

Press Release

Churches in Cape Town Support the Call for Government to Increase its Support for Tertiary Institutions

The Consultation of Christian Churches Supports the #FeesMustFall Campaign

[Cape Town, Western Cape], October 22, 2015:

The consultation of Christian Churches (CCC), a network of some 43 Christian churches, mission organizations and local fraternals in Cape Town adds its voice to the growing call for government to re-consider its funding model for tertiary institutions.

The CCC notes as the background to these protests the calls for transformation of the tertiary institutions. This was demonstrated, among others, in the “Rhodes must Fall” Campaign at the University of Cape Town, the language issue at the University of Stellenbosch and the call for the transformation of Rhodes University in Grahamstown.

The CCC supports the calls for greater access to higher education and supports the students who are currently protesting against the increase of fees at the Universities of Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Fort Hare, Rhodes and Witwatersrand, among others.

The CCC condemns outright the acts of violence and intimidation that have taken place and supports the right of those students who do not wish to protest the right not to do so. The CCC also condemns the acts of violence that have been perpetrated by certain sectors of the SAPS against students who were protesting peacefully and calls on all parties to act in accordance with the relevant laws.

The CCC notes that the Freedom Charter, in demanding that “The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall be Opened” states,

- Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children;
- Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit

The CCC echoes the rights enshrined in the Bill Of Rights in the Constitution:

”Education

29. (1) Everyone has the right—
- (a) to a basic education, including adult basic education; and
 - (b) *to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.*

The CCC hopes that the efforts of the South African Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, who has called a meeting of the representatives of the universities, will yield positive results. It is also hoped that the management of the universities will act swiftly to bring about the desired settlement and stability.

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The CCC expresses its concern at the timing of the protest, as it is close to the time of final examinations and hopes that these actions will not disrupt exams at higher education institutions.

Barry Isaacs

General Secretary

Consultation of Christian Churches