian Council of Lesotho (CC) Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM) Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD) Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission (CCAP) Church of Uganda (CoU) Comité Ecuménico para o Desenvolvimento Social (CEDES) Conseil National des Eolises du National Council of Churches in Burundi (CNEB) Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ) Economic Justice Network of FOCCISA, southern Africa (EJN) Ecumenical Office for Development Support (BOAD) Eglise de Jésus-Christ à Madagascar - Dépt pour le Développement (FJKM) Eglise du Christ au Congo Bureau National (ECC) Eglise Episcopale du Burundi (EEB) Eglise Fraternelle Luthérienne du Cameroun (EFLC) Eglise Luthériénne du Sénégal (ELS) Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) Ethiopian Orthodox Church – Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC) Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa SA) Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo (ELCCo) Evangelical Lutheran Development Service (ELDS) Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA) Igreia Evangélica **Reformada de Angola (IERA) Lutheran Churc**h in Liberia (LCL) Lutheran Development Service, Liberia (LDS-Liberia) Lutheran Development Service, Swaziland (LDS-Swaziland) Lutheran Development Service, Zimbabwe (LDS-Zimbabwe) Malagasy Lutheran Church (MLC) National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) Presbyterian Church in **Ghana (PCG) Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency** (PRDA) Rural Action Based Organisation (RACOBAO) Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) Tanganvika Christian Refugee Service (TCRS) Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) United Church of Zambia (UCZ) Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) Amity Foundation (AF) Centre for Disaster Risk Management and Community Development Studies (CDRMCDS) Christian Agency for Rural Development (CARD) Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB) Church of Bangladesh Social Development Program (CBSDP) Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) Fundasaun Sosial Naroman (FUSONA) **Indone**sian Christian Association for Health Services (ICAHS/PELKESI) KOINONIA Life With Dignity (LWD) Lutheran World Service India Trust (LWSIT) National Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ) National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) National Christian Council of Sri Lanka (NCCSL) Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (PCT) Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS) Social Health and Education Development (SHED) Synodical Board of Social Services, Church of North India (SBSS-CNI) United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India (UELCI) YAKKUM (including YEU) Diakonie of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethrene (DECCB) Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania (AIDRom) Hungarian Interchurch Aid (HIA) Philanthropy - The Charitable Fund of the Serbian Orthodox Church Russian Orthodox Church - Department for External Church Relations (ROC) Armenia Inter-Church Charitable Round Table Foundation (ARTF) ECLOF International The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Bread for All (BFA) Brot für die Welt – Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (BfdW) Christian Aid Church of Sweden, International Mission and Diakonia (CoS) DanChurchAid (DCA) Diakonia Sweden Diakonie Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (DKH) Finn Church Aid ICCO Cooperation Icelandic Church Aid (ICA) Kerk in Actie Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) Solidarité Protestante (SP) Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER) Accion Medica Cristiana Asociación Boliviana Uniendo Manos por la Vida (Red Umavida) Asociación Cristiana de Educación y Desarrollo (ALFALIT) Association for Social Development of the Moravian Church (ADSIM) Centro Evangélico de Estudios Pastorales en Centro América (CEDEPCA) Centro Ecuménico Diego de Medellin Centro Intereclesial de Estudios Teólogicas y Sociales (CIEETS) Centro Regional Ecuménico de Asesoría Servicio (CREAS) Christian Commission for Development (CCD) Comisión de Acción Social Menonita (CASM) Comité de Iglesias Para Ayudas de Emerg**encia (CIPAE) Asociación Conferencia de Igles**ias Evangélicas de Guatemala (CIEDEG) Consejo Ecuménico Cristiano de Guatemala (CECG) Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias (CLAI) Consejo de Iglesias Evangélicas Pro-Alianza Denominacional (CEPAD) Consejo de Iglesias de Cuba (CIC) Diaconia, Brazil DIACONIA. Peru Educación Popular en Salud (EPS) Fundação Luterana de Diaconia (FLD) Fundación de Ayuda Social de Las Iglesias Cristianas (FASIC) Iglesia Evangélica del Rio de la Plata (IERP) Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Boliviana (IELB) Iglesia Evangélica Luterana de Colombia (IELCO) Iglesia Luterana Costarricense (ILC) Iglesia Luterana de Nicaragua (ILN) KOINONIA Mission Sociale des Eglises Haïtiennes (MISSEH) Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia (IPC) Salvadorian Lutheran Synod (SLS) Service Chrétien d'Haïti (SCH) Servicio Social de Iglesias Dominicanas (SSID) Bishopric of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services of the Coptic Orthodox Church (BLESS/COC) East Jerusalem YMCA Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees of the Middle East Council of Churches (DSPRMECC) Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) Act for Peace Anglican Overseas Aid - Australia Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS) Christian World Service (CWS) UnitingWorld: Relief and Development Unit Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) Church World Service (CWS) Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) Lutheran World Relief (LWR) Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWSD) The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) United Church of Canada: Justice. Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit (UCC) United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) World Renew

"We believe the church is called to manifest God's gracious love for all people and work towards a reconciled human community. This witness is more clearly communicated to the world when we work together as members of one body of Christ."

