



## World Council of Churches

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### **Nomination of Prof. Sarojini Nadar in the Category Distinguished Researcher: Role of Science and Research in Overcoming Violence Against Women**

Dear Colleague,

I write to you today to endorse the nomination of Prof. Sarojini Nadar for the 2013 DST Women in Science Award, in the category: "**Distinguished Researcher: The role of science and research against violence towards women.**" In 2007, I, as the Programme Executive of the Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA), a programme of the World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland, and my colleagues at the Ecumenical Institute Bossey, Céligny, Switzerland, took the literature linking sexual violence to HIV seriously and decided that church leaders and theological educators needed to be conscientised about the ways in which sexual violence is implicit in so much of the churches' teaching and practices.

Prof. Nadar's personal childhood experience of sexual violence, and the way in which she chose to use this to encourage other women to go public with their own stories of abuse is what prompted me to invite her to facilitate workshops in Geneva, Switzerland from 4-10 June 2007, with a group of international church leaders and theological educators on sexual violence. Not only did her personal story of abuse inspire my invitation, but her sustained research in this area, particularly the way in which culture, religion and sacred texts often conspire in the abuse of women is what I wanted her to share with this group of international church leaders and educators.

The idea was that through her workshops, the leaders and educators would be inspired to read sacred texts, such as the bible in more open and honest ways, unmasking both the liberating and the oppressive nature of the text. This she did with great aplomb as she executed the workshops with sensitivity all the while inspiring the group towards a greater sense of critical engagement with the sacred text (see below for the programme which she developed). All the

participants who attended reported their great learning experience from Prof. Nadar. Her workshops were critical, thought-provoking and stimulating, causing many of them to make commitments to facilitate such workshops in their own countries, which ranged from the USA to India.

It entreats me to note that the methodology she promotes commonly known as Contextual Bible Study (CBS) is now widely used throughout Sub-Saharan Africa to educate churches and theological institutions about the linkage between sexual- and gender-based-violence and HIV and AIDS pandemic. As a result churches in the Global North are beginning to take note of this effective, empowering and socially transforming methodology of engaging sacred texts, cultures and religions in the context of sexual violence and the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

For her commitment to expose the evil of sexual violence (including incest) in our contexts through research and publications, but moreover for her commitment to transform mind-sets and bring change in contexts, such as the churches and theological institutions, where it is most difficult to do so, I wholeheartedly endorse her nomination for this award.

Yours sincerely,



The Reverend Dr. Nyambura Njoroge

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