



The United Church
of Canada
General Council

GCE45 GS11 Appointment of Partner Council for 2025-2028 Term for November 2025

True Document Date: November 14, 2025

1. What is the issue?

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us into continued concrete relationships with partners. One manifestation of this commitment is The United Church of Canada **Partner Council**. The term of the nominations below for Partner Council begins in 2025 with the rise of General Council 45.

The United Church of Canada has committed to engage in God's Mission in partnership with others, *"to form communities of right relationships, committed to resisting the forces of empire. to speak of partnership in this way requires that the whole church at all levels be invited into lived experiences of global partnership."*

***from Review of Global Partnership Principles and Practices in the Context of Empire:
Report to the Executive of General Council, (November 2008)***

2. Why is this issue important?

The Partner Council of The United Church of Canada was established in 2011 as part of the United Church's commitment to live into its partnership principles of mutuality and accountability. The Partner Council ensures that the voices of global partners are represented in our governance structures, providing advice and feedback to the church from a global perspective. We are grateful to global partners for their willingness to accompany us in our mission and ministry, and to contribute the gifts of their time, talent and wisdom.

The United Church Partner Council draws together perspectives from each of the regions where the United Church works with global partners (Africa, Asia, Canada, Global Ecumenical, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East). Individuals from partner organizations in each of these regions provide their voices and experiences, and their regional expertise, to the Council

3. How might the General Council Executive respond to the issue?

Appoint the following seven members to the Partner Council for the 2025-2028 triennium:

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

- **Rev. Dr. Kenneth Mtata** is Programme Director for Public Witness and Diakonia for the **World Council of Churches (Global Ecumenical)** ministries (**Switzerland**)

4. What will be the impact?

The Partner Council provides opportunities for addressing **Strategic Plan objectives** including global collaboration in programs/spaces related to Anti-Racism and Discrimination, LGBTQIA+ inclusion and dignity, Indigenous justice and other activity areas.

Staff time + budget are within Church in Mission Unit 2025-2028 budget and staff work plan.

Risks include the possibility of continuing challenges to gathering in-person.

5. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council Executive:

The Global Partnership *Review (2008)* declared that The United Church of Canada's engagement with global partners in God's mission would be shaped by a new "*Statement and Affirmations on Global Partnership*[\[1\]](#)", with ten guiding principles, and

The 2023 Global Partnership Program Review "Called into Radical Accompaniment Report received by the June 2023 GCE and the approved [Recommendations on Mutual Radical Accompaniment](#) affirmed the church's commitment to partnership in [Mending the World](#).

The Partner Council is a key way in which The United Church of Canada lives out these principles, affirmations and recommendations. We are grateful for global partners willing to accompany The United Church in this way.

[\[1\]](#)From ***The Review of Global Partnership Principles and Practices in the Context of Empire: Report to the Executive of General Council***, (The United Church of Canada, November 2008)

Document Type: [Proposal](#)

General Council: [GC45](#)

Originating Body: [General Secretary](#)