

REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES TO THE CONFERENCE: 15 TO 17 OCTOBER 2024

INTRODUCTION

1. The National Executive Committee of the SACC appointed the Membership Committee to attend to matters pertaining to the membership of the SACC. The committee comprises the following: Archbishop Thami Ngcana, Bishop Mosa Sono, Ms Anne Mokhine, and Rev Dr. Lungile Mpetsheni (Chairperson). The members of the secretariat and the staff served as *ex officio* members. As such, the operations of the Committee were always enabled by the Rev Mzwandile Molo and Mr Luthando Kiti.

MEETINGS

2. The committee held meetings regularly to attend to the issues pertaining to the membership of the SACC. The membership of the SACC is discussed at length in section 5 of the Constitution. The Committee studied that section and other sections that are related. The Committee members showed dedication to the task that was given to them and approached their work with dedication and maturity, putting the interests of the SACC before theirs.

NEW APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

3. During the period under review, the Committee received applications from various denominations and/or formations of churches. The members of the Committee exercised due diligence in assessing the readiness of the applicants to be members of the SACC. Some never attended the scheduled discussions and did not send the required documents that could assist with more information regarding the standing of the applicant. The Committee agreed that those applications would be considered on receipt of the required documents and when those representing the applicants indicated their readiness to continue with the applications. Some existed in less than the required three provinces. Those were advised to apply to the relevant provincial councils for admission. One applicant (an organisation) was not made of church affiliates exclusively but included other faiths and no faith groupings. Its representatives even acknowledged that some of their members would not be ready to affirm the statement of faith stated above.

4. After careful and prayerful processes, the following churches/organisations were recommended, at different times, to the Central Committee for provisional admission, to be on probation for a year:

- 4.1 A Gift from Above
- 4.2 The International Apostolic Church of God in SA
- 4.3 The New Church of Southern Africa
- 4.4 Ubukhosi Besabatha Ministries
- 4.5 Calvin Protestant Church of South Africa
- 4.6 FOHLOZA Foundation

5. Some of the churches disappeared and did not comply with what was expected of them. The attempts by the staff from the SACC office to follow up on them did not

yield positive results. Other churches were found to have misrepresented facts and did not qualify for full admission. At the end,

5.1 Calvyn Protestant Church of South Africa was admitted to the full membership of the SACC by the Central Committee.

5.2 FOHLOZA Foundation has complied with the requirements and is recommended for admission as an associate member of the SACC.

APPLICATION FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SACC

6. The Committee identified a gap regarding the processes to be followed when a denomination/organisation is applying for the membership of the SACC, as delineated in the Constitution. It was not possible to ascertain the standing of a church/organisation that applies for membership. There was no mechanism to do a verification before the application is considered and approved. Working on the narrative that is presented by the applicant is not enough, as the applicant may not be conversant with the standards and requirements of the SACC. The falsification/misrepresentation of facts came as a shock. The Committee proposed the following which were approved by the Central Committee:

6.1 A denomination or organisation applies to the office of the SACC.

6.2 The applying denomination or organisation should furnish three references who are already existing members of the SACC. The office will request the references to submit their testimonials about the applicant independently to the office.

6.3 The applying denomination or organisation should furnish a certified copy of the Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) and/or Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) registration certificate.

MEMBERSHIP RETENTION/SUSPENSION

7. The Constitution of the SACC, in section 5, discusses about the suspension of membership. The SACC depends on the dedication and commitment of its members to remain true to its calling and to venture into new mission frontiers. It is important that the member churches and organisations should work for the retention of their membership of the SACC. Without proposing an amendment to the Constitution, as there is no contradiction, the Committee drew up the following the minimum requirements:

7.1 Members should attend the meetings and activities of the SACC.

7.2 Members should participate regularly in the meetings and activities of the SACC.

7.3 Members should remain up to date with the membership dues/contributions.

7.4 Members should apprise the SACC of the changes in their leadership structures.

8. The National Executive Committee should be mandated to, through the Secretariat and the Membership Committee. The Secretariat will report to the Membership Committee. After the Secretariat and the Membership Committee have

exhausted the attempts to reach out to the non-complying member, the Membership Committee will make a recommendation to suspend the membership of non-compliant churches, and the decision to suspend will be taken in accordance and compliance with the provisions that are made in the Constitution.

ISSUE FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE IN THE INCOMING NEC

9. The Constitutional Amendments Committee is working on changes in the configuration of the SACC. If/when those amendments are approved by the Conference, the next team in the Membership Committee will need to work with the Constitutional Committee on the criteria for membership, especially in areas where the Constitution speaks of encouraging churches that are in less than three provinces to apply for membership in the provinces in which they exist. The consideration will be whether this arrangement should remain or be reviewed.

CONCLUSION

10. The members of the Committee appreciate the opportunity given to them to serve the SACC in this capacity. The members of the SACC are encouraged to love and support this organisation and work towards its sustainability and rejuvenation. It is through its members that the SACC can reach every South African at the grassroots. The members of the SACC are, therefore, required to be active in the affairs of the organisation and make a commitment to provide foot soldiers for the programmes of the SACC to reach the people that they are intended for. The members should suggest the course that the SACC should be taking, so that the Conference can take meaningful resolutions, which will enable the National Executive Committee to function with a clear mandate. It does not help when the members renege on their duties and responsibilities and start blaming the SACC for the lack of a prophetic voice. The SACC will be as strong/weak as its members.

11. A special word of gratitude goes to every member of the Committee and the secretariat who worked tirelessly to give meaning to what being a member of the SACC is about/entails. It was a dynamic team that made serving in the NEC of the SACC a noble calling. We also commend the NEC for holding the fort and providing direction to the SACC, at the worst of time. The last Conference in which the NEC was elected was held virtually, during the COVID-19 pandemic times. The NEC members bit the odds and focused on the courses of action that were agreed upon. We pray and wish that the incoming NEC will be more effective and focused in providing leadership during this difficult challenging time in South Africa and the rest of the world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Conference receives the report.
2. The Conference agrees to the grant the Fohloza Foundation associate membership status.

3. The Conference agrees to mandate the National Executive Committee to, through the Secretariat and the Membership Committee, monitor and evaluate the performances of the SACC members, to determine those that should be retained and those that should be suspended.