

1 Funding for this action will be made in accordance
2 with the overall mandates of the affected agencies
3 and the funds available.

4
5 **7. RESOLUTION: EPIDEMIC OF AIDS ON**
6 **THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA**

7 Mr. Rivera introduced the next item, "AIDS in Af-
8 rica." The General Assembly discussed the issue.
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10 Mr. Harter again called on the chair of Committee
11 Two, David Cavanaugh. Mr. Cavanaugh moved the
12 resolution, "The Epidemic of Acquired Immune
13 Deficiency Syndrome on the Continent of Africa,"
14 and asked that the Rev. Pamela June Anderson be
15 granted voice to speak to the motion. Following
16 Ms. Anderson's remarks, there was additional dis-
17 cussion from the floor.
18

19 Business returned to the Christian Church (Dis-
20 ciples of Christ) and Mr. Rivera called for the Gen-
21 eral Assembly vote on the issue, AIDS in Africa;
22 the item was adopted.
23

24 Moderator Harter called for the General Synod
25 vote.
26

27 01-GS-15 VOTED with abstentions: The Twenty-
28 third General Synod adopts the Resolution "The
29 Epidemic of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syn-
30 drome on the Continent of Africa."
31

32 **THE EPIDEMIC OF ACQUIRED IMMUNE**
33 **DEFICIENCY SYNDROME ON THE CON-**
34 **TINENT OF AFRICA**
35

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37 WHEREAS at the dawn of a new century and a
38 new millennium, we, as a faith community, believ-
39 ing in Jesus Christ, are called on to follow his
40 example and to heed his teachings, to tend his
41 lambs, to hear and respond to the loud wails and
42 the stifled cries of those who are suffering in our
43 world community;
44

45 WHEREAS at the dawn of this new century and
46 new millennium, the dread disease of HIV/AIDS
47 continues to plague the world community, bring-
48 ing particular suffering and devastation to our
49 brothers and sisters on the great continent of Africa;
50

51 WHEREAS in the last year, over two-and-one-half
52 million persons in Africa have died from HIV/
53 AIDS and related diseases, with every indication
54 that those numbers will increase in the coming years;
55

56 WHEREAS the suffering of women and children
57 in African countries has been particularly acute,
58 spawning the prospect of millions of orphaned chil-
59 dren in one generation, many faced with the task
of raising themselves;

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ has declared
its passionate concern and support for all who are vic-
tims of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
(AIDS) and the opportunistic diseases it enables; and

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ is empow-
ered to convey its concerns and impact on the commu-
nities of local churches, as well as in the nation and in
the global community, and is empowered to impact on
public policy;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-
third General Synod:

Calls on the United Church of Christ, through its pas-
toral leadership and through its Covenanted Ministries,
particularly Wider Church Ministries and Local Church
Ministries, to continue the commitment made in the
Proposal for Action regarding the Pronouncement for
Health and Wholeness in the Midst of a Pandemic,
which was adopted by the Sixteenth General Synod,
to wit, to provide information to local churches, Asso-
ciations, and Conferences on how the United Church
of Christ is responding to the AIDS crisis in Africa and
how these groups may further assist this response;

Calls on the United Church of Christ, through the Of-
fice of the General Minister and President and through
Justice and Witness Ministries and Wider Church Min-
istries, to convey to the President of the United States,
the Congress of the United States, and other appropri-
ate governmental bodies, the concern of its constitu-
encies about the AIDS crisis in Africa, and its advoca-
cy and support of any executive or legislative action
aimed at reducing substantially, or forgiving altogether,
the economic debt to the United States of America of
those African nations whose economies are overbur-
dened by same, and where the effects of the AIDS cri-
sis are particularly severe;

Calls on the United Church of Christ, through the
Office of the General Minister and President and
through the Justice and Witness and Wider Church
Ministries, to convey to the appropriate executive or
legislative bodies its advocacy and support of the imple-
mentation of international trade regulations that help
to reduce the prohibitively high cost and increase the
availability of HIV/AIDS treatment drugs in areas
where they are desperately needed.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Twenty-third
General Synod, in adopting this resolution of concern,
calls on the United Church of Christ to engage in mean-
ingful and prayerful dialogue with our partner churches
on the African continent and to actively seek to raise
the consciousness, awareness, and concern of the glo-
bal religious community in its efforts to ease the pain
and suffering caused by this terrible affliction to the hu-
man family.

