

# **PROGRAMME BOOK**



# **PROGRAMME BOOK**

**World Council of Churches  
10th Assembly  
Busan, 2013**



**World Council  
of Churches**  
Publications

**PROGRAMME BOOK**  
WCC 10th Assembly, Busan, 2013  
English-language edition

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## **FOREWORD**

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### **Olav Fykse Tveit** **General Secretary, World Council of Churches**

Within the pages of this *Programme Book* are several key texts and documents for delegates and other participants attending the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 30 October to 8 November, 2013. Here you will find introductions to all of the aspects and activities of the assembly's life, tools and explanations for how the assembly conducts its business and makes its decisions.

Also included is a unity statement, proposed for consideration and action by the assembly and meant to capture the present meaning of Christian unity, the animating aim of the ecumenical movement and primary purpose of the WCC, for our time.

This *Programme Book* contains other important information to help participants understand the nature and purpose of the World Council of Churches as "a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (article I of the WCC Constitution). Participants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the materials in this *Programme Book* well before the assembly begins – to approach the task in prayer, to read carefully what is here and to reflect upon it, particularly in the light of the life and witness of their church and their own context. Participants are asked to bring this book to Busan. It will be used every day.

This book takes its place alongside other resources that have been provided to help participants find their way at the assembly. These include the assembly *Resource Book* of recent and important documents on the key topics of discussion at the assembly; *God of Life*, which contains the Bible studies prepared for the assembly; and *A Faith That Does Justice*, an illustrated account of WCC activities from 2006 to 2013. A six-session online congregational resource, *Pilgrimage to Busan*, allows for group or congregational participation in preparing for the assembly and reflection on its chief topics. Upon arrival at the assembly, participants will also receive *Hallelujah! Resources for Prayer and Praise*, containing the prayers and music selected for the assembly. An assembly *Handbook* will be distributed as well, with the daily schedule, room assignments and helpful practical suggestions for our life together in Busan.

Assemblies are often turning points in the life of the World Council of Churches, and Busan will surely leave its mark on ecumenical history. As you prepare for the assembly, I commend this book, along with other resources, for your serious consideration and preparation. I also ask you to prepare for the assembly by turning to the members of your church so that your presence in Busan will be a testimony to the concerns, hopes and prayers of the community that has sent you and that will welcome you back home at the end of your journey.



# **INTRODUCTION**

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The 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches takes place in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 30 October to 8 November 2013, under the theme “God of life, lead us to justice and peace.”

The assembly is the highest governing body of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and is the only moment when the fellowship of 345 member churches comes together as a whole in prayer and celebration. The assembly has the mandate to review WCC work, to determine the overall policies of the Council, to issue public statements and to elect a new central committee. Only the assembly has the authority to change the WCC constitution.

And yet the assembly is more than a manifestation of fellowship and business. It also represents the gathering of a worldwide ecumenical movement of churches and partners. This makes an assembly of the WCC the largest, most diverse gathering of Christians in the world. It is a unique moment in the life of the one ecumenical movement to deepen visible unity and common witness so that the world may believe.

This volume offers detailed information about the many aspects of the assembly, its activities and programme, to enable your full participation and a fulfilling experience. It also includes key documents that frame the decision-making of the assembly, including the WCC constitution.

Although this is the tenth WCC assembly, it will include many new elements. In planning the assembly, the WCC central committee gave considerable attention to discerning ways in which the assembly could be more inclusive and welcoming of the wider ecumenical movement, recognizing that the WCC is not alone in the serving the visible unity and common witness of the churches. The assembly will provide space for member churches and ecumenical partners to move toward a shared vision of the one ecumenical movement – moving beyond an exclusively WCC agenda. The assembly, as a gathering of churches and partners, will be rooted in common prayer, Bible study, celebration and reflection – moving beyond a business-focused agenda. And the assembly has been prepared in the spirit of “togetherness” based on the ethos of fellowship and consensus – moving beyond the call for expanded space while maintaining the integrity of the event as a WCC assembly.

## **The assembly theme**

The assembly programme is made up of a rich offering of events intended to maximize sharing among participants – to deepen their experience of fellowship, to increase their knowledge of the ecumenical movement and to provide space for dialogue on important issues. The development of the programme is rooted in the theme “God of life, lead us to justice and peace” but also seeks to engage the assembly in responding to this prayer – being the church together in the world today – as a witness to justice and peace for all creation.

That theme offers scope for reflection and deliberation on how God is at work in the world today and what particular gifts and tasks the churches, church bodies, and individual disciples bring to the quest for justice and peace. Much of the assembly's work will be exploring the meaning and implications of the theme for churches, the ecumenical movement and the WCC.

## **The assembly venue: Korea**

Another highlight of the assembly is its venue. Taking place in Busan, Republic of Korea, it will be the first WCC assembly in Northeast Asia; and the broader Asian context will significantly shape the gathering. Among the reasons Korea was selected to host the assembly is the unique ecumenical "horizon" that the witness of the Korean churches offers the wider ecumenical movement.

The invitation to meet in South Korea was the joint initiative of many churches in the country, including WCC member churches, evangelical churches and Pentecostal churches. The church has grown rapidly in Korea, where nearly 25 percent of the population is Christian. The inter-religious context of Korea highlights the growing experience of living dialogue that other churches around the world face.

Korea remains a politically divided peninsula. The hope that the Korean people will one day be reunited is strong for many Koreans. The churches in Korea, together with the ecumenical movement, have been encouraging reunification efforts for decades. The hope for reconciliation and the assembly witness for reunification will significantly mark the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

## ***Madang***

*Madang* is a Korean term that describes a courtyard in a traditional Korean home. The *madang* serves as a space for encounter and sharing, celebration and fellowship, greeting a visitor and welcoming a stranger.

The Korean churches proposed *madang* as a concept to help root the assembly in the host context and also to give shape and meaning to the assembly. At the 1998 Harare and the 2006 Porto Alegre assemblies, the respective concepts of *padare* and *mutirão* referred to a limited shared space for workshops, exhibitions and side events, involving different groups and ecumenical partners.

The vision for the Busan Assembly is more holistic. *Madang* offers possibilities to prepare the entire assembly as a shared space for encounter and discussion of what it means to be the church together in the world today for justice and peace.

## **A rich programme**

Centred on the assembly theme, the assembly programme offers dozens of ways in which participants can be engaged in and with ecumenical Christianity and its renewal:

*Prayer* marks the beginning and end of each day. The worship life of an assembly is among its most noted highlights. It provides the opportunity to be united in prayer, to share liturgical gifts and to keep the assembly grounded in the theme, “God of life lead us to justice and peace.”

Daily *Bible study* has also been a highlight of past assemblies. It will again be a space for sharing faith and culture. The texts for daily study will focus on moments in biblical history in which life was threatened yet justice and peace prevailed, through God’s grace.

There are six *thematic plenaries* during the assembly. These are large-scale events providing space for celebration and inspiration, i.e., the assembly opening, exploration of the assembly theme and Asia plenaries. Four other plenaries on mission, unity, justice and peace will present global challenges the churches must face together and will highlight how ecumenical partners are working together to address these challenges.

Twenty-one *ecumenical conversations* are designed to promote in-depth discussion on issues of common concern. Each conversation focuses on a unique topic and provides four 90-minute sessions for sustained dialogue. Conversations are prepared with churches and partners to help profile existing cooperation, while deepening common efforts for the future. The reports of the conversations will help to shape a common ecumenical agenda in the post-Busan period.

While the whole assembly may be held in the spirit of *madang*, a specific *Madang programme* will promote the exchange of gifts and experiences among participants, through workshops, exhibitions, special events, performances, theatre, visual arts, spaces for discussion, etc. This is the most diverse area of programming, allowing for the widest participation of all those attending the assembly.

Although there is a strong focus on celebration, dialogue and action, a great deal of business must be completed by the member church delegates and official ecumenical partner representatives. This includes changes in governance, elections and receiving reports from the assembly committees on programme guidelines, policy reference, public issues, nominations, finance and assembly message.

In the two days prior to the assembly there are a variety of *pre-assembly events* intended to build community and prepare participants. There are pre-assembly gatherings of women and men; young adults; Indigenous People; and the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN). The Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI), which begins in Seoul and continues in Busan, will bring students and faculty into the life of the assembly.

The following sections of this volume are aimed to provide assembly participants with more detailed information about these dimensions of the assembly, and more. The hope is that for all participants, from around the world and from many different Christian traditions, this assembly will provide an opportunity to affirm Christian unity and the many ways in which to share in God’s mission and bring God’s message of salvation to the world. The deliberations on key issues will inform the programmatic engagements of member churches, the WCC, and the wider ecumenical world in the years to come.

The assembly focus on life, peace and justice will surely lead to a call for urgent action in caring for life and the fullness of God’s promise for all of creation. We hope,

too, that the assembly will be a watershed for reconciliation, drawing attention to the particular hopes of the Korean people. And finally, this assembly may choose to highlight in the post-Busan era a stronger focus on justice in the economy and with creation.

Readers will find this information as well as other assembly resources also conveniently situated on the assembly website: [www.wcc2013.info](http://www.wcc2013.info).

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# **THE 10TH WCC ASSEMBLY**

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## What Is an Assembly?

An assembly of the World Council is the coming together of the member churches of the WCC to reaffirm their fellowship and to take counsel with one another. Since the inaugural assembly in Amsterdam in 1948, at which the WCC was officially founded, these events have marked key moments in the life of the churches and in the history of the Council. They have been held at intervals of about seven years – at Evanston (USA) in 1954, New Delhi (India) in 1961, Uppsala (Sweden) in 1968, Nairobi (Kenya) in 1975, Vancouver (Canada) in 1983, Canberra (Australia) in 1991, Harare (Zimbabwe) in 1998, Porto Alegre (Brazil) in 2006, and now in Busan.

Persons whom the Council's member churches have delegated as their official representatives constitute the assembly. The central committee in consultation with the churches decides the number of delegates for each church. While only the delegates named by the churches can participate in the decision-making process, they are accompanied by a variety of other participants who have been invited by the central committee to assist the assembly. Some of these other participants have the right to speak, but not to participate in decision-making. This is described in more detail in the next section.

An assembly has three general functions.

*First*, as the most representative gathering of its kind, the assembly is an occasion to celebrate and reaffirm the mutual commitment that member churches and ecumenical partners have made through the WCC. It is a moment for the churches, through their delegates and all those gathered at the assembly to reaffirm their confession of Jesus Christ, to pray together, and to voice their intention to continue the search for the visible unity of the church. To ground its celebrations and commitments in the light of the present-day realities, each assembly has a theme. The theme chosen for Busan, “God of life, lead us to justice and peace,” has been a prayer guiding preparations and encouraging reflection. At the assembly, the theme will be explored each day in prayer and through Bible study, discussions and deliberations.

*Second*, the assembly is an opportunity for the churches to receive an account of the work facilitated by the WCC with its members and partners over the seven years since the last assembly. Written materials, including *A Faith That Does Justice: The Journey of the WCC from Porto Alegre to Busan* and many of the documents published in the companion *Resource Book* provide helpful information about the work of the WCC. Participants are asked to attend the first business plenary session of the assembly, during which an account of the Council's work will be presented.

*Third*, the assembly, as the highest decision-making body of the WCC, must set policy and programme guidelines for the Council's work in the years to come. It must also elect from among its delegates up to 150 members of the central committee, which will assume the responsibility for guiding the work of the WCC through the next assembly. The assembly will also elect the presidents of the WCC.

## **How does an assembly work?**

Because of the large size of the assembly and the limited time available in which to give adequate attention to all three of these features, the programme has been carefully constructed to enable an effective flow of work according to the procedures, while allowing for maximum participation.

The assembly will begin and end each day gathered together in common prayer. Following morning prayer, Bible study will provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on the scripture passage chosen for the day in the context of the life of their churches and their daily experiences.

Thematic plenaries will present some of the major issues facing the churches today, including the unity and mission of the church, the search for justice and peace, and the changing face of world Christianity, especially in Asia.

Delegates and others will join ecumenical conversations to deepen their dialogue on twenty-one specific issues related to the rapidly changing religious, ecumenical, political, social and economic context in which churches and individual Christians are called to act for life, justice and peace.

The assembly committees will prepare reports to the assembly concerning the future directions and leadership of the council. Delegates will seek consensus on the recommendations of the committees during the decision-making sessions at the end of the assembly.

