

**NO. 1117**  
**(SENSE-OF-THE-ASSEMBLY)**

**A CALL FOR REFLECTION AND ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF THE  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

**WHEREAS**, the mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) declares its passion for justice grounded in Micah 6:8 as declared in our vision statement: “to be a faithful, growing church that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice.”

**WHEREAS**, in Matthew 25:40 Jesus 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”; and

**WHEREAS**, throughout the past two centuries, for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), global presence and witness have been a gift of God's mission through the church; and

**WHEREAS**, 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; and

**WHEREAS**, Global Ministries has encouraged congregations to recognize "Congo Week," (an initiative created by Friends of the Congo) 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

**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 and has been related to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada since its inception; 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 mineral 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 contributed to the failure of the Congo state;<sup>i</sup> 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 45,000 Congolese reportedly perish monthly 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; 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;<sup>ii</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, the response of the international community, including the United Nations, has demonstrated a double standard in the application of international justice because of financial greed and disregard for the value of Congolese people;<sup>iii</sup> and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), meeting in Nashville, TN July 9-13, 2011 encourages all expressions of the church to pray, reflect, educate and advocate on behalf of sisters and brothers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that our church encourage the development of legislation such as the Conflict Minerals Law 2010<sup>1</sup> approved by the U.S. Congress and the Trade in Conflict Minerals Act introduced to the Canadian Parliament in 2010 requiring manufacturers to trace the source of minerals used in the production of consumer electronics for the purpose of developing a conflict-free mineral supply chain and more ethical mining practices, most particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that individuals and ministries of the church choose products that are labeled "DRC conflict free" when purchasing electronic products, once such labeling begins<sup>2</sup>; and

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<sup>1</sup> The current law, generally referred to as the "Conflict Minerals Law", was included as Section 1502 of the Dodd–Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, passed by the US Senate on May 20, 2010 and signed by President Barack Obama on July 21, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> The current legislation is expected to take effect in 2012.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Global Ministries continue to identify resources for all expressions of the church on the matter of the exploitation of people in the extraction of the mineral wealth of the Congo; and

**FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED** that all expressions of the church work with Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ to carry out advocacy and education across the globe for the Congo.

Division of Overseas Ministries

[A resolution of the Common Global Ministries Board, through the Division of Overseas Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to the General Assembly in 2011. A similar resolution has been submitted to the General Synod of the United Church of Christ in 2011.]

The General Board recommends that the General Assembly  
ADOPT Business Item No. 1117. (Discussion time 24 minutes)

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen, Chris. "Conflict Minerals and Congo's Brutal War." Crimes of War. 24 January 2010. <http://www.crimesofwar.org/onnews/news-congo7.html> and Shah, Anup. "The Democratic Republic of Congo." Global Issues. 24 January 2010. <http://www.globalissues.org/article/87/the-democratic-republic-of-congo#AnInternationalBattleOverResources>

<sup>2</sup> Carroll, Rory. "Multinationals in scramble for Congo's wealth." Guardian.co.uk. 24 January 2011. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/oct/22/congo.rorycarroll>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.