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5 **8. RESOLUTION: CONFLICT DIAMONDS**
6 **IN SIERRA LEONE**

7 Mr. Harter informed the delegates that the next item
8 of business would be the last common action of
9 the Synod/Assembly during the Plenary. He called
10 on Mr. Cavanaugh to present the committee's next
11 resolution, "Conflict Diamonds in Sierra Leone."
12 Mr. Cavanaugh moved on behalf of Committee
13 Two that the Twenty-third General Synod adopt
14 the resolution, "Conflict Diamonds in Sierra
15 Leone." He then yielded his time to the Rev. Dan
16 Hoffman, Area Executive for Africa of the Com-
17 mon Global Ministries, to speak to the resolution.
18

19 Moderators Rivera and Smith then facilitated the
20 discussion of this issue by the General Assembly.

21 Following that discussion, Mr. Harter called for the
22 General Synod vote.

23 01-GS-16 VOTED with abstentions: The Twenty-
24 third General Synod adopts the resolution, "Con-
25 flict Diamonds in Sierra Leone."
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28
29 **RESOLUTION ON CONFLICT DIAMONDS**
30 **IN SIERRA LEONE**

31 WHEREAS, the human tragedy of war in Sierra
32 Leone cries out for an effective international re-
33 sponse;

34 WHEREAS, the Revolutionary United Front
35 (RUF) rebel movement in Sierra Leone, whose
36 brutality included cutting off the hands, feet, and
37 legs of children, has been sustained by the sale of
38 diamonds from mining areas under its control;

39 WHEREAS, the income derived from diamonds
40 correlates directly with the RUF's access to arms
41 to continue its brutal war;

42 WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ traces
43 its connection with Sierra Leone to the successful
44 efforts of 19th century New England Congrega-
45 tionalists in returning the crew of the Amistad to
46 that country; and

47 WHEREAS, both the United Church of Christ and
48 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) continue
49 to support development and relief efforts of Sierra
50 Leonean Christians through One Great Hour of
51 Sharing and Week of Compassion grants;

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59 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the
Twenty-third General Synod of the United Church
of Christ meeting in Kansas City in July 2001,

Calls on the United States government to fully support
the United Nations embargo on "conflict diamonds";

Urges that the international diamond industry move
forward to establish a system for certifying legitimate
diamonds and for prohibiting the buying, cutting, and
exporting of diamonds originating in rebel-controlled
Sierra Leone;

Appeals to the U.S. Congress to legislate a ban on the
importation of diamonds from any country that does
not have "rough controls" in place to prevent the mar-
keting of conflict diamonds;

Calls on our congregations to reflect on this critical
issue and advocates to secure the end of conflict dia-
monds as a means of sustaining the war in Sierra Leone,
not only through advocacy with the U.S. Government
and Congress, but also by communicating their con-
cerns to jewelers in their communities, toward the end
that dealers in diamonds, who have previously opposed
these steps, may be persuaded to support efforts to end
the trade in conflict diamonds;

Urges all parties to proceed toward a system of identi-
fication and certification that provides no hindrance to
the sale of legitimate diamonds, such a hindrance harm-
ing the economies of such nations as Botswana,
Namibia, and South Africa;

Requests Common Global Ministries of the United
Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples
of Christ) to provide educational and advocacy re-
sources to interested United Church individuals and
entities on conflict diamonds in Africa; and

Requests the General Minister and President of the
United Church of Christ to communicate this resolu-
tion to the U.S. President, Secretary of State, Assistant
Secretary of State for African Affairs, U.S. Trade Rep-
resentative, the General Secretary of the United Con-
gregational Church of Southern Africa, and the Gen-
eral Secretaries of the All Africa Conference of
Churches and the councils of churches in Sierra Leone,
Liberia, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and the
United States.

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

Mr. Rivera called for the General Assembly vote and
the Business Item was adopted. Mr. Rivera reported
that this ended the business that had been submitted to
both the General Synod and Assembly and that busi-
ness would continue alternating between the business
of the two churches.

Mr. Rivera and Ms. Smith facilitated the General As-
sembly business item entitled "Justice and Reconcili-
ation to Comfort Women"; the item was adopted.