



***RE: Special Session of the General Assembly in Response to the  
Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic***

**Written Statement from the Anglican Consultative Council  
December 2020**

On the occasion of the Special Session of the General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations welcomes this critical and timely discussion and hopes that it encourages global solidarity and coordinated action in response to the catastrophic consequences faced across the world in the wake of the coronavirus.

The Anglican Communion is the world's third largest Christian communion, comprised of forty-one provinces across 165 countries representing 85 million members. Anglicans across the world have witnessed and responded to the pandemic and associated impacts on people's physical, socioeconomic, mental, and emotional health. Churches have been severely impacted by the pandemic and yet have responded with courage, compassion, and creativity, building on their inherent gifts, assets, and structures. Across the global, Anglican churches have developed feeding programs; used asset-based community development approaches to identify the needs of the most vulnerable, including working with government ministries; supported migrant workers at increased risk; offered pastoral care and support for the sick and bereaved; provided psycho-social support and raised awareness of the mental health impact of the pandemic.

Moreover, the global church has also called upon its resources to support local communities through consultations and online courses; facilitating communication and best practices, sharing spiritual and pastoral resources as well as health information and domestic abuse response toolkits; and managing appeals from churches across the world so as to ensure that resources are channeled to those in most need.

Churches across the world have witnessed the systems that support their communities—economic, health, education, among others—under severe strain and have taken up leadership and provision in the absence of coordinated leadership in many countries. Faith communities have engaged in a multi-dimensional COVID-19 response drawing on those assets which makes them unique as partners in recovery and

achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals—sustained community presence, local knowledge, and relationships, trusted leadership, networks of volunteers and professionals, skills in counseling and community mobilization, and the buildings and health facilities they run. Church leadership have also leveraged their structures to support the UN Secretary General’s global ceasefire, particularly as they seek to support church communities in conflict-affected contexts. The speed at which many churches have mobilized and adapted, despite the severe economic and health strain they face, has been exceptional, and we lament that this effectiveness was not always mirrored in the governmental responses.

As the global community faces the continuous work of addressing the aftermath of the pandemic, we know that rampant food insecurity, lack of livelihoods and risk of extreme poverty, overburdened health care systems, increased sexual and gender based violence, and threats to social cohesion and new conflict drivers are among some of the most pressing issues. We urge the international community, the United Nations, and governments across the world to consider faith actors and churches as key partners in the coordinated pursuit of Agenda 2030 and our collective recovery efforts.

Beyond the ways in which the Church and other faith communities have contributed to the practical response to COVID, we also acknowledge that it will take a holistic approach to transform the current unequal and unjust structures into ones that truly nourish both people and planet. It will require immense spiritual resources to sustain this work and hold the vision of a world that is not just “better” than the pre-COVID reality—but one that is transformed. This global moment is not only a necessity for conflict-, gender-, and climate-sensitive recoveries, but an urgent opportunity to “re-imagine our world.” The risk of “building back the same” —with the same injustice, inequality, and instability - is too great. Let us take this moment to reflect on our deepest values and, for those of faith, to listen to how God is calling us to respond with great courage and humility, and engage in a process of collective “re-imagination.”