

the needs of widows as prescribed in the bible, which is the authority for Christians, and contains over 70 (Old and New Testament) verses about appropriate treatment of widows.

Our key asks

- 1. Establishment of programs:** We call on churches to establish programs to create support systems and safe spaces through which they can provide counselling services as well as other psychosocial support to widows.
- 2. Implementation of policies and legislation:** We call on the Church to hold governments accountable and call on governments to protect widows' rights by implementing laws and policies that protect the rights and freedom of widows.
- 3. Change of attitude and behaviour towards widows:** Widows are full human beings, created in the image and likeness of God. (Genesis 1:27). Women are human in their own right whether they have husbands or not. We call on family, church and society to respect the dignity and God's image in every widow, in obedience to the Word of God.
- 4. Commemoration of International Widows' Day on 23rd June:** We encourage church leaders to collaborate with widows to develop activities geared towards commemoration of this day every year.

About AACC

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) is a continental ecumenical body that accounts for over 140 million Christians across the continent. AACC is the largest association of Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox and Indigenous churches in Africa and is a member of the worldwide ecumenical network. AACC is a fellowship of 198 members comprising of Churches, National Councils of Churches (NCCs), theological and lay training institutions and other Christian organisations in 42 African countries.

AACC Launch - Justice for Widows Campaign in Zambia, June 2019



ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

General Secretariat, Waiyaki way
P. O. Box 14205-00800, Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254-20-4441483, 44441338
Email: secretariat@aacc-ceta.org

JUSTICE FOR WIDOWS CAMPAIGN



AACC-CETA

ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE
OF CHURCHES (AACC)



Procession for International Widows Day in Zambia, June 2019

The problem

There are more than 258 million widows globally, with over 115 million of them living in extreme poverty. Moreover, approximately 1.5 million are child widows (girls under 18 years of age) according to a report by Action on Child. Widows generally face unique traumatic and dehumanizing experiences as well as violations of their rights upon the death of their husbands. The dehumanising treatment and practices include wife inheritance, denial of inheritance and land rights, as well as social discrimination that lead to increased poverty and long-lasting psychological effects. Some widows and their children become more vulnerable to forced labour and human trafficking, especially internally displaced

persons (IDPs) and those in refugee camps. Widows are therefore not a homogeneous group of adult women, but heterogeneous with diverse experiences and backgrounds. Recognizing these unique experiences provides an opportunity for advocacy and dialogue about their rights.

Our Response

A Regional 'Justice for widows' Campaign

AACC believes that no woman should suffer discrimination, lose her livelihood, property, dignity or status, because her husband has died, and that no young girl should experience widowhood and multiple violations of their human rights from premature and unlawful marriage.

As a response, AACC has launched a campaign to call churches and governments to respond to the plight of widows, by developing and adopting policies and legislation that provide them protection, as well as responding to their social and economic needs. This will boost the economy and social relations, in their families and the society, consequently breaking the cycle of poverty, and contributing to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Documenting their unique experiences

Widows have unique, diverse experiences and backgrounds that have largely remained undocumented or written about in contexts that do not represent their experiences. This under-representation has therefore continued to perpetuate silence around their plight. AACC developed a documentary to highlight these unique experiences, in contribution towards moving the evidence beyond academic journals and research findings to individual cases that amplify their voice and removes them from obscurity. The documentary aims to empower widows to raise their voices to the church and governments and other relevant stakeholders, about areas of concern to them.

Short-<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1pUkteYWXz-dCtnTviA3yzUvSh9j5EDog>

Long-<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1evdnmoJ53vkqbw1z79vsvX-jUPPX8Aw/view?usp=drivesdk>

Incentives for faith-led initiatives

AACC has set aside a small grant, as an incentive for churches within the AACC constituency, so that they can take lead in collaborating with governments and other stakeholders, to stand-up for the dignity and rights of widows. It is envisaged that the incentives will encourage churches to take up their rightful role of responding to