UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA PARTNER COUNCIL 2025-2028

Partner representatives

==Proposed New Member== Global Ecumenical: World Council of Churches (WCC) Masiiwa Ragies Gunda

Masiiwa Ragies Gunda serves as Programme Executive - Racial Justice, Equity, and Inclusion at the World Council of Churches (WCC). with special interest on the intersection of the Bible, Gender, Human Sexuality, Racism, and other contemporary socio-theological challenges threatening the realization of abundant life for disadvantaged minorities.

Partner Council appointments approved in November 2025:

Ms. Maria Tendai Dendere is the Director for Humanitarian Services and Diakonia at the **Zimbabwe Council of Churches** (**Zimbabwe**). A leader in global ecumenical efforts, Maria co-chairs the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Diakonia Reference Group, the ACT Alliance Southern Africa Regional Forum, and is an active member of Act Alliance Zimbabwe;

Ms. Elisabeth Cook is the Rector (President) of the **Latin American Biblical University** (UBL) (**Costa Rica**) and professor of Biblical Studies. She has served on the UBL staff since 1990;

Rev. Reina Ueno is the Director of the **Buraku Liberation Center** (BLC) (**Japan**) of the United Church of Christ in Japan, a member of the National Council of Churches of Japan's Gender Justice Working Group;

Sarah "Bestang" Dekdeken is the Secretary General of the **Cordillera Peoples Alliance** (CPA) (**Philippines**), an alliance of 307 of indigenous peoples' and sectoral organizations, and belongs to the Kankanaey-Igorot Indigenous people in the Cordillera region, northern Philippines.

Silvia Vasquez-Olguin is the Global Coordinator for Latin America, Gender Justice and Extractivism at **KAIROS Canada** (Canada); and

Mr. Zoughbi Al-Zoughbi is the founder and director of **Wiam, The Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center** (**Palestine**) a trainer and facilitator in conflict mediation, writer, human rights activist and lecturer in interdisciplinary fields of conflict mediation and transformation.