The *madang*, a veritable courtyard of workshops, exhibits and side-events which accompanies the assembly, will provide an opportunity for the witness of church members and ecumenical partners to strengthen the assembly.

The assembly will have many opportunities to share in the life and witness of its host churches. This will be highlighted during the ecumenical pilgrimage for peace on 2 and 3 November. About 800 participants will travel to Seoul by train on Saturday for an encounter with local churches focused on hope for the peaceful reunification of the Korean people. Participants staying in Busan on Saturday will join a variety of exposure visits with local churches, mission projects, community initiatives and cultural sites. On Sunday, participants in Seoul and Busan will join local congregations for worship and fellowship.

In addition, hundreds of people from Korea will join the assembly through the *madang*, providing for a rich exchange of witness and culture with the host churches.

The various elements or “building blocks” of the assembly are further explained in subsequent sections of this *Programme Book*.

## **Some hopes and expectations**

In the course of preparing this assembly, numerous hopes and expectations have helped to shape the programme, inform the agenda and determine the composition. Perhaps the most significant hopes and expectations relate to the context in which the assembly will meet, the urgent need for Christian unity and witness in a world that longs for justice and peace; the urgent need for reconciliation on the Korean peninsula, and the broadening of ecumenical life through closer ties of the council and its member churches to Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Roman Catholic Christians.

This will be the first assembly to take place in Asia. The rapid growth of Christianity in Asia, the great challenges faced by Christian minorities in some Asian countries,

the ongoing economic and social transformation of the region, the urgent need for reconciliation in Korea—all of these call for understanding and ecumenical solidarity.

## People at the Assembly

The assembly will gather up to 3000 church leaders, members and ecumenical partners from nearly every Christian tradition around the world, in addition to local participants. It is one of the broadest global gatherings of its kind.

### Life in community

A gathering of persons from so many varied cultures and church traditions is a unique experience of the richness of God's gifts and grace in our midst. For many participants the highlight of an assembly is the opportunity it offers to meet people from all over the world – sharing stories and a common witness, and experiencing the amazing diversity of the body of Christ.

Such diversity, however, can also create misunderstandings, frustrations or even conflicts in an ecumenical setting. To prevent this, each participant is asked to be patient and sensitive with all the persons they will meet. Each participant has his or her own language, culture, tradition and experience to share for the benefit of all. “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Matt. 22:39).

The guidelines for consensus decision-making as well as the policy document “When Christian Solidarity Is Broken,” both included in this volume, offer important principles for how the community life of the assembly can be fostered and protected.

### Categories of participation

Each participant has a specific role to play at the assembly. WCC Rule IV (see Constitution and Rules in this volume) explains these roles in a formal way. All participants will wear a badge, indicating their name, church and home country, as well as the role or category of the participant. What follows is a brief summary of the different categories.

- **Delegates** (up to 825) of the WCC member churches. Eighty-five percent are designated by the member churches directly; up to fifteen percent may be named by member churches at the request of the central committee in order to achieve various balances in the composition of the assembly (the details of this process are set forth in WCC Rule IV). The delegates of the member churches are the only persons entitled to participate in decision-making at the assembly.
- The **moderator and vice-moderators of the central committee** and WCC **presidents**, elected at the Porto Alegre assembly in 2006, may attend the assembly with the right to speak (and to participate in decision-making if they have been named delegates).
- Several members of the outgoing **central committee**, elected to serve from 2006 to 2013, will be present, either as delegates of their churches or as participants with the right to speak.

Other categories of participants also have the right to speak at the assembly.

- Member churches were invited by the central committee to appoint an **adviser to the delegation**, who shares responsibility for ecumenical affairs within the life of the church, to accompany the delegation through the assembly.
- **Delegated representatives** come from Christian world communions, regional and national ecumenical bodies, international ecumenical organizations and specialized ministries that are in a working relationship with the WCC.
- **Delegated observers** are officially named by churches which are not members of the WCC, but with whom the WCC has a working relationship – the largest such groups come from the Roman Catholic Church and various Pentecostal churches.
- The central committee invited a number of **advisers** who have a special contribution to make to the deliberations of the assembly or who have participated in the activities of the WCC.

Among those who are registered as participants and who may attend the sessions of the assembly (but do not have the right to participate in decision-making and may not speak unless specifically requested by the moderator) are:

- **Observers** from related ecumenical organizations or churches that are not members or that are not represented by a delegated observer or a delegated representative.

Also participating as observers are the heads of member churches who are present at the assembly but who are not delegates of their church.

- **Guests**, invited in a personal or individual capacity.
- Assembly **participants** are persons from around the world and across Asia who have come to Busan to share in and contribute to the life of the assembly. They may be individuals, congregations, student groups or ecumenical partners. Some will simply participate, while others will offer workshops, cultural celebrations and other activities. Many Korean participants will also join as assembly participants, some for the full assembly and others just for a few days.
- **GETI participants**, taking part in the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI), which brings together 180 students and faculty from around the world for study and reflection on the church today. Others students take part as **KETI participants**, through the Korean Ecumenical Theological Institute.

- **Stewards**, approximately 150 young people between 18 and 30 years of age from around the world who give their time and energy to assist the assembly in its work, but also to share in an experience of ecumenical formation and to strengthen the voice of youth.
- **WCC staff**, approximately 100 persons employed by the WCC, who are present to facilitate the assembly programme and provide administrative, financial, logistical and communications services.
- **Co-opted staff**, persons who have been invited to assist the WCC staff in assembly operations.
- Members of the national and local **host committees** and **volunteers** who have helped to prepare the assembly over several years and who assist with various tasks at the assembly.
- Over one hundred **accredited media** representatives, who are covering the assembly for journalistic purposes, including writers, radio and television reporters, photographers and technicians.
- **Service providers and partners**, persons employed by the companies that have been contracted to assist the assembly with logistical and technical needs.

## The Assembly Programme

Rich and diverse, the assembly programme contains several inter-related elements, involving fellowship, celebration, discussion, decision-making and prayer. The tenth assembly is expected to inspire and energize the churches and the ecumenical movement in addressing the challenges of the 21st century. It will be marked by a continuing practice of discernment, broader participation by a wide array of churches, and a studied collective search for the ways in which the God of life is leading Christians, churches, and the ecumenical movement toward true justice and lasting peace.

The assembly programme is rooted in the theme “God of life, lead us to justice and peace” and seeks to engage the delegates and others in responding to this prayer by being the church together in the world today as a witness to justice and peace for all creation.

To facilitate this, the assembly programme is coordinated around some important dimensions of being the church together in the world today:

*koinonia* – united by one faith and fellowship in Christ  
*martyria* – the faithful witness of the church in the world  
*diakonia* – faith in action serving God’s justice and peace  
 ecumenical formation – for renewal of faith and leadership development and inter-religious cooperation – as a common context faced by all churches.

The dimensions are like red threads running through the programme. They connect different parts of the assembly with each other and with an ecclesial foundation.

## Presidents of the WCC



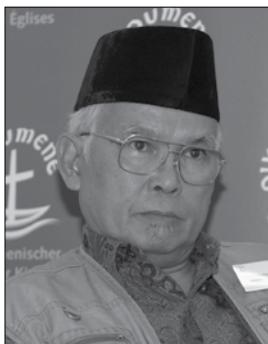
Archbishop Dr Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania, Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania



Mr John Taroanui Doom,  
Maohi Protestant Church  
(French Polynesia)



Rev. Dr Simon Dossou,  
Methodist Church in Benin



Rev. Dr Soritua Nababan,  
Protestant Christian Batak  
Church (Indonesia)



Rev. Dr Ofelia Ortega, Pres-  
byterian-Reformed Church  
in Cuba



Patriarch Abune Paulos,  
Ethiopian Orthodox  
Tewahedo Church (d.2012)

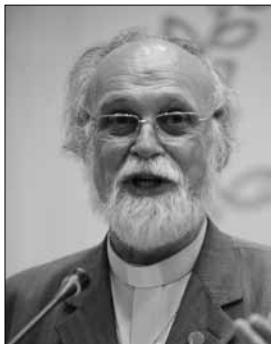


Rev. Dr Bernice Powell  
Jackson, United Church of  
Christ (USA)



Dame Mary Tanner, Church  
of England

## Leadership of the Central Committee



Rev. Dr Walter Altmann,  
moderator, Evangelical  
Church of the Lutheran  
Confession in Brazil



Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios  
of Sassima (Limouris), vice-  
moderator, Ecumenical  
Patriarchate of Constantinople



Rev. Dr Margaretha Hen-  
driks-Ririmasse, vice-mod-  
erator, Protestant Church in  
the Moluccas



Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit,  
WCC general secretary,  
Church of Norway

**World Council of Churches, 10th Assembly, Busan, Republic of Korea**  
**"God of life, lead us to justice and peace"**

Draft	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
11/07/13	30 October	31 October	1 November	2 November	3 November	4 November	5 November	6 November	7 November	8 November
08:30 09:00	Registration and Orientation	Prayer	Prayer	Prayer		Prayer	Prayer	Prayer	Prayer	Prayer
09:15 10:15	Bible Study	Bible Study			Bible Study	Committee Reports				
10:15	Break	Break	Break			Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
10:45 12:15	Gathering Prayer	Theme Plenary	Asia Plenary	Ecumenical Pilgrimage for Peace with Korean Churches	Mission Plenary	Unity Plenary	Justice Plenary	Peace Plenary	Closing Plenary or Reports	
12:15	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch (Committees)	Lunch (Committees)	Lunch (Committees)	Lunch (Committees)	Lunch (Committees)	Lunch (Committees)	Lunch	Lunch
14:15 15:45	Opening Plenary	Business Plenary	Business Plenary		Madang Programme (Workshops)	Madang Programme (Workshops)	Madang Programme (Workshops)	Madang Programme (Workshops)	Madang Programme (Workshops)	Sending Prayer
15:45	Break	Break	Break			Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
16:15 17:45	General Secretary and Moderator Reports	Ecumenical Conversations	Ecumenical Conversations	(Committees)	(Committees)	Ecumenical Conversations	Ecumenical Conversations	Committee Reports	Committee Reports	W/C/C Central/ Committee
17:45	Break	Break	Break			Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
18:15 19:45	Business Plenary	Regional Meetings	Confessional Meetings	(Committees)	(Committees)	Elections	Committee Reports	Committee Reports	Confessional Meetings	
20:00 20:30	Prayer	Prayer	Prayer			Prayer	Prayer	Prayer with Korean Churches	Prayer	X
20:30	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner			Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	X

They are visible in the thematic plenaries on unity, mission, justice and peace. They are visible in 21 ecumenical conversations, in the *madang* programme workshops and exhibitions, as well as in the work of the assembly committees. And the same dimensions are visible in the lives of the churches, many of which have a similar focus on unity, mission, justice, education and inter-religious dialogue.

The entire assembly is an opportunity to respond to the ecumenical question: what does it mean to be the church together in the world today, and how does this shape our search for visible unity and our quest for common witness?

In the pages that follow the assembly programme is explained in detail with a focus on:

- Assembly spiritual life – daily prayer and Bible study
- Assembly plenaries – addresses, business and thematic presentations
- Ecumenical conversations – deliberation on important issues
- Assembly business – consensus procedures, committees, statements and nominations
- *Madang* workshops, exhibitions, celebrations

## **Assembly timetable**

The assembly timetable, reproduced on page 10, gives an overview of the assembly, and a daily schedule of events will be distributed.

## **Assembly Spiritual Life**

The whole of the assembly is a spiritual experience of prayer, encounter, reflection and discernment. This spiritual life is founded on the assembly theme, “God, of life, lead us to justice and peace,” itself a prayer before God.

### **Prayer life**

The tenth assembly will be a “praying assembly.” Participants will gather each morning and evening for common prayer. After morning prayer, participants will meet in small groups for Bible study. Eucharistic services may also be offered by various church traditions. The assembly will be linked closely with local church life in Korea, and congregations around the world will pray along with the assembly, using resources from the assembly website. Special services in Busan will be announced on the assembly website.

The prayer life of the assembly was planned by the assembly worship committee, whose members have been working for two years. The committee sought to prepare a prayer life meaningful for all church traditions. Through daily prayer and Bible study, participants will explore the assembly theme holistically.

### *Opening prayer*

The opening prayer will take place on 30 October, at 10:45. The celebration will gather 4000 assembly participants and people from local churches. The homily will offer a theological reflection on the assembly theme.

