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FEDERATION

Office of the
General Secretary

To the leadership of
The LWF Member Churches in
Latin America and the Caribbean

lutheranworld.org

Geneva, 2 June 2016

This cannot go on, it has to end!

Public letter to leaders of the LWF member churches in Latin America and the Caribbean

The case of a young Brazilian woman who was gang-raped has revealed once more the scourge of violence against women, which is so profoundly rooted in our societies. This is one of many more cases that have shaken the public opinion, and of thousands of other cases which have not come to light but continue perpetuating this intolerable situation in our region.

The LWF Latin American Network of Women and Gender Justice has issued a clear and powerful communiqué, denouncing these situations, helping to understand them within structures and paradigms marked by violence in gender relations, and denouncing the systemic character of this violence. The Network calls for a series of processes and conversions that are necessary to eventually eradicate this scourge.

I don't want to add anything to the powerful and clear voice of the Latin American Network of Women and Gender Justice, but to underline through my letter that the eradication of all forms of violence against women is not and cannot be a women's issue only. It requires both men and women, who have understood on the basis of their faith, that what may appear to be culturally acceptable, is unmasked by the Gospel as unacceptable. The necessary processes of change require a transformation of relationships between men and women which put the dignity and wellbeing of all people at the centre.


Resources have been developed already to support these processes of change and transformation, which are mentioned in the communiqué and which I want to offer once more with this letter:

- *Churches say NO to violence against women*: this is a document, which although almost 20 years old, has not lost its pertinence. The document calls violence against women a sin.
- *The LWF Gender Justice Policy*: a document with a solid biblical and theological basis, which offers resources to those communities and churches that want to move away from perpetuation of the various expressions of violence on the basis of religious discourse, and instead root in the liberating message of the Gospel their defence of the integrity and dignity of all people.

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I encourage churches to once more take up these issues, or to continue deepening them. I invite them to join those who, on the basis of other vocations share the vision of overcoming violence against women. I call upon them to support the conversion of minds and hearts, thereby unfolding all the power of the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ who took upon himself the violence, instead of perpetuating it, so that we all could have life – life in abundance. All, men and women.

In Christ,



Rev. Dr Martin Junge
General Secretary