

## WCC to develop Global Ecumenical Health Strategy, starting in Lesotho



Patient being examined at the Lutheran Church-sponsored Gurukul Clinic in Chennai, India. @ Paul Jeffrey/WCC

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**“Standing at the threshold of the Sustainable Development Goals, the World Council of Churches (WCC) believes it is time for the church to reaffirm the role it has played over centuries as leader in global health, and to consolidate efforts towards health and healing for all,” says Dr Mwai Makoka, WCC programme executive for Health and Healing.**

Meeting in Maseru, Lesotho, on 27 February, the WCC is starting the process of developing a Global Ecumenical Health Strategy, following the legacy of churches’ high profile in health care and mission historically.

“The church has been engaged in health services for centuries,” Makoka explains, “and has insisted through the years that there is a unique Christian understanding of health and healing which should shape the way churches provide healthcare.”

“The church realised and affirmed early, that health is more than medicine, more than physical and or mental well-being, and that healing is not primarily medical,” Makoka adds.

The first step towards developing the strategy will be the 27 February consultation in connection with the 8th biennial conference of the Africa Christian Health Associations Platform in Maseru, Lesotho. The consultation will bring together church leaders from Africa, heads of African Christian health associations and church organisations from Europe and the USA.

A second consultation will follow on 24 May at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, drawing participation from many churches, as well as several UN and other organisations.

“The WCC remains steadfast in its commitment to health and healing for all, and has recently reaffirmed that health and healing were a central feature of Jesus’ ministry and of his call to his followers,” Makoka concludes.

“And as we learn in ‘*Together towards life*,’ it is the Holy Spirit who ‘empowers the church for a life-nurturing mission, which includes prayer, pastoral care and professional health care on one hand, and prophetic denunciation of the root causes of suffering, transforming structures that dispense injustice and the pursuit of scientific research on the other’.” (“*Together towards life*,” p. 50)

*“Together towards life” is a WCC publication which serves as a tool for Christians to think freshly about Christian mission, presents a new ecumenical mission affirmation.*

[WCC work on Health and Healing](#)

[Africa Christian Health Associations Platform](#)

[Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes](#) (WCC Publications)