### *Morning prayer*

Prayer begins each morning at 8:30, with time for singing and gathering beforehand. Prayers and songs can be found in *Hallelujah! Resources for Prayer and Praise*, which will be distributed at the assembly. Please bring your copy every day and come ready to learn new music from around the world.

### *Evening prayer*

Before retiring for the day, the assembly will gather for evening prayer at 20:00. Confessional evening prayer will follow varied church traditions of vespers services.

### *Worship with local congregations*

Congregations from Busan and the surrounding area are invited to join the assembly for the opening and closing celebrations as well as for daily prayer. On Wednesday, 6 November, the evening service will feature elements from both Korean Protestant and ecumenical common prayer. More information about this occasion will be provided at the assembly.

The assembly will have many opportunities to share in the life and witness of its host churches. This will be highlighted during the ecumenical pilgrimage for peace on 2 and 3 November. About 800 participants will travel to Seoul by train on Saturday for an encounter with local churches focused on the hope for the peaceful reunification of the Korean people. Participants staying in Busan on Saturday will join a variety of exposure visits with local churches, mission projects, community initiatives and cultural sites. On Sunday, participants in Seoul and Busan will join local congregations for worship and fellowship.

### *Closing prayer*

The assembly will close in prayer on the afternoon of Friday, 8 November at 14:15. This final gathering will send participants home with renewed hope in the power of the God of life.

### **Bible study**

Reflecting the rich diversity of the participants and the churches from which they come, Bible study will help participants explore the assembly theme in light of the biblical texts, while sharing their own experiences of life and faith. Following morning prayer, participants will gather in small groups or in larger plenary groups for Bible study from 9:15 to 10:15.

In the midst of such ecumenical diversity, the invitation to read the Bible together is an invitation to be open to one another, to the witness of scripture and to the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a time to discern together the signs of God's grace in the texts, in our lives and in the world. Bible study will encourage participants to integrate all

they have done and heard during the assembly and to discover the possibilities of renewed commitment to life, justice, and peace.

Reflections in *God of Life: Bible Studies on Justice and Peace* have been published for the preparation of the assembly participants and for use by congregations around the world. Each day participants will focus on the biblical text chosen for common reflection.

Each group will have a moderator, whose role is to encourage everyone in the group to make a contribution. These groups do not prepare reports; rather, they are a place to share and a resource for informed participation in the assembly.

Bible study group and locations will be announced in the assembly *Handbook*.

## Assembly Plenary Sessions

### **Nonthematic plenaries**

The full assembly meets at several points in the course of the programme in order to inaugurate and conduct the business of the 10th Assembly.

#### *Opening plenary and orientation*

On Wednesday, 30 October, the opening plenary will welcome participants and officially open the assembly. The opening plenary begins at 14:15, after lunch.

On Wednesday morning, participants are encouraged to attend an orientation plenary from 9:15 to 10:15. The orientation will include information on life in Busan, the assembly programme and consensus decision-making procedures.

#### *Moderator's and General Secretary's reports*

Following the opening plenary on Wednesday, 30 October, from 16:00 – 17:30, the assembly will hear two major addresses. The first will be delivered by Rev. Dr Walter Altmann, moderator of the WCC central committee and minister in the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil. The second will be delivered by Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the World Council of Churches and a minister in the Church of Norway.

### **Business plenaries**

During the business sessions on 30 and 31 October, the consensus procedures prepared for the assembly will be formally introduced. The procedures are published on pp. 79-95. Delegates will be introduced to the proposed revision to Constitution of the World Council of Churches, which can be found on pp. 37-76. Delegates will also be presented with proposals for assembly committee leadership and membership and other matters pertinent to the nominations process described on pp. 29-31.

### **Decision plenaries**

During the second week of the assembly, committees will present reports and recommendations for consideration in plenary. The order of reports will be announced by

the business committee at the assembly. More information on assembly committees can be found on pp. 25-27.

## **Thematic plenaries**

A series of thematic plenaries will present crucial issues in a manner that highlights their importance and relevance for the churches and the ecumenical movement today. The concerns raised in plenary presentations will be discussed in ecumenical conversations, committees and in workshops offered through the *madang* programme. Topics to be examined include:

### *Theme plenary: God of life, lead us to justice and peace!*

*Thursday, 31 October, 10:45 – 12:15*

The theme plenary will set the agenda for the ensuing plenaries and ecumenical conversations, each of which is rooted in the assembly theme. Through the contributions of key personalities from the church and from society, the theme plenary offers reflections on how to interpret the current world situation, the role of the churches and the life of the WCC fellowship, in light of the prayer “God of life, lead us to justice and peace”.

### *Asia plenary: Living together in God's justice and peace*

*Friday, 1 November, 10:45 – 12:15*

The plenary will deepen reflection on the theme from varied Asian church perspectives. Noting the multi-faith context in which the theme is prayed by Asian Christians, the plenary will highlight how the theme is understood and interpreted in the lives of communities and the churches of Asia. By presenting ways in which Christians creatively respond to injustice, provocations toward violence and the stifling of life, the plenary will show how the spirit of solidarity strengthens common initiatives for fostering life, justice and peace through mutual participation and shared contribution to the ecumenical movement.

### *Mission: A call to life-giving witness*

*Monday, 4 November, 10:45 – 12:15*

Addressing new developments in the global field of mission, the plenary will emphasize the dynamic, transformative aspect of mission in the Spirit. Successful examples of concrete action for mission and evangelism will be shared. The plenary seeks to inspire churches and ecumenical partners to commit anew to the call for common witness based on the new WCC mission statement, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, so as to enhance ecumenical cooperation on future mission work. The text of the statement can be found in the *Resource Book*.

### *Unity in Christ: the journey of the fellowship*

*Tuesday, 5 November, 10:45 – 12:15*

The plenary will focus on the vision of visible unity and the journey towards that vision in the fellowship of the World Council of Churches. It will recall how past WCC assemblies have described “the unity we seek” and address some of today’s perceived hopes and challenges on the way to full visible unity. Pointing to signs of

hope for the whole *oikoumene*, the plenary will highlight contexts in which the search for Christian unity is inseparable from the struggle for justice and peace. The convergence text *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* can be found in the *Resource Book*. A draft Unity Statement, on which the assembly will take action in a decision plenary can be found in this volume.

### *God of life lead us to do justice in today's world!*

*Wednesday, 6 November, 10:45 – 12:15*

The plenary will address the current threats to life expressed in social, economic and ecological injustices, through testimonies and reflections that highlight the ways in which these injustices are deeply intertwined. It will re-affirm, with commitment, the need for the fellowship to eradicate poverty, inequality and exclusion; and to sustain God's creation. In response, it will challenge participants to join a pilgrimage for justice and peace that can inspire the work of the churches for socio-economic and ecological justice. The background report on *Economy of Life, Justice and Peace for All: A Call to Action* can be found in the *Resource Book*.

### *God of life, lead us to build peace in today's world!*

*Thursday, 7 November, 10:45 – 12:15*

The plenary will inspire participants with a call to visionary leadership that seeks to serve the peace of God. The plenary will present examples of peace-building supported by common actions in faith, mobilizing spiritual and material resources, and tackling the root causes of conflict and war. In recognition that Christians are called to seek and pursue peace within the *oikumene* – the whole of God's creation – participants will be invited to give urgent attention to the global challenges to peace, and to do so with people of other faiths. The plenary will also invite participants to join a pilgrimage for justice and peace to become leaders for peace who build peace in today's world. *The Ecumenical Call to Just Peace* can be found in the *Resource Book*.

## Ecumenical Conversations

### What are ecumenical conversations?

The assembly, as a whole, provides space for celebration, dialogue and reflection through common prayer, Bible studies, thematic plenaries, ecumenical conversations, business sessions, workshops, the *madang* exhibition and the weekend pilgrimage with the Korean churches.

Ecumenical conversations, in particular, engage assembly participants in sustained, in-depth dialogue on critical issues that affect the unity, mission and witness of the church today – issues that require a common response by the churches together. The results of the conversations will help to guide future ecumenical cooperation.

There are 21 ecumenical conversations. Each conversation focuses on a unique topic and provides four ninety-minutes sessions for sustained dialogue. Each conversation has between 80 and 120 participants. Participants are asked to choose one conversation in advance and to commit to being present for all four sessions.

Ecumenical conversations follow consensus procedures and use methodologies that seek to inform, engage and promote dialogue. Conversations will include:

- input and sharing on the topic from participants and resource persons;
- presentation of different viewpoints from participants and resource persons;
- discussion and debate among the participants; and
- a harvest of affirmations and challenges that are relevant for future ecumenical cooperation.

Each ecumenical conversation is moderated by a delegate and supported by leadership team nominated from among the delegates, delegated representatives, delegated observers, observers and advisors. The team is responsible for leading the conversation and preparing the report.

While ecumenical conversations are open to all participants, they serve to deepen the dialogue between member church delegates. The delegates have a particular responsibility for agreeing to the affirmations and challenges that should be put forward to the churches. The delegates are resourced by many other participants, representing other churches, ecumenical partners, congregations and local experiences. While every attempt will be made to encourage the active participation of all participants, member church delegates have a particular role and responsibility in ecumenical conversations.

All ecumenical conversations are asked to prepare a short narrative report (3-4 pages) that includes ecumenical affirmations and challenges to be addressed by the churches, ecumenical partners and the World Council of Churches (WCC). The reports will be made available to participants, churches and partners. The reports will be submitted to the WCC central committee at its first full meeting after the assembly in 2014 for consideration and appropriate action.

The success or failure of each conversation depends on the genuine and committed encounter among the participants. At times this may be difficult, but it will serve the process of spiritual discernment and provide a better understanding of how people experience the world and how the church, by working together, can promote life, justice and peace for all.

## **The theme and the church**

“God of life, lead us to justice and peace” – the assembly theme – is both a prayer and a statement of faith addressing contemporary trends, urgent challenges and threats to life from the perspective of faith in the Triune God.

The world we live in belongs to the God of life, who created it, who redeemed it through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and who continues transforming it through the power of the Holy Spirit, so that God’s justice and peace may reign. This is God’s promise of life in fullness for all creation (John 10:10; Eph. 1; Col.1; Rev. 22).

God takes the initiative in all things. The new humanity in Christ, renewed by God’s grace, is commissioned to take part in God’s healing and transformation of the world (1 Cor. 3.9). The *koinonia*, *martyria* and *diakonia* (unity, mission and service)

of the church are synergistic acts by which Christians participate through prayer, fellowship, common witness and action in the work of God's love.

As followers of Christ, we are drawn into the movement of God's love with the marginalized, the persecuted and the suffering creation (Luke 4; Rom. 8). Responding to God's mission of life, the church is called to be one in Christ (John 17:21) and to bear witness to the reign of God's justice and peace for all who share the gift of life in God's household, the *oikoumene* (Pss. 9:9; 19:5; 24:1; Matt. 24:14; Acts 17:31; Heb. 1.6, 2:5).

## **Contemporary challenges for the churches' unity, mission and service**

In the light of the theme, the assembly gathers to analyze the impact of contemporary trends and threats to life on people and the planet and to discern the role of the churches and the ecumenical movement in responding with care for God's creation.

The process of globalization significantly marked the period between the Harare and Porto Alegre assemblies, i.e., between 1998 and 2006. While the process of globalization is on-going and continues to provoke varied reactions, other dimensions of the present situation should be highlighted:

- changing geopolitical context and shifting power configurations with new opportunities, but also new emerging tensions and conflicts;
- persistent poverty and growing inequality, which are further aggravated by the consequences of the financial crisis on people, communities, nations and the churches themselves;
- devastating reality of climate change;
- growing numbers of migrants, with a high percentage of Christians among them;
- the influence of information technologies and new media, and its impact on social and political change;
- pressing challenges for inter-religious relations in many parts of the world;
- changing ecclesial and ecumenical landscapes, with the continued growth of Pentecostal, charismatic and independent churches especially in the global south; and
- changing social patterns and the varied responses of the churches.

What are the consequences of such rapid change, and how do these challenges affect the call to be one, so that the world may believe – the call to be the church together in the world today? How do these challenges affect the churches' unity in faith; mission and evangelism; witness for justice and peace; commitment to theological education; and interreligious dialogue and cooperation?

The assembly programme, and the ecumenical conversations in particular, are constructed to facilitate dialogue, reflection and responses to these questions. The topics covered by ecumenical conversations address a plethora of related issues, including what it means to be the church, common prayer, Christian discipleship,

the community of women and men, theological education, inter-religious cooperation, human rights and security, economic and ecological justice, peace-building, health and healing, *diakonia* and development.

