



## ACOUN report for ACC Ghana 2023

The Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations (ACOUN) represents and raises up the voices, experiences and expertise of the Anglican Communion on the global stage. ACOUN is a missional activity, specifically focused on engagement with the secretariat, agencies and member states of the United Nations.

Our engagement with the United Nations is outworking of discipleship, in the context of the Anglican Five Marks of Mission. We are called to take good news into all spheres of life, to respond to human need, challenge unjust structures, pursue peace and reconciliation, and safeguard creation. Working across this missional call, ACOUN takes information from the Provinces of the Communion and feeds it back at the UN intergovernmental level, seeking to further enhance international cooperation to care for God's world, and for all of His children. We seek to focus the attention of nations on the solutions Anglicans and Episcopalians are delivering across the world in partnership with others, especially ecumenical and other faith actors.

Since the last ACC meeting, the ACOUN has undergone many changes, but continues to deliver results. Jack Palmer-White, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, consolidated two separate teams (one in New York, one in Geneva) to oversee coordinated action to advocate more effectively for and with the global Anglican Communion.

In 2021, the members of the New York team moved on to other career opportunities, and at the end of 2022, Jack Palmer-White also took a new position elsewhere. In July 2022, Revd Glen Ruffle joined as part-time Assistant to the Permanent Representative,

with the aim being that Glen will relocate to Geneva where he can provide an in-person presence at the UN. Based in Nairobi, home of the UN Environment Programme, Nicholas Pande works one day a week for the Anglican team focusing exclusively on climate and biodiversity issues. In March 2023, the new Permanent Representative is hoping to take up the role.

Highlights of the work completed since ACC17 include:

### Raising Anglican Voices

1. We have increased recognition of faith at the United Nations, leading efforts to get language on the importance of faith actors in tackling environmental challenges into key UN documentation for the first time
2. We have been invited into leadership roles within the UN system, including a Steering Group for Faith-Based Organisations within the UN Environment Programme and continuing membership of the UN Multi-Faith Advisory Council
3. In 2019 we sent eight female delegates to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), briefing them on opportunities and advocacy points
4. We were able to send five delegates to the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) in 2019, again briefing them beforehand on what to target and speak into
5. We supported the drafting and editing of various statements related to the UN Environment Assembly, including inclusion of key Anglican language in the global civil society statement, global faith leaders' statement on tackling plastic pollution, and the multi-faith statement delivered in the closing plenary of UNEA
6. We made advocacy submissions to the Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
7. We have provided delegates and attended online UN events concerning gender justice, indigenous rights and climate resilience
8. The Permanent Representative supported the Archbishop of Canterbury in his role briefing the United Nations Security Council on issues of peacebuilding and reconciliation
9. We secured formal accreditation for the Climate COP process and the COP summits on the Convention on Biological Diversity.
10. Working with the Anglican Alliance, we facilitated an Anglican presence at both COP26 in Scotland and COP27 in Egypt, with strong support from the host-country Church. Whilst The Episcopal Church has long sent a delegation to the climate COPs, these were the first ACC delegations to any UN climate change conferences. We convened a global working group to plan policy priorities and shape a representative delegation. Feedback suggests our presence was powerful, cutting edge, influential and motivational for other attendees. ACOUN and the Anglican Alliance helped brief delegates, arrange logistics and manage the advocacy process. Outcomes noted include:
  - Our report for COP26 pioneered the concept of climate resilience and just financing, and our briefing document for COP27, produced in four languages, was equally

