

## **Revd. Dr. Andre Karamaga, General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Will Visit Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne from April 14 – 21.**

Act for Peace is proud to support Revd. Dr. Andre Karamaga in his first visit to Australia. Karamaga will present Australian audiences with an African perspective to the raging climate change and aid effectiveness debates which have divided Australians. Karamaga will also alert the Australian public to the church's role as a peace keeper in the wars that plague the African continent and draw from his personal experience as a Rwandan leader, who lost family during the Genocide.

Karamaga will discuss with Australian audiences, the AACC's whole of Africa approach to prevent the loss of innocent lives and mass displacement of populations. "Our dream is to make Africa a better place, so that Africans can live in a dignified way... The church remains one of the foundations of hope in Africa, but it must never lose sight of its prophetic and reconstructive role in societies undergoing rapid change", said Karamaga.

### **Overall Aims of Visit**

- i. Increased recognition of the Pan-African approach which the AACC undertakes as a means of curtailing the effects and incidents of conflict in the continent.
- ii. Increased commitment within the Christian community, African Diaspora and the broader Australian public to actively promote and support sustainable peace in Africa.
- iii. Increased recognition, understanding and focus on the issues facing Sudan as it undertakes its first elections in 24 years and will undertake a Referendum in 2011.

### **More Specific Objectives**

- i. Credible public and private discussions regarding the situation in Sudan, Somalia, DRC, Ethiopia and Kenya and awareness of the steps needed for a just and sustainable peace and for, the alleviation of poverty – to promote human dignity.
- ii. Increased and measureable commitment from church leaders to a just and sustainable peace in these areas.
- iii. Transformative contact with significant influencers of public opinion e.g. Church leaders, MPs media figures and community leaders.
- iv. Raise awareness for the high level Peace Missions which are led by the AACC, which are supported by the Australian public.
- v. Secure an ongoing commitment from church, media and government on peace issues and initiate and ongoing dialogue centered around issues pertaining to peace and conflict.

### **About Revd. Dr. Andre Karamaga and Act for Peace's work with the AACC**

Karamaga was inducted as AACC General Secretary on 12 December 2008 in Maputo Mozambique during the ninth General Assembly of the AACC.

Karamaga, a Presbyterian and a theologian, was nominated for the position by his own church – The Presbyterian Church of Rwanda. He is neither new to the AACC nor to the ecumenical movement. Previously, he served AACC as a Programme Executive in charge of Theology (1990-1995) and later as a member of its policy



making organs. He became the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda and the President of the Conseil Protestante du Rwanda (CPR); He served as the Vice-President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and as a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Founded in 1963, the AACC is the largest pan-African ecumenical grouping on the continent. It brings together 173 churches, Councils of Churches and Christian organisations from 40 African countries and represents the voices of 120 million Africans.

Act for Peace has worked in partnership with the AACC for over twenty years to ensure the church remains a significant voice in peace processes and so the voices of the most marginalised communities are heard. Act for Peace is currently supporting the Eminent Persons' Ecumenical Program for Peace in Africa (EPEPPA) which aims to achieve sustainable peace in Africa by engaging the churches as active participants in conflict prevention.

The church over the years has played a crucial role in conflict resolution and restoration of peace in Africa, but also in challenging repressive governments and enhancing democratic practices. This has been made with the acknowledgement of the intrinsic linkage between democracy, human rights, justice, equitable development and peace.

Act for Peace's work in Sudan is of crucial importance for building sustainable peace in the war-torn country. We have worked in with our partners, the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), since 1991 to create the foundations for peace. The AACC is assisting the SCC with running Civic and Voter Education Training across Sudan in preparation for the 2010 Elections and 2011 Referendum.

## **Act for Peace in Africa**

Act for Peace works with project partners in numerous countries in Africa to reduce the incidence of conflict and create sustainable solutions to the problems facing Africans.

We are also currently working on long-term development projects in:

- **Chad** to help establish community leadership committees, increase awareness about hygiene and supply women and teenage girls with hygiene kits. Part of this education campaign includes information about gender based violence and HIV/AIDS;
- **Democratic Republic of Congo**, supporting nutrition programs that provide food to Congolese people in need and teach parents how to ensure that their children are receiving proper nutrition. Our project partners are also providing seeds, tools and educational programs in order to supplement the agriculture in the region and work toward increasing food stability;
- **Ethiopia** where we have helped create programs that focus on environmental rehabilitation, improved agriculture, access to clean water, sanitation, and healthcare and cross cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS and harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation;
- **Somalia** to rehabilitate water sources and develop better water infrastructure in the region in order to increase the quality and availability of water to the Somalis in need. We are also educating them on hygiene and sanitation awareness so that disease can be prevented and medical expenses can be cut back;
- **Sudan** to empower communities to protect and assist around 300,000 internally displaced people in Darfur. We are building and running schools, water programs and health clinics. In addition to running voter education programs, we are working in South Sudan to resolve tribal conflicts in the

regions of Kordufan and Central Equatoria by running successful peace processes. The program has, to date, involved over 20,000 people and will soon also include an expanded disarmament program.

- **Zimbabwe** on enhancing food and nutrition security, improving hygiene and building the capacity of communities to become self-sufficient.

*To arrange a media interview with Revd. Dr. Andre Karamaga, General Secretary of the All African Conference of Churches (AACC), contact **Edwyn Shiell: 0458 303 515***