## **Descriptions of the ecumenical conversations**

### *EC-01. Called to be one: new ecumenical landscapes*

Two of the most important factors in the emergence of new ecumenical realities have been the growth of Pentecostal, charismatic, neo-charismatic and non-denominational churches and the impact of globalization on the economic, political, cultural and religious spheres of different societies.

These developments raise questions, but they also offer opportunities for new initiatives for the unity of the Church and for strengthening common witness and service in new forms of cooperation and action. This applies to bilateral and multilateral relationships between churches within and beyond WCC membership, the Global Christian Forum, as well as other conciliar ecumenical organizations (regional ecumenical organizations and national councils), confessional bodies (Christian world communions) and specialized ministries, e.g., church-based or -related mission and development agencies (Christian service).

The assembly theme invites common efforts for unity, mission and service in the pursuit of justice and peace. The purpose of this ecumenical conversation is to assess the contemporary situation and its challenges; to reflect on its theological, relational and institutional dimensions; and to propose steps for further exploring the potential for the ecumenical movement in mutually enriching partnerships.

### *EC-02. The Church: toward a common vision*

What can we say together today about Christ's Church so that we may grow in communion, struggle together for life, justice and peace in today's world, and overcome our past and present church divisions? This question – vital to the future of the ecumenical movement and of the WCC - was the subject of the long process that led to the newly released WCC/Faith and Order convergence statement *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*.

This ecumenical conversation will centre on this new text. It will engage participants in discerning the ecumenical breakthrough that it may represent and in raising critical questions about its ecumenical limits, and will equip them to promote its reception among the churches.

### *EC-03. Transformed by renewal: biblical sources and ecumenical perspectives*

*Renewal* in contemporary Christianity may suggest programmes for church growth and evangelization. Or it may refer to movements, such as charismatic and liturgical renewal, or even to the ecumenical movement itself as an expression of renewal. While all churches can recognize the biblical call to renewal, different experiences and expressions of renewal may also be church-dividing. What are the indicators of renewal: evangelism, prosperity, reform, restructuring, financial health, charismatic gifts, mission toward justice and peace, larger numbers of Christians, religious experience?

This ecumenical conversation seeks to reflect on the concept of renewal within contemporary Christianity. The goals of the ecumenical conversation are threefold: to assist the churches in articulating what renewal means from a theological perspective; to recognize and assess its authentic indicators pastorally; and to receive its fruits ecumenically. The conversation begins with biblical insights and reflects on different confessional and contextual experiences of renewal, as exemplified in the lives of churches around the world today.

#### *EC-04. Moral Discernment for life, justice and peace*

Moral discernment describes the process by which a person or a community responds to the dilemmas and questions that human beings face when seeking the “right” and the “good.” Therefore the task of moral discernment is an essential aspect of Christian life, not only for the individual but also for churches as a whole. Seeking to discover God’s will is becoming increasingly difficult in a world in which new technologies and new scientific insights raise new ethical issues and where different worldviews result in conflicting responses to moral questions.

This ecumenical conversation explores the sources and process of moral discernment as an *entrée* to ecumenical discussion of moral issues and differences. How can the churches help each other to make the world a place where human beings and all creation may live a life in justice and peace? More particularly: How can churches find better ways to discern the will of God?

#### *EC-05. We must pray together if we are to stay together*

Christians need to pray for unity, and this makes sense only if they pray together. This important statement points to a fundamental challenge for the fellowship of churches “on the way to visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship, *expressed in worship and in our common life in Christ*.” Unfortunately, one of the factors that divide Christians is the matter of worship itself.

Ecumenical prayer does not claim to be the worship of any given member church, or of any kind of a hybrid church or super-church. It is in common prayer, perhaps more than in any other ecumenical work, that we encounter both the promise of God’s reconciliation and the pains of our divisions, not only in the fact that we cannot share the Eucharist, but also in different emphases in worship and in different gestures and customs which make us feel strangers in other churches.

This ecumenical conversation asks: How can we as churches and as a fellowship of churches pray together, and on which theological and ecclesiological grounds? Do we pray together if attending each other’s confessional worship? What does “ecumenical” prayer entail?

#### *EC-06. Developing effective leadership: contextual ecumenical formation and theological education*

Ecumenical theological education and formation, resting on core moral and spiritual values of the churches, is vital for the future of the ecumenical movement and the integrity of Christian mission. It not only preserves the ecumenical memory but more importantly develops responsible and conscious agents of change within communities, churches and civil society. But how is this to be done today? The search for

creative, inclusive and transforming leadership is rooted in the prayer “God of life, lead us to justice and peace.”

This ecumenical conversation takes up the constitutional mandate of the WCC to “nurture the growth of an ecumenical consciousness through processes of education and a vision of life in community rooted in each particular cultural context.” It examines how contextual ecumenical formation and education can strengthen leadership in the churches. What role can the ecumenical movement, and in particular the WCC, play in strengthening contextual ecumenical formation and education in the coming years?

#### *EC-07. Together towards life: mission in changing contexts*

Empowered by the life-giving Spirit, God’s mission aims at affirmation of the fullness of life. Acknowledging the need to re-define the concepts of mission in rapidly changing ecclesial and ecumenical landscapes, the WCC adopted in 2012 a new mission affirmation, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*. This ecumenical conversation will engage in further work to give impetus and encouragement to ecumenical mission work and to implement new mission thinking in the various aspects, contexts and venues of mission.

At the conversation, participants will discuss study and policy guidelines, as well as training modules on the statement for three target audiences: local congregations and mission groups; national mission boards and global mission bodies; and missiology students and missionary trainees. This practical guide to the statement aims to offer signposts that can help participants discern the action of the Spirit in the world – and to bring the document into everyday use in the life of the churches and among agents of mission.

#### *EC-08. Evangelism today: new ways for authentic discipleship*

Evangelism is the invitation to authentic discipleship in a new life in Christ. It is at the heart of God’s mission and the missional dimension of every local church. Within today’s secular, multi-religious and multi-cultural contexts, churches have a pivotal role in the rediscovery of God’s mission for the fullness of life, searching for new ways of authentic discipleship.

This ecumenical conversation aspires to address key challenges in how evangelism can best witness to the good news for people of all cultures in diverse contextual settings. Today’s challenging opportunity to live out authentic witness necessitates the development of new means of discipleship in Christ, always oriented toward promotion of the healing and reconciling message of the gospel, guided by life-affirming values for the promotion of the common good.

#### *EC-09. Community of women and men in the church: mutual recognition and transformative justice*

The church, as a prophetic sign in today’s world, is called to embody a true community of women and men. Such an inclusive community is God’s gift and promise for humanity, being created “in God’s image,” male and female (Gen 1:27). To enliven this ideal during the 10th Assembly, this ecumenical conversation will create a space to explore how “what we are, we ought to become” (Philip Potter). It will be a space

for celebrating and furthering the 60 years of women's active praxis for a just community of women and men in the church. While acknowledging the still-existing challenges to becoming this community, there will also be a call for mutual accountability in different ministries of the church as to how we have been or not have been a community of women and men. Echoing the assembly theme, the ecumenical conversation will also be a call to transformative justice in response to the often-acknowledged backlash to the gains that the ecumenical movement made through the earlier agency of the ecumenical foremothers.

Through various methodologies the ecumenical conversation will explore these questions: In what ways has the church been a community of women and men? What have been the existing challenges to the called-to-be-one church's vision of being and living as a community of women and men? What programmes, concrete actions and theologies should the churches, the ecumenical movement and ecumenical partners design and engage with so as to make sure that the call to unity for justice and peace is pursued together as a just and inclusive community of women and men? How can the ecumenical process of building a community of women and men better enhance the "cross-fertilisation" advocacy process with the UN CSW?

#### *EC-10. Exploring Christian self-identity in a world of many faiths*

In the twenty-first century, Christians in many different contexts and parts of the world need to articulate their faith in conversation with people who are followers of other religions. This conversation will reflect on a number of central Christian themes (such as our understanding of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, creation, salvation, the Bible and the church). Though Christian thinking and practice about such issues may be challenged as we engage with people of other religions, it can also be a creative undertaking, encouraging us to return to the roots of our faith and to reflect more deeply, discovering Christian insights speaking directly to this religiously plural world.

This ecumenical conversation will seek to be a space for holding a genuine conversation in which different views on serious questions about the relationship between Christianity and other religions may be expressed courteously, heard graciously and honoured. The conversation will draw as a resource on the consultations organized over the last decade by the WCC in the area of "Christian self-understanding in the context of religious plurality." It will also act as a springboard for future interreligious work, integrating both theological and practical dimensions.

#### *EC-11. Bonded with the Marginalised for a just and inclusive church and world*

Discrimination and marginalization of people on the basis of their colour, ethnicity, caste, gender, disabilities and other factors have always been matters of concern for churches everywhere. This has resulted in a variety of diaconal initiatives and advocacy for their rights and justice. In fact, such engagement has given visibility, relevance and purpose to the churches and ecumenical organizations, including the WCC.

This ecumenical conversation will attempt to address some of the major hesitations and inhibitions that churches encounter in responding to marginalized groups. It will also search for creative possibilities for churches' effective presence and witness

in an increasingly unjust and exclusionary world. In addressing these issues, churches have an opportunity to become truly alternative communities, holding forth the promise of the coming reign of God. The conversation will draw from the experiences and resources of those who are struggling against racism, casteism, and for Indigenous people, people with disabilities, people forced to migrate or flee and those in migrant churches.

*EC-12. A call to ecological justice and peace in the face of climate change*

Climate change is one of the major threats humanity is facing today. The increase of frequency and intensity of tropical storms, droughts and floods, the rise of sea levels and the change in weather patterns are some of the symptoms of the climate crisis affecting peoples and earth. Vulnerable communities in various parts of the world are already experiencing the most severe consequences of a crisis which has global implications.

This ecumenical conversation will look at what churches, civil society and the international community are doing to address climate change and ecological destruction. It will discuss the ethical, spiritual and theological dimensions of the crisis and will put forward proposals for action contributing to the ecumenical pilgrimage for justice and peace.

*EC-13. Economy of life: overcoming greed to eradicate poverty*

“Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions” (Luke 12:15). This saying of Jesus hints at the perennial challenge of relating Christian discipleship to the larger economic environment in which the human good is or is not realized. Greed and injustice are at the root of the intertwined economic, social and ecological crises that continue to cause immense suffering, especially among the already impoverished and vulnerable. In response, churches are calling for an “Economy of Life, Justice and Peace for All,” a vision in which poverty is eradicated, inequality and greed are challenged, and creation is cared for.

The ecumenical conversation will address the following key question: How can churches inspire a pilgrimage toward justice and peace with a focus on an economy of life, witness to a “spirituality of enough” as well as contribute to transforming the current climate of greed, materialism and consumerism? A major focus will be the introduction of greed indicators and alternative definitions of well-being, crucial to evolving an economy of life.

*EC-14. Human security: sustaining peace with justice and human rights*

Human rights and freedom from violence are now often described together as *human security*. Human security is increasingly recognized as a basic right for all people, since it is essential for sustaining peace with justice and upholding human dignity. Human security views every person as deserving of fundamental freedoms and universal rights for all, a vital security matter. Security itself is seen within the conditions of freedom from pervasive threats to people’s rights, their safety and their right to peaceful lives. The agenda for human security for sustaining peace with justice and human rights should ensure fullness of life, an idea deeply rooted in the biblical concept of *shalom*.

This ecumenical conversation will analyze and reflect on different pertinent issues related to human security within the context of peace with justice and human rights in emerging geo-political contexts. The conversation will also discuss the interrelatedness of human security and human rights, sharpening the theological undergirding of God's call for prophetic witness.

#### *EC-15. The way of just peace: building peace together*

What do we mean by "just peace"? The search for Christian unity includes a standing invitation for churches to become more united for peace. Yet political, theological and practical divisions persist. Churches are deeply divided or silent on even the greatest threats to peace. Nation and culture often are classified by creed and compassion. But projections of power and lifestyle on a global scale now pose new challenges to witness and service in church and society.

This conversation will explore how churches at different levels are motivated and equipped to build peace. It will tap rich biblical, ecumenical and other resources using the inter-disciplinary approach of just peace. It will provide space to debate global issues that call Christians toward the more dynamic unity required if we are to become credible witnesses for peace today. It will draw from the discussions new pathways for churches committed to building peace together, in faith.