praised for its clear, concise and relevant content

- We believe our presence and advocacy work, particularly with the Anglican Alliance and ACEN, was influential, alongside others, in achieving the loss and damage fund agreement
  - Through the ACC COP26 Working Group, we delivered a series of pre and post-COP26 webinars – attended by +200 from all parts of the Anglican Communion
  - Alongside our global Communion leaders, the COP delegations have included youth, women and Indigenous representatives, also highlighting those places most impacted by climate change
11. We have nurtured relationships with the UN Department for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, resulting in a Memorandum of Understanding with the Archbishop of Canterbury that Anglican mediators would be supported in their roles in conflict situations. This resulted in high-level engagements between Anglicans and senior UN staff in Mozambique and Cameroon
  12. We ensured the Anglican Communion Environmental Network, as well as the Anglican Indigenous Network, were able to feed into and influence key global civil society statements on environmental justice. We brought Anglican-led efforts on environmental protection to the attention of the Executive Director of UN Environment
  13. ACOUN has supported ACC participation in key UN meetings on environmental justice, climate change, biodiversity, nuclear weapons and gender justice. A key Anglican speaker was able to speak at the UNEP@50 event in February 2021
  14. Our work has enabled the ACC to join the new World Health Organization Faith Network
    - We also developed the Anglican public voice on a global pandemic treaty ahead of the World Health Assembly Special Session, along with the Anglican Alliance

### Engaging the Provinces

15. The UN team has produced materials to help Provinces take part in the Universal Periodic Reviews of the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR)
16. In 2022 we provided expertise and technical support to enable the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil to submit a report as part of the Universal Periodic Review of the human rights record of Brazil
17. In 2019, we sat on the steering committee of a UN workshop to strengthen collaboration between UN and faith-based organisations in supporting people living with HIV. Our position enabled Refuge Egypt (Diocese of Egypt) to demonstrate their work with refugees and those living with HIV
18. ACOUN has directly informed the UN Secretary General's work on effective multilateralism, managing the Archbishop of Canterbury's response to the Secretary General and securing favourable relations
19. We developed and released a video collaboration between the Anglican

Indigenous Network, ACO Communications Team and ACOUN to highlight indigenous issues of concern

20. The Permanent Representative spoke to CAPA (Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa) about collaboration with UN environment groups
21. We have run a number of highly successful social media campaigns during key moments in the UN calendar (93,000 tweet impressions during the 2-week period of UN COP26; 12,500 tweet impressions during the 2-week period of the UN Commission on the Status of Women)
22. In the Lambeth Conference process, ACOUN supported the drafting of the Call on Environment and Sustainable Development, organised multiple seminars on relevant issues and met with a wide range of bishops and other stakeholders to identify ways that ACOUN could support different parts of the Communion
23. Our team provided logistical, administrative, strategic and hosting services to the bishops at the Lambeth Conference, as well as co-leading seminars for bishops on the Sustainable Development Goals and Reimagining our World

Since joining in July 2022, Glen has, amongst other work:

- Written the ACO submission for the 51st UN Human Rights Council on the impact of Covid on the rights of young people
- Delivered a video submission on the same subject at the General Debate on Item 3 at the 17th meeting of the Regular Session of the 51st Human Rights Council on 21st September 2022
- Written a policy paper for CSW67
- Provided a submission for the OHCHR on Human Rights and Climate Change in response to resolution 50/9 (09.12.2022)

Nicholas' work since July 2022 has seen him achieve, amongst other things:

- Write the highly rated ACC policy update for COP27 in Egypt
- Help prepare, brief and organise delegates for COP27 and support their advocacy work
- Track developments at the Biodiversity COP15 in Canada

## Looking ahead

The ACOUN is entering 2023 with a sense of freshness, with new staff seeking to take the work already achieved to a greater level. We will be supporting COP28 in Dubai, attending online CSW67, and hope to have on-the-ground advocacy capacity in Geneva itself.

We are seeking to engage much further with the Provinces of the Anglican Communion, and build networks with other supportive and compatible organisations and coalitions so we can add our support to other pieces of advocacy work that align with Anglican priorities.

Having established a Faith Health Network at the World Health Organization, we will be seeking to exploit the opportunities to speak into this new environment, as well as continue our advocacy at the Human Rights Council, with UNHCR for Refugees, with the ongoing COP processes, and with the various other related issues that arise.

*Glen Ruffle, January 2023*