

## **A service of celebration to mark the retirement of Professor Dr h. c. Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel on 29th May 2021, and subsequent words of greeting**

Words of greeting: Dr. Agnes Abuom, Chair of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (video message)

Peace and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to you Rev. Cornelia Fullkrug -Weitzel. We gather to thank God for long service and bid you goodbye. It is sad to see you leave the stage and retire but everything has a season and seasons do change. We sincerely appreciate and are grateful for your ministry that has touched many lives across the world.

**Commitment to the Ecumenical Movement** -Your commitment to the ecumenical movement has been unwavering. You inspired and encouraged me to continue the pilgrimage from a different vantage point. The journey has for you been rough and tough but you overcame the challenges. A million flowers of gratitude for believing in WCC's vision, the ecumenical movement and churches in the global south. We cherish unrelenting support, accompaniment and quality partnership given by German churches, people and government through your leadership. Indeed, BftW proved to be a trustworthy, reliable, listening and a learning partner.

As you traversed the ecumenical terrain your skills of listening, sharing, caring, giving voice to her story (ies), praying and working with other pilgrims to secure justice, human dignity and human rights for all, especially women were demonstrated.

**A mark of Humility: Walking with women in IDP and refugee camps, you keenly** listened to her story (ies) of dehumanization and denial of human dignity including interventions to transform their situation; your ministry of presence as a pastor with a color and woman leader provided symbols of hope, power, service and encouragement to many, to highlight the impact of Gender Based Violence and the courage for women to have seats at the table; as change became a realistic dream to many who previously had seen no light at the end of the tunnel.

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**Respect of others' Dignity:** You knew my underlying health challenges for years and offered necessary support without infringing on my dignity. It is when we are vulnerable that as fellow pilgrims we either hold the others' hand or let them disappear. You had the power to pressurize me instead you were there for me as a sister. A story for another day!

**The Unfinished agenda:** Our Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace especially in Africa; unraveled the bottomless pit of cycles of trauma caused by repeated experiences of violence, abuse, commodification and weaponization of women. Indeed, your last walk and engagement in the ecumenical space is characterized by presence, listening, and sharing strategies of ascertaining gender justice and dignity. The concern you carry over into retirement is how to equip and inspire the younger generation of women to actively participate and inform the ecumenical agenda, as response to the impact of trauma remains pivotal.

Under an acacia tree more will be said. Allow me, to conclude by affirming that even in adverse situations your strength, courage and resilience is inspired and sustained by hope and faith in the God of life. May the compassionate God of love, justice and peace continue to protect, sustain and accompany you. Thank you sister!

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**New Leadership** - My prayer for the new President the Rev. Dr. Dagmar Pruin, is that as you take up the mantle and steer BftW to new heights; especially at this historic moment when due to the global impact of COVID-19 pandemic, the world is gripped by uncertainty, anxiety, and fear about tomorrow; that God's favor will be upon you, unequivocal staff support and mutual, inclusive and learning partnership will abound. WCC be assured is ready to walk together with you. God bless you!

Agnes Abuom  
29<sup>th</sup> May 2021

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