#### *EC-16. Religions working together for peace and freedom*

After addressing the question of the ambiguous relationship between religion and both peace and freedom, this ecumenical conversation will explore different models of interreligious engagement. It will facilitate a candid and creative engagement with the problematic aspects of religions, especially in relation to the themes of peace and freedom, in order to engender interreligious collaboration so that humanity may flourish.

This ecumenical conversation will juxtapose situations of strife and conflict between religions (as in Nigeria and Pakistan - Christian and Muslim) with instances of religions working alongside each other as peace-builders (as in Korea and Sri Lanka - Buddhists and Christians) to articulate critical challenges and creative possibilities for interreligious peace-building and fostering freedom.

#### *EC-17. The Korean peninsula: ecumenical solidarity for justice and peace*

Taking into consideration the broader implications and impact of tensions on the Korean peninsula for North East Asia and other parts of the world, this ecumenical conversation will seek to explore the lessons learned from initiatives to date. It will then explore the issues, challenges and obstacles that should be addressed by the ecumenical movement as a whole, and specifically by the WCC.

This ecumenical conversation will work to identify specific areas for partnership among churches, as well as with governmental and non-governmental organizations, and regional and global ecumenical organizations. The ultimate aim is to promote and strengthen ecumenical accompaniment for building justice and peace on the Korean peninsula, which can foster reconciliation with a vision toward eventual reunification.

*EC-18 “Middle East”: whose justice, what peace?*

In the last three years the Middle East has experienced a new wave of conflicts. This ecumenical conversation will focus on the multiple causes of conflict and examine the different theologies that inform the conflict and attempt to understand them. It will also explore ways in which the churches in the region and in the wider ecumenical arena could come together, work together and witness together for the cause of a just peace in the region.

*EC-19. Churches’ advocacy for children’s rights*

Children are a blessing from God, and churches, families and communities are called to nurture and protect them. But many children in every part of the world are at risk, particularly as a result of a neoliberal globalized economy, violence and conflict. Children are among the most vulnerable victims of injustice, poverty and abuse. Furthermore, children have been abused even within the churches.

The basic objective of this ecumenical conversation is to heighten understanding of the situation of children both in the churches and society. It is expected that it will lead to recommendations from the participants for development of an action plan promoting the protection of children’s rights, prophetic witness on their behalf and advocacy for the participation of children themselves as agents for peace and justice.

*EC-20. Ecumenical health and healing ministries*

Health and healing ministries work through a variety of institutions. The churches, Christian healthcare providers, pastoral counsellors and ecumenical advocacy networks and institutions work to bind together issues of justice, peace and fullness of life. For instance, many efforts are being implemented to address the root causes of the HIV pandemic and to facilitate healthcare services, including palliative care. Other Christian ministries address deep-seated trauma, which has been recognized as one of the major causes of mental-health diseases. In many parts of the world barriers still exist to quality of life, justice, peace and affordable healthcare services, often a matter of life and death. This conversation will strategize as to how churches, Christian healthcare providers, ecumenical health networks, secular international agencies like the World Health Organization and UNAIDS and national governments can work together to restore dignity, justice and health in communities.

This conversation will identify ways of creating and/or strengthening ecumenical partnerships for life and for churches to call each other to health and healing ministries.

*EC-21. Compelled to serve: diakonia and development in a rapidly changing world*

The global context in which churches and specialized agencies work for solidarity and sustainable development is rapidly changing and significantly affects how we engage in sustainable development through *diakonia* (Christian service). These changes include new demographics (youth); communication technologies; geo-political-financial power shifts; the private sector and military as new actors; changed global development architecture; shrinking political space for civil society; interreligious opportunities and challenges; neo-liberal economics and climate change. Responses

of the ecumenical movement in the past that have effectively provided solidarity, accompaniment and resources now require new thinking, new approaches and new patterns of cooperation.

This conversation invites deep analysis of this changing development paradigm, in which the ecumenical movement is compelled to engage and to witness for and serve God. The sessions will provide a space for theological, ecclesiological and practical reflection on how these change factors affect churches and specialized agencies. Focus will be on the risks, opportunities and new patterns of cooperation. A foundational document is “Theological Perspectives on *Diakonia* in the Twenty-First Century.”

## Assembly Business

Assembly business is conducted using the consensus model of decision-making. The consensus model of decision-making encourages prayerful listening to one another and growth in understanding between ecclesial traditions. Consensus procedures allow more room for consultation, exploration, questioning and prayerful reflection, with less rigidity than formal voting procedures do – though procedures for voting are maintained. Through consensus, participation, dialogue and commitment among participants and member churches are strengthened.

### Committees

Assembly committees will contribute to the future mandate of the World Council of Churches. Their reports, reflecting the spirit and dynamics of the assembly, will be brought forward for decision in business plenaries. To ensure that the outcome of the committees will guide the future WCC in a coherent way, cooperation among these committees started prior to the assembly, in June 2013, in a preparatory meeting of their leadership. The preparatory meeting included encounter with the WCC general secretary on expectations from the assembly and post-assembly programmes and policies, collaboration with staff members in charge of each committee’s work, and consensus training. The collaboration and interaction of the committees will also be facilitated by regular meetings among the assembly committee moderators and rapporteurs during the assembly.

In the course of the assembly, the Programme Guidelines Committee and Finance Committee will inform one another so as to prepare their recommendations taking into consideration both the priorities identified by the assembly and the available human and financial resources.

For the first time, the Programme Guidelines Committee will focus on both programme and relationships in an integrated manner. The committee will formulate policies and guidelines integrating the council’s programmatic and relational engagements in the future, avoiding, at the same time, contradictions, competition or expectations beyond existing capacities. The Policy Reference Committee will focus on institutional policies and will also process the Unity Statement for action.

All committees will deliberate and prepare their reports and their recommendations following the consensus procedures. The meeting of their leadership, mentioned above, included an introduction to consensus provisions for the conduct of meetings and orientation sessions with the consensus facilitator.

The assembly committees include:

#### *Nominations Committee*

Based on the recommendations from member churches, regional and confessional meetings of delegates, the committee makes proposals for the election of presidents and members of the central committee from among the delegates. Procedures of the Nominations Committee are detailed below.

#### *Message Committee*

The committee is responsible for listening carefully to what is happening at the assembly – in its prayer life, Bible study groups, plenary sessions, ecumenical conversations and the *Madang*. Based on what it has heard, the committee develops and presents for adoption by the assembly a text that captures the experience and hopes of those gathered in Busan. This message is intended to serve as an inspiration to Christians and the churches in their ecumenical commitment and to offer a clear and convincing Christian witness to the world at large.

#### *Finance Committee*

Discussing the finances of the WCC over the past seven years and financial projections for the period ahead, the Finance Committee proposes general guidelines regarding financial matters for the new central committee to follow.

#### *Programme Guidelines Committee*

Reviewing the evaluation and reports since the 9th Assembly, the Programme Guidelines Committee prepares and presents for adoption by the assembly a report making recommendations for future work in the areas of churches and ecumenical developments, unity and mission, public witness and *diakonia*.

#### *Policy Reference Committee*

The committee presents recommendations for assembly action on the reports of the moderator and the general secretary, on membership matters, and reviews amendments to the Constitution and Rules of the WCC. The committee will also review, amend and bring for final approval the “Unity Statement.”

#### *Public Issues Committee*

This committee prepares and presents for adoption draft statements on selected issues of international concern, including ecumenical engagement in peace building, human rights and justice. See further discussion of this committee’s work below.

### *Business Committee*

Formed by the officers, presidents, the moderators of the assembly committees and other delegates, the committee coordinates the daily business of the assembly. Its membership is defined the rule IV.5 of the WCC Rules.

### *Assembly Worship Committee*

Responsible for the rich spiritual life of the assembly, the committee organizes the daily worship prepared for the assembly and coordinates other prayer services during the assembly.

### *Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration*

This committee serves the assembly in an advisory capacity, helping to maintain the spirit of the mandate, concerns and dynamic of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC.

## **Public Issues Committee**

### *Rules on public statements*

Public statements are one way in which the WCC responds to critical issues on the international agenda. The basic provisions for making such statements are set out in WCC rule XII:

In the performance of its functions, the World Council of Churches through its assembly or through its central committee may issue statements on any situation or concern with which the Council or its constituent churches may be confronted. While such statements may have great significance and influence as the expression of the judgment or concern of so widely representative a Christian body, yet their authority will consist only in the weight which they carry by their own truth and wisdom, and the publishing of such statements shall not be held to imply that the Council as such has, or can have, any constitutional authority over the constituent churches or right to speak for them.

Politics is an inescapable reality and involvement in it is a Christian responsibility. Churches are therefore expected to address current affairs. At the Amsterdam assembly in 1948, the framework for public issues was given in a way that remains valid: “the Council regards it as an essential part of its responsibility to address its own constituent members as occasion may arise, on matters which might require united attention in the realm of thought or action.”

### *The WCC responding to political challenges*

A public statement may take various forms, including consultation reports and assessments of situations, pastoral letters and appeals to member churches, resolutions, and representations and appeals to governments and intergovernmental bodies.

Public statements are only one form of response to international affairs available to the council; and in many situations other forms of action may be more effective. These include pastoral visits to churches in difficult or critical situations, discussions with governments, interventions with intergovernmental bodies, delegations dispatched to study and report on specific issues or situations, confidential representations to

governments, and support to and solidarity with churches and action groups. All of these are undergirded by continuous monitoring of developments as they affect the life and witness of churches in particular situations and the fellowship of churches as a whole.

### *Criteria for public issues*

The central committee has identified the main criteria used in selecting issues on which public statements are made:

- areas on issues on which the WCC has had direct involvement and long-standing commitment;
- emerging issues of international concern to which the attention of the churches should be called for action;
- critical and developing political situations which demand the WCC to make known its judgment and lend its spiritual and moral voice;
- expectations from the member churches that the WCC should speak;
- the need to set policy or mandates for the WCC staff.

Public issues give guidance to member churches for their own public actions and can serve as a tool for a more united voice. Public issues offer policy, by giving the language to bring to governments, intergovernmental organizations and other structures of political decision-making. Public issues guide programme work at the same time as programme work experiences guide public issues.

Public issues reflect all political concerns of the council, including war and peace, economy, ecology and human rights. They deal with violation of all rights – economic, social and cultural rights, as well as civil and political ones.

The public issues are brought to the assembly through a long, careful and transparent process, involving the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, the leadership of the central committee, the central committee and the executive committee to ensure the best possible ownership by the constituency and quality of the message.

The statements to be discussed at the 10th assembly in Busan were proposed by the CCIA in its meeting held in the People's Republic of China in June 2012 and approved by the WCC central committee in its meeting held in Crete, Greece, in August-September 2012. They concern:

- freedom of religion and rights of all religious communities in the context of politicization of religion
- peace and reunification in the context of the Korean Peninsula
- just peace
- human rights of stateless people.

Key meetings in preparing the draft statements were, among others, the Consultation on Human Security in Asia, with focus on North East Asia (June 2013), and the meeting of the IEPC reference Group (August 2013).

### *Process at the assembly*

In Busan, the approval of the assembly will be sought on the issues at an early business session at which the delegates will also be informed of procedures and deadlines for proposing additional issues on which they believe the assembly should speak. The fact that a particular public issue item, if it comes from the floor, should have the support of 10-15 member churches could limit public issues coming up in this way.

The public issues committee then will review these proposals in the light of the criteria listed and select topics on which it will recommend that statements be issued, taking into consideration the time constraints and other limitations under which the assembly works. The topics selected should be of considerable international and ecumenical significance. The public issues committee will not propose statements on specific issues or situations which can be dealt with in the normal course by the general secretary, the leadership of the central committee or the central or executive committees. Nor will it propose statements on issues for which other forms of actions would be more appropriate.

The public issues committee discusses and prepares draft statements that are then brought before a business plenary of the assembly for adoption.

### **Nominations Committee**

One of the important tasks of a World Council of Churches assembly is to elect from among its delegates the members of the new central committee, which will give leadership to the WCC in the years until the next assembly, and the presidents.

The WCC Rules provide for the election of an Assembly Nominations Committee to (1) nominate the Presidents of the World Council of Churches and (2) prepare the list of nominees to the new Central Committee. The members of the Nominations Committee are themselves not eligible for nomination to the Central Committee.

