

The participants in Lusaka engaged in an in-depth discussion about the role and place of the church in responding to the crisis of resilience. Here is a summary of the responses to the three questions discussed:

## 1. What is the role and place of the church in Lusaka in responding to the crisis of Resilience?

- **Discipleship:** The participants emphasised the importance of discipleship as a key function of the church in building resilience. While discipleship programs exist in many churches, the effectiveness of these programs was questioned. The need for a more relevant and impactful approach to discipleship, tailored to the current generation and specific contexts like Lusaka, was highlighted.
- **Relevance to the Community:** The church must be deeply integrated into the community, understanding and addressing local issues such as early marriages, divorces, and poverty. The church's role extends beyond spiritual guidance to providing practical solutions to the community's needs.
- **Voice in Policy-making:** Participants stressed that the church should not only participate in community-level initiatives but also be a proactive voice in national policy-making. The church should move from being a passive participant (e.g., providing opening and closing prayers) to a leading actor in shaping policies that affect the nation.

## 2. What are three practical steps that the church in Zambia can take to respond to the Resilience crisis?

- **Offer Solutions Beyond Spiritual Needs:** The church should provide practical assistance such as food, clothing, and empowerment programs, especially for vulnerable groups like widows. This holistic approach will ensure that the church meets both the spiritual and physical needs of the community.
- **Build and Run Social Institutions:** Establishing schools, health clinics, and community counselling centres were identified as critical actions the church could take to support resilience. These institutions not only meet immediate needs but also contribute to the long-term resilience of the community.
- **Ensure Visibility and Accessibility:** The church must be seen as a city on a hill, open and accessible to everyone in the community, not just its members. This requires the church to be deliberate in communicating its services and ensuring that the community knows where to turn for help.

### 3. What are three practical steps that your church community can take to respond to the crisis of Resilience?

- **Focus on Local Community Needs:** Churches should prioritise understanding and addressing the specific needs of their immediate community, such as issues in the Northern area. This localised approach ensures that the church's efforts are relevant and impactful.
- **Empowerment Initiatives:** Churches should develop empowerment programs tailored to the needs of the community, such as skills training, small business support, or educational programs. Empowering individuals within the community will enhance their resilience.
- **Active Participation in National Dialogue:** Churches must ensure they have a voice in national discussions, particularly in policy-making processes. This involves moving beyond ceremonial roles and actively contributing to the development of policies that address the crises facing the community.

#### Key Takeaways for Further Reflection:

- **Discipleship:** The need to rethink and redesign discipleship programs to be more effective and relevant in today's context.
- **Community Integration:** The importance of the church being an active participant in the community, offering both spiritual and practical solutions.
- **National Influence:** The growing recognition that the church must play a more significant role in national policy-making to address systemic issues affecting resilience.

These reflections and actions emphasise the church's critical role in fostering resilience within both the local and national context, highlighting the need for practical, community-focused, and policy-driven approaches.

