A CALL FOR A REFLECTION AND ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
A Resolution of Witness

Submitted by Wider Church Ministries

SUMMARY

This resolution seeks to raise awareness of and engage settings of the church in advocacy regarding the violent conflicts and human rights abuses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, related especially to the exploitative mining of resources for export and industrial application.

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE

In Matthew 23:23-24 Jesus asserts an obligation in public affairs to ensure justice for the common good: “Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others.” In Matthew 25:40 he teaches moral responsibility in the reign of God is strongest for those most in need, saying “just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” Similarly our international commerce and public affairs should be governed by an obligation to ensure the common good, and to resist policies and practices that do injustice and violence to others.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS throughout the past two centuries, for the United Church of Christ, global presence and witness have been the core of God’s mission through the church; and

WHEREAS the Community of Disciples of Christ in Congo (CDCC), in what today is the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), formerly known as Zaire, was founded in 1889 in relation to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada, and is an ecumenical partner today of the United Church of Christ through our Common Global Ministries; and

WHEREAS the 62 protestant denominations united under the ecumenical umbrella of the Church of Christ in the Congo have consistently decried the brutal and unmitigated exploitation of the Congo’s immense resources; and

WHEREAS, since the advent of Congolese independence on June 30, 1960, the continued greed of global corporations for precious and strategic raw materials from the Congo and failure of the international community to respond to the documented human rights abuses of Congolese victims has led to the failure of the Congo state; and

WHEREAS the series of invasions of the Congo by proxy states Rwanda and Uganda that commenced in 1996 have facilitated unfettered access to Congolese natural resources by international corporations and their collaborators in the Congo; have not only undermined
democratic advancements, but have also cost the lives of an estimated 6,000,000 Congolese; have subjected up to a half million Congolese women and girls to rape, including sexual mutilation by multiple armies from Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi; and have increased dramatically the incidence for HIV/AIDS among women and girls, thus creating a health time bomb with dire consequences for the Congo; and

WHEREAS an estimated 1,250 Congolese reportedly perish daily in Eastern Congo as a direct or indirect result of the militarization of mines by elite networks of militia supported by business interests in the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, and the industrialized world, at the detriment of Congolese socio-economic development and liberation (Global Witness report, 2003/2004); and

WHEREAS these criminal behaviors are orchestrated and maintained by those seeking to profit from unfettered access to Congolese strategic natural resources (notably coltan, cobalt, tungsten, cassiterite, in addition to diamonds, gold, copper, uranium, oil, timber), in order to benefit mostly private wealth in industrialized nations, yet subjugating the Congolese people, despite the wealth of their natural resources, to poverty, suffering, slave labor, and human trafficking; and

WHEREAS the international community, including the United Nations, has not adequately responded to these documented crimes against humanity, thus demonstrating a double standard in the application of international justice because of financial greed and disregard for the value of Congolese people,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-eighth General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages its members, congregations, and various settings to pray, reflect and advocate on behalf of sisters and brothers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

BE IT RESOLVED that congregations will be encouraged to recognize "Congo Week," the third week in October, in their respective annual worship calendars as a week of commemoration for the millions of victims of the scramble for Congo’s resources and a stand for justice in solidarity with the people of the Congo; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that congregations working with Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ carry out advocacy and education across the globe for the Congo, with governments, the United Nations, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations, and with multinational corporations, until Congolese security and sovereignty is obtained. Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made available in accordance with the overall mandates of the Covenanted Ministries called upon and the funds available.

FUNDING
Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Justice and Witness Ministries is requested to work with Wider Church Ministries to implement this resolution.