The assembly will be expected to elect up to eight Presidents, who should be “persons whose ecumenical experience and standing is widely recognized by the member churches and among the ecumenical partners of the World Council in their respective regions and ecclesial traditions.” Appropriate names for consideration by the Nominations Committee were solicited prior to the assembly. By virtue of office, Presidents will be members of the Central Committee.

The WCC Constitution specifies the number of Central Committee members to be elected: not more than 150 from the member churches, including five from the member churches not meeting the criterion of size (formerly known as “associate member churches”).

The churches have been invited to nominate candidates for the Central Committee from among assembly delegates. Consultation between churches in each region is encouraged, such that a name supported by more than one church will carry more weight. The churches have been informed in advance that the Nominations

Committee, in normal circumstances, might call upon any one of their delegates to serve on Central Committee.

The principles guiding the work of the Nominations Committee in preparing its slate are as follows:

- the personal qualifications of the individual for the task for which she/he is to be nominated;
- fair and adequate confessional representation;
- fair and adequate geographical and cultural representation;
- fair and adequate representation of the major interests of the World Council;
- the general acceptability of the nominations to the churches to which the nominees belong;
- not more than seven persons from any one member church;
- adequate representation of lay persons – men, women and young people;
- appropriate participation of persons with disabilities, indigenous people, and persons of racial and ethnic minorities.

It has been the normal practice that the Central Committee should reflect in its composition the proportion of representation at the assembly. This applies not only to the representation of confessions and regions, but equally to the presence of women, youth and lay persons on the Central Committee. In order to ensure an inclusive and balanced assembly and in line with earlier practice, the following goals have been established: women 50 percent, youth 25 percent, lay persons 50 percent, Orthodox 25 percent.

In view of the above principles and to facilitate the task of the Nominations Committee, the churches have been asked to submit prioritized lists of nominations rather than single names, insofar as possible following the criteria for balanced representation set forth in the WCC Rules. The Nominations Committee will seek to respect the wishes of the nominating churches, while acknowledging that it may not be able to accept all recommendations.

The considerable information about potential nominees gathered through this process will therefore be available to the Nominations Committee as it will begin its work at the assembly. Basically, its task will be to select nominees from the lists thus provided and to fill out the slate in a way that achieves a balanced representation overall. To facilitate what is evidently an extremely complicated task, the Committee will consult as necessary with delegates from member churches and from various regions.

Delegates will also be given an opportunity to propose names for the new Central Committee. The precise procedures and deadlines for doing so will be explained during the plenary session early in the assembly when the Nominations Committee presents its initial report. During that session, the Nominations Committee will present a first proposal on the anticipated profile of the new Central Committee (without names) for consideration and approval by the assembly. Subsequently, a first reading of nominations will be presented for general discussion. Delegates may bring proposals for changes to specific nominations to the Nominations Committee outside of the

plenary. Any change needs to offer a replacement with the same demographic profile (region, gender, age, etc.) – *unless the replacement will improve the balances sought* – and must be signed by six delegates from the same region.

The Nominations Committee will consider these responses, bearing in mind the criteria for balanced representation mentioned above. On this basis it will formulate a second slate to be presented in a plenary session for the assembly to vote on.

Following the election, the new Central Committee will hold a brief initial meeting to choose from among its own members a nominations committee responsible for proposing a slate of the moderator and vice-moderators of the Central Committee and Executive Committee members. The new Central Committee will hold one further meeting toward the end of the assembly for these elections and any other organizational matters which need to be dealt with prior to its first full meeting, which is planned to take place in early July 2014.

## ***Madang Programme***

### **What is *madang*?**

*Madang* is a Korean term that denotes a courtyard in a traditional Korean house. The *madang* serves as a space for encounter and sharing, celebration and fellowship, greeting a visitor and welcoming a stranger. The Korean churches proposed *madang* as a concept to help root the assembly in the host context and also give shape and meaning to the assembly. *Madang* offers possibilities to prepare the entire assembly as a shared space for encounter and to discuss how we can best be the church together in the world today. This discussion will also be seen with the highlighting of five different dimensions of being church together that will act as transversal tracks throughout the assembly; *koinonia* (fellowship), *martyria* (mission and witness), *dia-konia* (service), ecumenical formation and inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. By linking plenary presentations, discussion spaces, workshops, committees, etc., in more intentional ways, we are able to engage in a mutual learning and sharing of the gifts that we all bring. While the assembly may be held in the spirit of *madang*, a specific *madang* programme has also been developed to promote the exchange of gifts and experiences among participants, through workshops, exhibitions, side events, performances, theatre, visual arts, spaces for discussion, etc.

### ***Madang* programme components**

#### *Workshops*

Workshops are events that provide an opportunity for assembly participants to come together to discuss and explore a specific thematic topic. Workshops will:

- Provide space for the ecumenical family to discuss issues of common concern and/or emerging challenges, allowing for free and frank discussion in an environment of mutual learning;
- enable the exchange of information and sharing of knowledge, specialization and experience, while developing common approaches to best practice;

- demonstrate the interconnectedness of topics;
- help to develop guidance around future work and initiatives.

In Busan, 88 workshops will be offered over a four-day period during the assembly beginning on 4 November (see timetable). A listing of *madang* workshops and their descriptions is offered in the assembly *Handbook*.

### *Exhibitions*

Exhibitions are spaces that provide an opportunity for the assembly participants and the wider public to enjoy a range of diverse offerings from the membership and/or ecumenical partners. Exhibitions are not limited to static presentations and displays (photo essays, art exhibitions, etc) and may include a variety of offerings, such as presentations, book discussions, artistic demonstrations, and interactive exhibits. Exhibitions will:

- introduce and promote the exploration of themes/ issues in visual form
- encourage people to actively interpret and explore exhibition content
- create an interactivity between people viewing the exhibition, the exhibitors and the exhibition itself
- build networks and mobilize interest around themes/ issues
- demonstrate partnership with churches and other ecumenical partners within the fellowship.

### *Side Events*

Side events are events for the fellowship, ecumenical partners and wider public that may include music, cultural e.g., cultural performances (theatre, dance), concerts, or visual arts, and designated spaces for discussion. Most *madang* exhibitions and side events activities will take place in the exhibition hall 2.

## **Regional and Confessional Meetings**

On 31 October participants are invited to join regional meetings. These will be co-hosted with regional ecumenical organizations (REOs). The meetings provide an opportunity for fellowship among delegates and other participants from the same region.

The REOs in Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Pacific held significant assemblies prior to the Busan Assembly, engaging with similar themes of life, justice, peace, dignity, discipleship and unity. Other preparatory meetings were held in Asia, the Caribbean, the Middle East and North America. The regional meeting in Busan will provide space to continue these reflections. Delegates will also be asked to consider the gifts of leadership they would like to offer to the future central committee of the WCC, particularly its presidents.

On 1 and 7 November participants are invited to join confessional meetings. These will be hosted by Christian world communions (CWCs) and member churches. The

meetings are an opportunity for participants from the same church family to join in fellowship and prayer. The first meeting is an opportunity to discuss and to affirm the gifts that different church traditions offer the one ecumenical movement. The second meeting will be an opportunity to reflect on the outcomes of the assembly and to strengthen the commitment of each confessional tradition as it continues the pilgrimage for justice and peace beyond the assembly and into the life of the churches.



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## **POLICY DOCUMENTS**

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# **CONSTITUTION AND RULES OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

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*\*Amendments to the Constitution as reviewed by the central committee, 2012, and sent to the member churches in accordance with article VII of the constitution. These amendments are proposed to the assembly for action (approval). Proposed amendments are underlined.*

*\*\*Amendments to Rules I, VI, and XX already approved by the central committee, 2012. These three rules, though approved by the central committee, will come into effect only after their confirmation by the assembly (rule XX). Proposed amendments are underlined.*

## **Constitution**

### **I. Basis**

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### **II. Membership**

Churches shall be eligible for membership in the fellowship of the World Council of Churches who express their agreement with the basis upon which the Council is founded and satisfy such criteria for membership as the assembly or central committee may prescribe. The central committee shall consider applications for membership in accordance with Rule I.

### **III. Purposes and functions**

The World Council of Churches is constituted by the churches to serve the one ecumenical movement. It incorporates the work of the world movements for Faith and Order and Life and Work, the International Missionary Council, and the World Council of Christian Education.

The primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches is to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe.

In seeking *koinonia* in faith and life, witness and service, the churches through the Council will:

- promote the prayerful search for forgiveness and reconciliation in a spirit of mutual accountability, the development of deeper relationships through theological dialogue, and the sharing of human, spiritual and material resources with one another;
- facilitate common witness in each place and in all places, and support each other in their work for mission and evangelism;
- express their commitment to diakonia in serving human need, breaking down barriers between people, promoting one human family in justice and peace, and upholding the integrity of creation, so that all may experience the fullness of life;
- nurture the growth of an ecumenical consciousness through processes of education and a vision of life in community rooted in each particular cultural context;
- assist each other in their relationships to and with people of other faith communities;
- foster renewal and growth in unity, worship, mission and service.

In order to strengthen the one ecumenical movement, the Council will:

- foster the living fellowship of the member churches and the coherence of the one ecumenical movement;
- nurture relations with and among churches, especially within but also beyond its membership;
- establish and maintain relations with national councils, regional conferences of churches, organizations of Christian world communions and other ecumenical bodies;
- support ecumenical initiatives at regional, national and local levels;
- facilitate the creation of networks among ecumenical organizations;
- work towards maintaining the coherence of the one ecumenical movement in its diverse manifestations.

#### **IV. Authority**

The World Council of Churches shall offer counsel and provide opportunity for united action in matters of common interest.

It may take action on behalf of constituent churches only in such matters as one or more of them may commit to it and only on behalf of such churches.

The World Council of Churches shall not legislate for the churches; nor shall it act for them in any manner except as indicated above or as may hereafter be specified by the constituent churches.

#### **V. Organization**

The World Council of Churches shall discharge its functions through an assembly, a central committee, an executive committee, and other subordinate bodies as may be established.

1. The assembly
  - a. The assembly shall be the supreme legislative body governing the World Council of Churches and shall ordinarily meet at eight-year intervals.
  - b. The assembly shall be composed of official representatives of the member churches, known as delegates, elected by the member churches.
  - c. The assembly shall be an expression of the living fellowship of member churches, shall strengthen the one ecumenical movement, and shall have the following functions:
    - i. to elect the president or presidents of the World Council of Churches;
    - ii. to elect not more than 145 members of the central committee from among the delegates which the member churches have elected to the assembly;
    - iii. to elect not more than 5 members from among the representatives elected to the assembly by churches which do not fulfil the criteria of size and have not been granted membership for exceptional reasons;
    - iv. to determine the overall policies of the World Council of Churches and to review programmes undertaken to implement policies previously adopted;
    - v. to delegate to the central committee specific functions, except to amend this constitution and to allocate the membership of the central committee granted by this constitution to the assembly exclusively.
2. The central committee
  - a. The central committee shall be that governing body of the World Council of Churches with primary responsibility and authority to:
    - i. carry out the vision and policies of the assembly and to determine and develop the strategies to do so;
    - ii. deepen the living fellowship of member churches, and shall include opportunities for fulfilling together the common calling that is the basis of membership;
    - iii. seek to provide coherence and strategic leadership to the one ecumenical movement, and provide opportunities for consultation among Christian churches on issues of mutual concern;
    - iv. be responsible for elaborating institutional and programmatic strategic plans based on the policies adopted by the assembly and for ensuring their implementation;
    - v. exercise the functions of the assembly itself delegated to it by the assembly between its meetings, except the assembly's power to amend this constitution and to allocate or alter the allocation of the membership of central committee.
  - b. The central committee shall be composed of the president or presidents of the World Council of Churches and not more than 150 members.
    - i. Not more than 145 members shall be elected by the assembly from among the delegates the member churches have elected to the assembly. Such members shall be distributed among the member churches by the assembly giving due regard to the size of the churches and confessions

- represented in the Council, the number of churches of each confession which are members of the Council, reasonable geographical and cultural balance, and adequate representation of the major interests of the Council.
- ii. Not more than 5 members shall be elected by the assembly from among the representatives elected to the assembly by churches which do not fulfil the criteria of size and have not been granted membership for exceptional reasons.
  - iii. A vacancy in the membership of the central committee, occurring between meetings of the assembly, shall be filled by the central committee itself after consultation with the church of which the person previously occupying the position was a member.
  - c. The central committee shall have, in addition to the general powers set out in (a) above, the following powers:
    - i. to elect its moderator and vice-moderator or vice-moderators from among the members of the central committee;
    - ii. to elect the executive committee from among the members of the central committee;
    - iii. to elect committees, commissions, and consultative bodies;
    - iv. to initiate and terminate programmes and to set priorities for the work of the Council within the policies adopted by the assembly;
    - v. to elect the general secretary;
    - vi. to elect one or more deputy general secretaries, and to make provision for the appointment of all members of the staff of the Council;
    - vii. to decide membership matters;
    - viii. to adopt the reports of executive committee actions, and to receive the budget and financial reports;
    - ix. to determine and develop the strategies to deliver the goals set by the assembly, including institutional policies for programme and finance and to secure financial support for the Council;
    - x. to plan for the meetings of the assembly, making provision for the conduct of its business, for worship and study, and for common Christian commitment. The central committee shall determine the number of delegates to the assembly and allocate them among the member churches giving due regard to the size of the churches and confessions represented in the Council; the number of churches of each confession which are members of the Council; reasonable geographical and cultural balance; the desired distribution among church officials, parish ministers and lay persons; among men, women and young people; and participation by persons whose special knowledge and experience will be needed;
    - xi. to delegate specific functions to the executive committee, or to other bodies or persons, and to hold them accountable for that delegation.
  - d. The central committee can delegate to the executive committee such authority necessary to ensure fiduciary responsibility and accountability for

governance of the Council, including monitoring programmes, finance and personnel matters.