### **STRATEGIES**

### **ENGAGED MEMBERS. DYNAMIC FORUMS**

- Develop and strengthen national and regional ACT forums capable of delivering high-quality work together, emphasising the relational elements of trust and confidence, partnership, ownership, leadership, transparency and accountability
- Enable a member-driven alliance by engaging members through a defined membership strategy, encouraging joint programming, joint partnerships, joint advocacy, capacity building and sharing of resources

### **ACCOUNTABLE AND CAPABLE LEADERS**

■ Identify and develop leaders in every region. Promote gender balanced leadership. Promote and support learning spaces for specific groups of leaders, such as forum coordinators and communities of practice chairs, to exchange experiences and jointly develop leadership competences

### **INCREASED BRAND RECOGNITION**

■ Create and identify opportunities for brand exposure across media, peer organisations and international institutions, such as implementing a targeted online and social media strategy to engage with the public, key policy makers and peers

■ Develop and promote an engaging platform and guidance tools for disseminating quality, timely information to members, including messaging based on practical experience that highlights the increased value of working together

### **BE KNOWN FOR OUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

- Members, forums, governance and secretariat will implement the ACT quality and accountability framework and seek to develop capacities where gaps exist. Progress in implementing quality standards will be regularly monitored through self-assessments, structured internal verification processes and external certification, as appropriate
- Strategies and systems for learning and feedback mechanisms are developed and promoted

### AN EFFECTIVE AND WELL-FUNCTIONING SECRETARIAT

- Make functional a new secretariat structure with improved, accountable systems of shared responsibilities and clear added value of a regional secretariat presence. This demands fully capacitated staff and effective management to support and facilitate the alliance in its implementation of the new strategic plan
- Members will design and consider alternative and innovative funding models and increase the capacity to collectively fundraise under the brand of the ACT Alliance

# **NHAT WILL HAVE CHANGED** Vision 2018 ■ Motivated, committed members, who are offering their leadership and actively engaging in the life of the alliance, sharing resources and promoting ACT's identity and vision within and outside the alliance Learning for continuous improvement is integrated into all our work as an alliance and has resulted in transformed practice. ACT members consistently achieve high quality in their work, leading to greater impact for the people and communities with whom we work ■ ACT leaders in all corners of the globe represent through word 100 and deed the mission, vision and values of the alliance ■ ACT's increased brand recognition enables ACT to exert more influence, be seen as an opinion-leader in policy discussions and be vied for as a substantial partner across peer audiences. Members appreciate the added value of being part of ACT Alliance, knowing how the ACT brand will help them in promoting their agency work, and are prepared to co-brand Members are supported, based on their contextual needs, by the secretariat, and forums feel encouraged to define and execute their own long term strategies

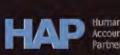
This global strategy will be implemented through detailed operational plans and strategies that will be developed, after affirmation of the Global Strategy 2015-2018 at the 2014 General Assembly, by the ACT Governing Board, ACT Secretariat, ACT Forums and ACT members. These operational plans will include:

- ACT secretariat annual operational plan and budget
- ACT Advocacy strategy
- ACT Alliance Communications strategy
- ACT Alliance Capacity development and learning strategy
- ACT Alliance Membership strategy
- ACT Alliance Fundraising strategy
- ACT External relations strategy
- ACT Quality and Accountability Framework
- ACT national and regional forum country plans
- ACT member strategic and annual plans

### **ACT Alliance is a member of**











ACT Alliance Secretariat 150 Route de Ferney P.O. Box 2100 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland

www.actalliance.org

@ACTAlliance

**f** ACTAlliance



Designed and produced by sam.gleadow@gmail.com Printed by pureprint.com using pureprint environmental print technology

Printed on Magno matt paper which is ISO14001
FSC\* C022913 accredited and FSC\* certified

