

Press release

Subject: XIV Regional Assembly and Thematic Consultation of WSCF-LAC

Young people and students from 9 countries in the region, gathered in Mexico City, reaffirm their commitment to continue weaving threads of justice in Latin America, a continent hit by inequalities and the advance of fundamentalism.

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Mexico City, November 30, 2021 -

The World Student Christian Federation in Latin America and the Caribbean held its XIV Regional Assembly and Thematic Consultation on Democracy, Human Rights and Fundamentalisms between the 25th to 28th of November at the Anglican Seminary of San Andrés in Mexico City.

After almost 18 months of postponement due to the COVID-19 outbreak that radically changed our ways of working and relating, WSCF LAC had the opportunity to hold its first face-to-face regional meeting. During the meeting, delegates from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Uruguay, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, shared the experience of the reunion that was reflected in the postponed hugs. The celebration of the SCM identity, the observation of the contexts, the planning of the transformative actions that have always characterized the Federation were woven into the path traveled during the 4 days.

In the Consultation on Democracy, Human Rights and Fundamentalisms, there were two moments that attracted special attention. One of them was a visit to *Casa Mambré*, the Center for Migrants and Refugees in Mexico City, from which the students heard experiences about human mobility in a framework marked by the lack of rights, violence and restlessness for the protagonists, who mostly come from the Northern Triangle, and who begin their journey in search of new dreams. There was also a thematic panel on gender and fundamentalisms, continuity of the seminar held at the regional level in virtual mode during October-November 2020.

The panel, moderated by Sarahí García Gómez, outgoing Chairperson of WSCF-LAC, raised the following topics: *Decolonial feminist theologies as alternatives for analysis and a liberating practice in the face of fundamentalisms* by Dr. Marilú Rojas Salazar; *How do fundamentalisms affect the rights agenda in LAC: Lgbtiq + communities, Afro communities, indigenous communities and women?* by Enrique Vega-Dávila; and *the role of the media in the agenda of fundamentalisms in Latin America: provocations for the search for political-public advocacy for justice* led by Priscila Barredo.

The Federation has been and is a space for the training and empowerment of leaders as part of and towards the ecumenical movement, the churches and civil society. As an organization led by young people and students, the Assembly established general strategic and thematic lines that will lay the foundations for the subsequent construction of a new strategic plan for the four-year period 2022-2025 and promote proposals at the global level of the Federation to combat fundamentalisms, inequalities and exclusion as consequences of climate change and socio-economic injustices. Other key points that will mark the agenda are migrations and peacebuilding from an ecumenical and interreligious perspective and gender justice from a decolonial perspective.

In addition to its thematic and planning components, the Assembly had the election of its Latin American board of directors and the appointment of its ExCo members. Under a spirit of consensus and fellowship, the commitment to young leadership was reaffirmed, forming the new board: Julio González (Venezuela, Presbyterian) Chairperson, Yenny Fernández Lugo (Colombia, Presbyterian) Vice-chairperson, Oscar Reicher Salazar (Chile, Independent) Treasurer; Jorge González Núñez (Cuba, Episcopal) Vocal; Malena Lozada Montanari (Argentina, Methodist) and Natalia Miguel Blanco (Brazil, Methodist) as representatives of the Global Executive Committee.

The WSCF-LAC thanked and recognized the results of the work of the members of the outgoing board for the period 2013 - 2021: Sarahí García Gómez (Chairperson), Oscar Reicher (Vice-chairperson), Rev. Chris Ferguson (Honorary Treasurer), Johana Nuñez Olaciregui (Vocal) together with Marcelo Leites, who received special recognition for his dedication, vocation and work results as Regional Secretary from 2011 to 2021. Dianet de la Caridad Martínez Valdés was formally welcomed to the Regional Secretary responsibility, elected by the Global Executive Committee in July 2021.

In the framework of the launch of the international campaign *16 days of activism against gender violence*, the Assembly held an ecumenical liturgy on November 25 -International Day of the Struggle for the Elimination of Gender-based Violence- in which participants affirmed the diversity of our identities, and brought to mind the imprint of the women of our continent and the overwhelming rejection of all kinds of violence against women and girls. It expressed the prophetic commitment to continue building relationships of justice and equity for a new and better world.