### 3. Rules

The assembly or the central committee may adopt and amend rules not inconsistent with this constitution for the conduct of the business of the World Council of Churches.

### 4. By-laws

The assembly or the central committee may adopt and amend by-laws not inconsistent with this constitution for the functioning of its committees, consultative bodies and commissions.

### 5. Quorum

A quorum for the conduct of any business by the assembly or the central committee shall be one-half of its membership.

## **VI. Other ecumenical Christian organizations**

1. Such world confessional bodies and such international ecumenical organizations as may be designated by the central committee may be invited to send representatives to the assembly and to the central committee, in such numbers as the central committee shall determine; however, these representatives shall not have the right to participate when decisions are taken.
  
2. Such national councils and regional conferences of churches, other Christian councils and missionary councils as may be designated by the central committee may be invited to send representatives to the assembly and to the central committee, in such numbers as the central committee shall determine; however, these representatives shall not have the right to participate when decisions are taken.

## **VII. Amendments**

The constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the delegates to the assembly present and voting, provided that the proposed amendment shall have been reviewed by the central committee, and notice of it sent to the member churches not less than six months before the meeting of the assembly. The central committee itself, as well as the member churches, shall have the right to propose such amendment.

# **Rules**

## **I. Membership in the fellowship of the World Council of Churches**

The World Council of Churches is comprised of churches which have constituted the Council or which have been admitted into membership and which continue

to belong to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches. The term “church” as used in this article could also include an association, convention or federation of autonomous churches. A group of churches within a country or region, or within the same confession, may choose to participate in the World Council of Churches as one member. Churches within the same country or region or within the same confession may apply jointly to belong to the fellowship of the Council, in order to respond to their common calling, to strengthen their joint participation and/or to satisfy the requirement of minimum size (rule I.3.b.iii). Such groupings of churches are encouraged by the World Council of Churches; each individual church within the grouping must satisfy the criteria for membership in the fellowship of the World Council of Churches, except the requirements of size. A church seeking affiliation with a grouping of autonomous churches which is a member of the World Council of Churches must agree with the basis and fulfil the criteria for membership.

The general secretary shall maintain the official lists of member churches that have been accepted to belong to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches, noting any special arrangement accepted by the assembly or central committee. Separate lists shall be maintained of member churches belonging to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches that do or do not participate in decision-making.

### 1. Application

A church that wishes to join the World Council of Churches shall apply in writing to the general secretary.

### 2. Processing

The general secretary shall submit all such applications through the executive committee to the central committee together with such information as he or she considers necessary to enable the central committee to make a decision on the application.

### 3. Criteria

Churches applying to join the World Council of Churches (“applicant churches”) are required first to express agreement with the basis on which the Council is founded and confirm their commitment to the purposes and functions of the Council as defined in articles I and III of the constitution. The basis states: “The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

Applicant churches should give an account of how their faith and witness relate to these norms and practices:

#### a. Theological

- i. In its life and witness, the church professes faith in the triune God according to the scriptures, and as this faith is reflected in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.
- ii. The church maintains a ministry of proclaiming the gospel and celebrating the sacraments as understood by its doctrines.

- iii. The church baptizes in the name of the one God, “*Father, Son and Holy Spirit*” and acknowledges the need to move towards the recognition of the baptism of other churches.
  - iv. The church recognizes the presence and activity of Christ and the Holy Spirit outside its own boundaries and prays for the gift of God’s wisdom to all in the awareness that other member churches also believe in the Holy Trinity and the saving grace of God.
  - v. The church recognizes in the other member churches elements of the true church, even if it does not regard them “as churches in the true and full sense of the word” (Toronto statement).
- b. Organizational
- i. The church must produce evidence of sustained autonomous life and organization.
  - ii. The church must be able to take the decision to apply for formal membership in the World Council of Churches and continue to belong to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches without obtaining the permission of any other body or person.
  - iii. An applicant church must ordinarily have at least fifty thousand members. The central committee, for exceptional reasons, may dispense with this requirement and accept a church that does not fulfil the criteria of size.
  - iv. An applicant church with more than 10,000 members but less than 50,000 members that has not been granted membership for exceptional reasons under rule I.3.b.iii, but is otherwise eligible for membership, can be admitted as a member subject to the following conditions: (a) it shall not have the right to participate in decision-making in the assembly, and (b) it may participate with other churches in selecting five representatives to the central committee in accordance with rule IV.4.b.iii. Such church shall be considered as a member church belonging to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches in all other respects.
  - v. Churches must recognize the essential interdependence of the member churches belonging to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches, particularly those of the same confession, and should make every effort to practise constructive ecumenical relations with other churches within their country or region. This will normally mean that the church is a member of the national council of churches or similar body and of the regional/sub-regional ecumenical organization.

#### 4. Consultation

Before admitting a church to membership in the fellowship of the World Council of Churches, the appropriate world confessional body or bodies and national council or regional ecumenical organization shall be consulted.

## 5. Decision on acceptance

The Central Committee shall consider applications for membership according to the consensus model of decision making. The application shall be accepted for a specified interim period of participation in the work of the World Council of Churches and for interaction with the local fellowship of member churches. The member churches of the World Council of Churches shall be consulted during the interim period. The Central Committee shall assess whether a consensus of member churches has developed in favour of the application, in which event the applicant church shall be considered a new member church. If there is no consensus, the Central Committee shall deem the application rejected.

## 6. Resignation and Suspension

- a. A church which desires to resign its membership in the fellowship of the World Council of Churches can do so at any time. A church which has resigned but desires to rejoin the Council must again apply for membership.
- b. The central committee may suspend the membership of a church: (i) at the church's request; (ii) because the basis of, or the theological criteria for, membership has not been maintained by that church or; (iii) because the church has persistently neglected its responsibilities of membership as described under rule II.
- c. When the central committee suspends the membership of a church the general secretary shall present progress reports to the executive committee until a solution is mutually agreed. Any decision about the membership status of the church shall be taken by the central committee.

## **II. Responsibilities of membership**

Membership in the World Council of Churches signifies faithfulness to the basis of the Council, fellowship in the Council, participation in the life and work of the Council and commitment to the ecumenical movement as integral to the mission of the church. Churches which are members of the World Council of Churches are expected to:

1. appoint delegates to the assembly, the major policy-making body of the Council, and participate in council with other member churches in shaping the ecumenical vision and the ecumenical agenda;
2. inform the Council of their primary concerns, priorities, activities and constructive criticisms as they may relate to its programmes as well as any matters which they feel need expression of ecumenical solidarity or which merit the attention of the Council and/or churches around the world;
3. communicate the meaning of ecumenical commitment, to foster and encourage ecumenical relations and action at all levels of their church life and to pursue ecumenical fellowship locally, nationally, regionally and internationally;

4. interpret both the broader ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches, its nature, purpose and programmes throughout their membership as a normal part of their own reporting to their constituency;
5. encourage participation in World Council of Churches programmes, activities and meetings, including:
  - a. proposing persons who could make a particular contribution to and/or participate in the Council's various committees, meetings and consultations, programmes, publications and staff;
  - b. establishing links between their own programme offices and the appropriate World Council of Churches programme offices; and
  - c. submitting materials for and promoting Council communications resources: books, periodicals and other publications;
6. respond to decisions of the central committee which call for study, action or other follow-up by the member churches as well as respond to requests on matters referred by the central or executive committee or the general secretary for prayer, advice, information or opinion;
7. make an annual contribution to the general budget of the Council: the amount of the contribution shall be agreed upon in consultation between the church and the Council and shall be regularly reviewed;
8. participate, in ways commensurate with their resources and in consultation with the Council, in assuming responsibility for the costs of the Council's programmes and for expenses related to travel and accommodation of their representatives to Council events.

The implications of not fulfilling such obligations shall be such as the central committee shall decide.

### **III. Churches in association with the World Council of Churches**

A church that agrees with the basis of the Council may request in writing to be received as a church in association with the World Council of Churches, stating its reasons for requesting this mode of relating with the Council. If the reasons are approved by the central committee, such a church may be accepted to be in association with the World Council of Churches.

Churches in association with the World Council of Churches:

1. can send representative(s) to the assembly and the central committee who can speak with permission of the moderator, but have no right to participate in formal decision-making, whether by consensus or by vote;
2. can be invited to participate in the work of the commissions, advisory groups and other consultative bodies of the Council as consultants or advisers;

3. have the possibility of participating in the work of the World Council of Churches as described, but will not be identified with decisions taken or statements issued by the Council;
4. shall make an annual contribution to the general budget of the Council; the amount of the contribution shall be agreed upon in consultation between the church and the Council and shall be regularly reviewed; no financial support will ordinarily be made available from the Council to such churches to facilitate their participation.

The general secretary shall maintain a list of churches in association with the Council.

## **IV. The assembly**

### 1. Composition of the assembly

#### a. *Persons with the right to speak and the responsibility to participate in decision-making*

The assembly shall be composed of official representatives of the member churches, known as delegates, elected by the member churches, with the right to speak and with the responsibility to participate in decision-making

- i. The central committee shall determine the number of delegates to the assembly well in advance of its meeting.

- ii. The central committee shall determine the percentage of the delegates, not less than 85 percent, who shall be both nominated and elected by the member churches. Each member church shall be entitled to a minimum of one delegate. The central committee shall allocate the other delegates in this group among the member churches giving due regard to the size of the churches and confessions represented in the World Council of Churches, the number of churches of each confession which are members of the Council, and reasonable geographical and cultural balance. The central committee shall recommend the proper distribution within delegations among church officials, parish ministers and lay persons; and among men, women, young people and Indigenous peoples. The central committee may make provision for the election by the member churches of alternate delegates who shall serve only in place of such delegates who are unable to attend meetings of the assembly.

- iii. The remaining delegates, not more than 15 percent, shall be elected by certain member churches upon nomination of the central committee as follows:

- iv. If the moderator or any vice-moderator of the central committee is not elected a delegate within the provisions of paragraph ii.above, the central committee shall nominate such officer to the member church of which such officer is a member. Paragraphs v. and vi. below apply to such nominees.

- v. The central committee shall determine the categories of additional delegates necessary to achieve balance in respect of:
  - a) the varied sizes of churches and confessions;

- b) the historical significance, future potential or geographical location and cultural background of particular churches, as well as the special importance of united churches;
- c) the presence of persons whose special knowledge and experience will be necessary to the assembly;
- d) proportions of women, youth, lay persons and local pastors;
- e) participation of Indigenous peoples;
- f) participation of differently-abled people.
- vi. The central committee shall invite the member churches to propose the names of persons in the categories so determined whom the churches would be willing to elect, if nominated by the central committee.
- vii. From the list so compiled, the central committee shall propose the nomination of particular individuals to their respective member church.
- viii. If that member church elects the said nominee, he or she shall become an additional delegate of that member church.
- ix. The member churches shall not elect alternate delegates for such delegates.

