

UEM Churches in Africa Show Solidarity and Strengthen Self-Reliance

African Regional Assembly donates to flood victims in Sumatra and intensifies its own fundraising efforts

(Gaborone/Wuppertal, 05.03.2026) The African Regional Assembly of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) met from 23 February to 1 March 2026 in Botswana. The host church was the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Botswana (ELCB). Under the theme “The Beam in Our Eye: Discrimination in Church and Diakonia,” the 55 delegates from seven African countries adopted four concrete recommendations for the African UEM member churches.

Solidarity with Sumatra

The assembly set a visible sign of solidarity already during the opening service. In response to the severe flooding in Sumatra, Indonesia, at the end of 2025, which left many families homeless and destroyed the infrastructure of entire communities, delegates and guests spontaneously collected donations for affected people and congregations.

Four Recommendations for a Just and Self-Reliant Church

The assembly calls on African UEM member churches to actively combat discrimination and to strengthen inclusive theological approaches and church practices. Particular emphasis is placed on gender justice, the full inclusion of people with disabilities, intergenerational participation, and respect for ethnic and socio-economic diversity across all areas of church life.

To enhance resource mobilization and financial sustainability, churches are encouraged to establish transparent financial systems, diversify local income-generating initiatives, and promote greater financial responsibility among their members. This also includes the systematic identification and responsible management of church assets such as buildings, land, and movable property.

Furthermore, the African member churches reaffirmed their commitment to revitalize the “United Action” fundraising campaign. Planned measures include a 1-euro campaign, dedicated UEM Sundays, and the increased involvement of UEM ambassadors. Considering declining contributions and reduced third-party funding from Germany, the resulting budget gap is to be addressed progressively through strengthened local initiatives.

Regarding artificial intelligence, the assembly recommends its responsible use as a supportive tool. Clear ethical guidelines must ensure human accountability, data protection, and the safeguarding of human dignity, while making clear that digital applications cannot replace pastoral presence.

Finally, the delegates call for disaster preparedness to be structurally embedded through local emergency plans, training for church leaders, and close cooperation with public authorities and ecumenical partner organizations.

A Step Toward a Prophetic Communion

In the view of the participants, the 2026 African Regional Assembly was more than an administrative meeting. "It was a moment of spiritual renewal and a clear commitment to a justice-oriented, inclusive, and self-reliant mission" says Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Muhozi, head of the Division Africa and member of the UEM board. Pre-assemblies of youth, women, and men ensured that diverse voices were meaningfully integrated into the final resolutions.

About „UEM“

The United Evangelical Mission (UEM) with offices in Germany, Indonesia and Tanzania is an international, equal communion of 39 members, including 32 Protestant churches in Africa and Asia as well as six Protestant churches and the v. Bodelschwingh Foundations Bethel in Germany. The UEM consistently pursues a holistic understanding of mission. This includes improving the living conditions of suffering and disadvantaged people while respecting their personal dignity and taking their cultural context into account.