

A Call to Recognise, Reimagine, Recommit:

Joint Communique from the Summit on the Future of Theological Education

Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12.2

Preamble

We, a group of church leaders and theological educators, predominantly from the seven provinces in partnership with USPG (United Society Partners in the Gospel) in Africa, as well as representatives from other parts of the Anglican Communion met from 8th to 11th November in Gaborone, Botswana for a summit on 'The Future of Theological Education in Africa'. Hosted by the Diocese of Botswana in the Anglican Church of the Province of Central Africa, the summit aimed to map the current theological education landscape in different African contexts, identify contemporary challenges and reflect together on ways to strengthen and sustain theological education. Our time together was marked by prayer, conversation, conviviality and networking. This communique seeks to capture the fruits of our time of mutual learning in terms of recognition, reimagination and recommitment.

Recognition

We recognise

that building sustainable theological education as anchored in the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission is a question of Christian stewardship of the gospel and the gifts that contribute to the building up of all God's people.

that as leaders we have a responsibility to strengthen theological education for the sake of God's mission and the ministry of Church.

that all Christians have a shared responsibility to contribute to theological education and benefit from its fruits.

that Bishops, Synods and Governing Boards have a particular responsibility, which should be exercised with the support of clear structures and processes that ensure ownership, sustainability and accountability.

that the translation and provision of theological materials in a range of languages including Portuguese, French, Arabic and Swahili is important for increasing access to and participation in theological education.

that it is important to ensure that all those called to leadership, management and governance roles are equipped effectively for the task.

Reimagination

In a world of change, conflict and crisis, we acknowledge the importance of reimagining existing models and institutions of theological education to meet current challenges. In this task of reimagination, we seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit

to actively review the contextual relevance of our theological education from the perspective of decolonisation, our curriculum development and delivery methods, and models of governance management and sustainability in light of the needs of the Church.

to revisit our assumptions and mindset about the place and role of theological education in the life of the Church.

to embrace the challenges of our post-Covid-19 context and develop approaches to e-learning and other ways of learning that improve the quality of learning experiences of all students and increase access to theological education.

to be innovative and intentional about the mobilisation of internally available resources to ensure sustainability of theological education.

to reimagine theology in a variety of dynamic African contexts and cultures by careful reconsideration of our curricula and liturgy.

to align the goals of theological education with the vision, witness and needs of churches.

Recommit

As those who have responsibility for the development and delivery of theological education in our provinces, we recommit ourselves

to develop a shared understanding and identify a trajectory for supporting sustainable theological education in our local contexts, identify clear processes to support this, and set measurable milestones to assess outcomes. *(Post-Summit Delivery Plan focussing on the next 4 years).*

to mentor and coach young theologians.

to foster the mutual sharing of resources and create a forum and network of theological educators and other relevant stakeholders across provinces to share experiences, expertise and support.

to support CAPA's (Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa) coordination role in establishing a unit to accompany provinces in achieving sustainable theological education.

to produce a report of the summit and develop an appropriate plan of action.

We wish to express our deep gratitude to the Diocese of Botswana for graciously hosting us, USPG for initiating and implementing this summit, the Theological Education department of the Anglican Communion Office for supporting this summit, and all those who helped to set and sustain the momentum of the conference in their capacity as panellists, reflectors, devotion leaders, facilitators and moderators. Inspired by this spirit of gratitude, we commit to ensuring that the aspirations of this summit are realised within our provinces as we seek to live out the calling "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).

Signed by representatives of the following provinces and USPG

1. Anglican Church of Tanzania
2. Church of the Province of Central Africa
3. Church of the Province of West Africa
4. Anglican Church of Southern Africa
5. Igreja Anglicana de Mocambique e Angola
6. Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean
7. The Episcopal/Anglican Province of Alexandria
8. United Society Partners in the Gospel

There has been an active involvement in the planning and delivery of the summit by all seven provinces, with active participation of Primates, lead Bishops for theological education, Principals and Deans of theological colleges, and collaborators and innovators across the Anglican Communion. We gratefully acknowledge the support provided by the provinces and others towards the organising of this summit.

Signed by representatives of the following provinces and USPG:

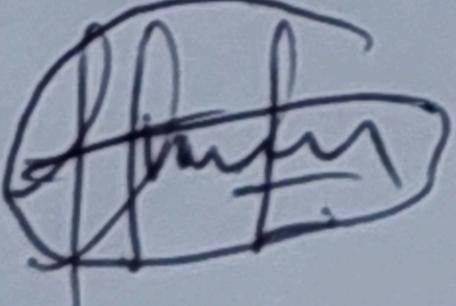
1. Anglican Church of Tanzania:

H Maimiso Tanzania

2. Church of the Province of Central Africa:

H Rukungu Albert Chavira

3. Church of the Province of West Africa:

P. O. + 

4. Anglican Church of Southern Africa:

+ Edward Port Elizabeth

5. Igreja Anglicana de Mocambique e Angola:

+ Vitor Rosa

6. Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean:

+ Mervyn Cartwright

7. The Episcopal/Anglican Province of Alexandria:

+ Mark Sel

8. United Society Partners in the Gospel:

+ Jim Davis