

**217th General Assembly (2006)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

Item 11-30. On Promoting a Free, Fair, and Democratic Election in the Democratic Republic of Congo-From the Presbytery of New Hope.

Recommendation

[The assembly approved Item 11-30. See p. 45.]

On Promoting a Free, Fair, and Democratic Election in the Democratic Republic of Congo—From the Presbytery of New Hope.

At the request of Congolese Presbyterians, other Congolese people, and their friends around the world, the Presbytery of New Hope overtures the 217th General Assembly (2006) of the PC(USA) to do the following:

- 1. Educate the General Assembly Moderator, the General Assembly Stated Clerk, the General Assembly Council, and the members and clergy of the PC(USA) about conditions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).**
- 2. Establish a Day of Prayer and Fasting for the people of Congo.**
- 3. Encourage the General Assembly Moderator, the General Assembly Stated Clerk, the General Assembly Council, and the members and clergy of the PC(USA) to advocate that the U.S. Congress do the following:**
 - a. Send a bipartisan congressional delegation to visit the Congo to assess, first hand, ways and means to promote and carry out free, fair, and democratic elections in the Congo.**
 - b. Utilize the resources of the U.S. government for continued and increased support to the U.N. to bring under control remaining armed conflicts that divide people in the DRC.**
 - c. Support the current efforts to bring unity to the Congo as provided by the Global and Inclusive Accord.**
 - d. Utilize the resources of the U.S. government to implement a free, fair, and democratic election in Congo, including financial support now needed to make appropriate preparations for and to carry out the election process.**
 - e. Determine responsible channels for directing the use of this money for its intended purposes.**
 - f. Utilize the influence of the U.S. government to encourage DRC's neighboring countries to support a free and fair election in DRC.**
 - g. Support funding and implementation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Congo after free and fair elections.**
 - h. Support and advocate foreign debt forgiveness for Congo after free and fair elections.**
 - i. Support and advocate, after free and fair elections, aid for educational, medical, transportation, and telecommunications infrastructure.**
 - j. Urge and support the newly elected Congolese government in placing the education of its children and youth as a high priority.**

This is a reprint of the action of the 217th General Assembly (2006) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The official version is found in the Minutes. In the event of any discrepancies, the version in the Minutes takes precedence.

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church of the Congo, now numbering more than two million members, traces its roots to the 1891 missionary efforts of two U.S. Presbyterians: the Reverend William Shepherd and the Reverend Samuel Lapsley.

Our Presbyterian brothers and sisters in the Democratic Republic of Congo are crying out for our help because the Congolese people are living in deplorable and deteriorating conditions; the levels of poverty and hunger are despicable; illiteracy and unemployment are rampant; diseases like HIV/AIDS are increasing; the infrastructure of the nation is crumbling; and political instability is increasing.

The nation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has great natural resources, has realized little benefit from this potential national wealth, and needs political stability to encourage development.

The people of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have not experienced the joy of a free, fair, transparent, and democratic election of their national leaders since receiving independence in 1960.

The people of DRC now urgently are calling for a free, fair, transparent, and democratic election of their national leaders as promised to them by the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, sanctioned by a Global and Inclusive Accord and a Transitional Constitution approved by Congolese negotiators in Pretoria, South Africa, on April 4, 2003.

Many Americans of the faith community, including members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and American friends of Congo who have lived in, and/or visited, this great African country in recent years now plead for free and fair elections.

America is seen in the Congo and around the world, as a people who cherish freedom and democratic institutions, and President George W. Bush in his Second Inaugural Address has articulated U.S. policy in support of free elections in every country around the globe.

Europe has donated a large sum of money to support free elections in the DRC, and the United Nations is increasing the number of peacekeeping troops in the DRC.

Education is the foundation of an effectively functioning democracy and economy, consequently, for an election to succeed and a democratic government to continue, the schools of the Congo must be successful.