



The United Church
of Canada
General Council

GCE45 GS36 New Appointment to Partner Council 2025-2028 for February 2026

True Document Date: February 20, 2026

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 current Partner Council 2025-2028 ends with the rise of the 46th General Council. The appointment of this **new member** is to replace a previously-approved member on the current Partner Council, bringing in a Global Ecumenical and social justice perspective.

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 the 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.

The United Church Partner Council draws together perspectives from each of the regions where the United Church works with global partners, including LGBTQI+ partners (Global Ecumenical, Africa and the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean). Individuals from partners in each of those regions provide their voice and experience, and their regional expertise, to the Council. The World Council of Churches has revised its nomination to the 2025-2028 Partner Council as the previously approved appointment is not able to continue in the role.

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

That the General Council Executive appoint the following new member to the current Partner Council (renewable once) for the 2025-2028 triennium to the rise of General Council 46 in 2028, to provide a crucial Global Ecumenical voice on the Partner Council:

- **Masiwa Ragies Gunda, Programme Executive - Racial Justice, Equity, and Inclusion at the World Council of Churches representing the Global Ecumenical partnership program.**

Masiwa also serves as adjunct professor at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland. He holds a PhD in Applied Intercultural Biblical Studies from the University of Bayreuth, Germany and an BA Hons and Master of Arts from the University of Zimbabwe. Masiwa has previously worked as a lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University both in Zimbabwe. He has also taught at several theological seminaries in Zimbabwe. As a socially engaged scholar, Masiwa has served as a consultant to international organizations 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.

4. What will be the impact?

The Partner Council provides leadership in the Global Partnership Program in Mutual Radical Accompaniment. The meaningful presence and participation of the Partner Council in the

GCE can bring essential global perspectives to its discussions and deliberations. Partner Council members contribute from leadership and experience on shared priorities in many areas including equitable and decolonizing governance, justice concerns including LGBTQI+ rights and climate, contextual theological and congregational and denominational ministry. The Partner Council has accompanied the United Church in living out its **Strategic Plan**, including global collaboration in programs/spaces particularly related to the Strategic Objective on Embolden Justice as well as other Strategic Objectives and activity areas.

Staff time + budget are within Church in Mission Unit 2026-2028 budget and staff work plan.

5. How does this proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?

AND

6. 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 which included the understanding that:

- Right relations are at the very heart of God's Mission
... "right relationships flow from an understanding that relationship is central to the nature of God, and that the Spirit calls us to live relationships that reflect Christ's character of justice and love..."

References

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)

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