

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROGRAMME TO COMBAT RACISM (PCR) 1971 – 2021

**“FROM COMBATING RACISM TO OVERCOMING RACISM, RACIAL
DISCRIMINATION AND XENOPHOBIA: THE OLD AND THE NEW FOR THE
PRESENT AND THE FUTURE OF RACIAL JUSTICE”**

8 DECEMBER 2021 @ 1400 HOURS CET

Rationale

In 1971, the World Council of Churches launched the Programme to Combat Racism (PCR) after years of in-depth theological reflections and prayer about the injustices that were happening in the world, especially in colonised territories, where indigenous populations and non-European migrants were being racially discriminated in political, economic, religious and social spheres. South Africa became a global example because of the adoption of apartheid as government policy, years after it had been adopted officially or in practice by several churches there. For decades, the PCR became a flag-bearer of the WCC as it encapsulated the concept of “lived faith.” This year, 2021 marks 50 years since this ground breaking commitment by the WCC and its member churches.

This 50th Anniversary coincides with the launch of the Programme to Overcome Racism, Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia due to the increase in racial injustice, racially motivated crimes and violence and the continued strengthening of far-right populist-nationalist political movements that have been spreading ideologies that are racist and xenophobic. This anniversary commemoration is also coinciding with an 11th Assembly pre-Assembly consultation on racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. This consultation is brainstorming to advise the WCC on how to execute the mandate of this new programme.

Objectives

This webinar seeks to:

1. Bring together champions of racial justice who served in the PCR to share their experiences of “combating racism” in the context of colonialism, highlighting the successes and failures.
2. Bring contemporary champions of racial justice to interface with past champions of racial justice to explore the differences and similarities between the PCR and the PORDX.
3. Re-affirm the WCC and member churches’ commitment to work for a world of racial justice

Methodology

The anniversary will be a hybrid event, combining an in-person and an online component. The commemoration will have a panel discussion as well as question and answer session. The panellists will participate in an in-person panel discussion at the Ecumenical Center with participants to the Pre-Assembly Consultation also in attendance.



The 90 minute session will also be streamed live on online platforms to bring the global audience on board. The following areas will be focused on during the session:

1. The rationale for launching the PCR and the responses by member churches.
2. The theological basis for launching PCR.
3. The challenges faced in the implementation of PCR.
4. Contrasting the contexts of PCR and PORDX
5. Contemporary challenges to overcoming RDX.
6. Strategies to mitigating challenges and drive work to overcome RDX into the future.

The moderator will put questions to the panellists who will have on average 3 minutes to respond to the question put before them. Where necessary, moderator can also make follow-up questions to the panellists. The global participants following the webinar online, can put their questions into the chat, which will then be put to the moderator who will ask the panellists to respond to such questions.

Confirmed Panellists

Moderator: Prof. Isabel Apawo Phiri (Deputy General Secretary, World Council of Churches WCC)

Panellist 1: Mr. Baldwin Sjollema (First Director – Programme to Combat Racism PCR)

Panellist 2: Mrs Thandi Soko-de Jong (PhD student Intercultural Theology)

Panellist 3: Ms. Marilia Schüller (former WCC programme executive for Combating Racism)

Panellist 4: Dr. Karen Nazaryan (Executive Director of Armenia Round Table Foundation)

Panellist 5: Rev. Dr. Iva Carruthers (General Secretary of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference (SDPC))

Panellist 6: Rev. Dr. Frank Chikane (Moderator of the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA))

Participants

1. Consultation participants
2. Member churches
3. Ecumenical organizations
4. People of Goodwill

Invitations and Registration

Invitations will be sent to all the panellists and registration link will be shared in all networks associated with racial justice in the WCC and outside. Depending on the registered participants' profiles, there might be translation services for the online participants.

Contact

For further information or enquiries please contact Masiwa (masiwa.gunda@wcc-coe.org) or Isabel (Isabel.Phiri@wcc-coe.org) or Semegnish Asfaw (Semegnish.Asfaw@wcc-coe.org).