Member churches are encouraged to consult regionally in the selection of the delegates described in paragraphs ii. and iii. above, provided that every delegate is elected by the church of which he or she is a member in accordance with its own procedures

- b. *Persons with the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making*  
In addition to the delegates, who alone have the right to vote, the following categories of persons may attend meetings of the assembly with the right to speak:
  - i. *Presidents and moderator or vice-moderator(s)*: Any president of the Council or moderator or vice-moderator of the central committee who has not been elected delegate by their church.
  - ii. *Members of the outgoing central committee*: Any member of the outgoing central committee who has not been elected delegate by his or her church.
  - iii. *Representatives of churches which do not fulfil the criteria of size and have not been granted membership for exceptional reasons*: Each one of these churches may elect one representative.
  - iv. *Advisers*: The central committee may invite a small number of persons who have a special contribution to make to the deliberations of the assembly or who have participated in the activities of the Council. Before an invitation is extended to an adviser who is a member of a member church, that church shall be consulted.
  - v. *Delegated representatives*: The central committee may invite persons officially designated as delegated representatives by organizations with which the World Council of Churches maintains relationship.
  - vi. *Delegated observers*: The central committee may invite persons officially designated as delegated observers by non-member churches.

c. *Persons without the right to speak or to participate in decision-making*

The central committee may invite to attend the meetings of the assembly without the right to speak or to participate in decision-making:

- i. *Observers*: Persons identified with organizations with which the World Council of Churches maintains relationship which are not represented by delegated representatives or with non-member churches which are not represented by delegated observers.
- ii. *Guests*: Persons named individually.

2. Assembly leadership

- a. At the first decision session of the assembly, the outgoing central committee shall present its report which must include an accounting of its work since the previous assembly and also shall present its proposals for the moderation of the assembly and for the membership of the business committee of the assembly and make any other proposals, including the appointment of other committees, their membership and functions, for the conduct of the business of the assembly as it sees fit.
- b. At the first or second decision session, additional nominations for membership of any committee may be made in writing by any six concurring delegates.
- c. Election shall be by ballot unless the assembly shall otherwise determine.

3. Assembly agenda

The agenda of the assembly shall be proposed by the central committee to the first decision session of the assembly. A delegate may propose changes to the agenda in accordance with rule XIX.6.c. New business or any change may be proposed by the business committee under rule IV.5.b.

4. Nominations committee of the assembly

- a. At an early decision session of the assembly, the assembly shall elect a nominations committee from the official church delegates to the assembly. The nominations committee shall include balanced representation of the membership of the assembly and representation of the major interests of the World Council of Churches. No person serving on the nominations committee of the assembly shall be eligible for nomination as president of the World Council of Churches or member of the central committee.
- b. The nominations committee shall make nominations for the following, consulting as necessary with the business committee of the assembly:
  - i. the president or presidents of the Council;
  - ii. not more than 145 members of the central committee from among the delegates which the member churches have elected to the assembly;
  - iii. not more than 5 members of the central committee from among the representatives elected to the assembly by the churches which do not fulfil the criteria of size and have not been granted membership for exceptional reasons.

- c. In making nominations, the nominations committee shall have regard to the following principles:
    - i. the personal qualifications of the individual for the task for which he or she is to be nominated;
    - ii. fair and adequate confessional representation;
    - iii. fair and adequate geographical and cultural representation;
    - iv. fair and adequate representation of the major interests of the Council.
  - d. The nominations committee shall satisfy itself as to the general acceptability of the nominations to the churches to which the nominees belong.
  - e. Not more than seven persons from any one member church shall be nominated as members of the central committee.
  - f. The nominations committee shall secure adequate representation of lay persons, and adequate balance of men, women and young people, so far as the composition of the assembly makes this possible.
  - g. The nominations committee shall present its nominations to the assembly. Alternative nominations may be made in writing by any six delegates from at least three member churches, provided that each such alternative nominee shall be proposed as an alternative to a particular nominee.
  - h. Election shall be by ballot unless the assembly shall otherwise determine.
5. Business committee of the assembly
- a. The business committee of the assembly shall consist of the general secretary, the moderator and vice-moderator or vice-moderators of the outgoing central committee, the presidents of the World Council of Churches, the co-moderators of the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration participating as delegates, the moderator or designated member of the assembly planning committee participating as a delegate, the moderators of assembly hearings and committees (who may appoint substitutes), plus ten persons nominated from assembly delegates who are not members of the outgoing central committee, who shall be elected in accordance with rule IV.2 If a co-moderator of the permanent committee and/or the moderator of the assembly planning committee are not delegate(s), he/she shall be invited as an adviser to the assembly and its business committee with the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.
  - b. The business committee shall:
    - i. coordinate the day-to-day business of the assembly and may make proposals for rearrangement, modification, addition, deletion or substitution of items included on the agenda. Any such proposal shall be presented to the assembly at the earliest convenient time by a member of the business committee with reasons for the proposed change. After opportunity for discussion on the proposal, the moderator shall put the following question to the assembly: Shall the assembly approve the proposal of the business committee? The assembly shall decide the question by consensus or voting procedures. If decided according to voting procedures, then any proposed change must receive a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present to be adopted;

- ii. consider any item of business or change in the agenda proposed to the business committee by a delegate under rule XIX.6.c;
  - iii. determine whether the assembly sits in general, hearing or decision session as defined in rule XIX.2;
  - iv. receive information from and review the reports of other committees in order to consider how best the assembly can act on them.
6. Other committees of the assembly
    - a. Any other committee of the assembly shall consist of such members and shall have such authority and responsibilities as are proposed by the central committee in accordance with rule IV.2 or by the business committee after its election and accepted by the assembly.
    - b. Any such committee shall, unless the assembly otherwise directs, inform the business committee about its work and shall make its report or recommendations to the assembly.

## **V. Presidents**

1. The assembly shall elect up to eight presidents of the World Council of Churches.
2. The presidents should be persons whose ecumenical experience and standing is widely recognized by the member churches and among the ecumenical partners of the World Council of Churches in their respective regions and ecclesial traditions.
3. By virtue of office, the presidents will be members of the central committee.
4. Presidents may be invited to moderate sessions of the central committee or assembly as provided by the rules.
5. The central committee may invite the presidents to undertake certain tasks or reflections and report back to the central committee.
6. The term of office of a president shall end at the end of the next assembly following his or her election.
7. Should a vacancy occur between assemblies, the central committee may elect a president to fill the unexpired term.
8. A president who has been elected by the assembly or by the central committee to fill a vacancy shall not be eligible for election for a second consecutive term of office.

## **VI. Central committee**

1. Members
  - a. The central committee shall consist of the president or presidents of the World Council of Churches together with not more than 150 members elected by the assembly (see constitution, article V.2.b).
  - b. If a regularly elected member of the central committee is unable to attend a meeting, the church to which the absent member belongs shall have the right to send a substitute, provided that the substitute is ordinarily resident in the country where the absent member resides. Such a substitute shall have the right to speak and to participate in decision-making. If a member, or his or her substitute, is absent without excuse for two consecutive meetings, the position shall be declared vacant, and the central committee

shall fill the vacancy according to the provisions of article V.2.b.iii of the constitution.

- c. Members of the central committee, shall:
  - i. promote the values of the ecumenical movement;
  - ii. advocate for and interpret the work of the World Council of Churches, especially in their respective regions and ecclesial traditions;
  - iii. enhance World Council of Churches contact with the leadership of the churches in their regions; and
  - iv. assist in assuring the financial stability of the World Council of Churches.

## 2. Participants

- a. Any member church, not already represented, may send one representative to the meetings of the central committee. Such a representative shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.
- b. Advisers for the central committee may be invited by the executive committee after consultation with the churches of which they are members. They shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.
- c. Moderators and vice-moderators of committees, commissions and consultative bodies who are not members of the central committee may attend meetings of the central committee and shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.
- d. Regional ecumenical organizations (rule XIV), Christian world communions (rule XV) and Specialized ministries engaged in witness and service (rule XVI) recognized by the central committee shall be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the central committee, who shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.
- e. Associate councils (rule XIII) and international ecumenical organizations (rule XVII) recognized by the central committee may, at the discretion of the central committee, be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the central committee, who shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.
- f. Staff of the World Council of Churches appointed by the central committee as specified under rule XI.3 and 4.a and b. shall have the right to attend the sessions of the central committee unless on any occasion the central committee shall otherwise determine. When present they shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.

## 3. Leadership of the central committee

- a. The central committee shall elect from among its members a moderator (the “moderator”) and a vice-moderator or vice-moderators to serve for such period as it shall determine, normally for terms that coincide with the terms of the central committee from assembly to assembly.
- b. The moderator shall be the chief governance officer of the World Council of Churches and has primary responsibility for assuring the coherence of the work of the central committee and of the executive committee and for

assuring that the ethos of consensus characterizes all aspects of the governance of the Council.

- c. The moderator shall have primary responsibility for chairing sessions of the central committee and of the executive committee, sharing this role with the vice-moderator(s). The moderator, in consultation with the vice moderator(s) and the general secretary may delegate responsibility for moderating specific sessions of the central committee and/or executive committee to one of the presidents or to members of the central or executive committee with specific expertise.
- d. The moderator, vice-moderator(s) and general secretary together shall lead the planning of the meetings of the central committee and the executive committee. Together they shall identify issues that belong to the central committee for discernment and decision or further action, or belong to the executive committee. They shall assure that sessions and committees of the central committee have appropriate leadership and resources (information and time) to enter into the process and ethos of consensus discernment, and that the sessions and committees of the executive committee have sufficient resources and expertise to undertake all responsibilities that have been delegated to the executive committee.
- e. The moderator and vice-moderator(s) and session moderators shall: (i) encourage the participants in meetings to challenge one another and the member churches to deepen their fellowship and mutual accountability; (ii) ensure that the meetings foster the common understanding and vision of the World Council of Churches; (iii) cultivate the ethos and facilitate the process of consensus discernment, and (iv) help to foster coherence within the ecumenical movement.
- f. The general secretary of the World Council of Churches shall be secretary of the central committee, and shall have the right to participate in all sessions of the central committee, except when discussing a topic related to him or her, but shall not vote or use indicator cards.

#### 4. Meetings

- a. The central committee shall ordinarily meet during or immediately following the assembly during which it was elected (the “organizing meeting”), approximately one year following the assembly, and thereafter at approximately two year intervals. The general secretary shall convene the organizing meeting. The central committee shall be discharged when its report has been received by the subsequent assembly.
- b. The central committee shall determine the dates and places of its meetings and of the assembly.
- c. The executive committee may call an extraordinary meeting of the central committee whenever it deems such a meeting desirable and shall do so upon the request in writing of one-third or more of the members of the central committee.
- d. The general secretary shall take all possible steps to ensure that there is adequate representation present from each of the main confessions and from

the main geographical areas of the membership of the World Council of Churches and of the major interests of the Council.

## 5. Functions

In exercising the powers set forth in the constitution and delegated to it by the assembly, the central committee, on behalf of the membership of the World Council of Churches, shall have the following specific authority and responsibility to govern the work of the Council:

- a. Set the vision and strategic objectives of the World Council of Churches consistent with policies adopted by the assembly, as well as plan and provide for the subsequent assembly and report to the subsequent assembly the actions it has taken during its period of office;
- b. Address emerging issues affecting the life and witness of the churches, including those identified by the assembly, the central committee, commissions and consultative bodies;
- c. Address matters referred to it by member churches and issue statements on any issue or concern with which the Council or its member churches may be confronted, in accordance with rule XIII;
- d. Decide membership matters;
- e. Set programme strategies and goals;
- f. Ensure the financial stability of the World Council of Churches;
- g. Elect the general secretary of the World Council of Churches;
- h. Receive reports from the general secretary of his or her leadership and management of the Council and hold the general secretary accountable for the work of the staff, that the programmes and activities of the Council have remained consistent with the constitution and the defined self-understanding and ethos of the Council;
- i. Elect the moderator and vice-moderator(s) and executive committee;
- j. Delegate specific governance functions to the executive committee by rule and hold the executive committee accountable;
- k. Provide for the organizational structure to fulfil the responsibilities of the central committee, including committees, sub-committees and working groups as necessary;
- l. Set policy guidelines for all aspects of the Council, including but not limited to, staff, programmes and relationships;
- m. Elect commissions and consultative bodies and approve their bylaws, and incorporate into its life their ongoing work, including but not limited to:
  - i. Commission on Faith and Order;
  - ii. Commission on World Mission and Evangelism;
  - iii. Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation;
  - iv. The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs;
  - v. ECHOES Commission on Youth and the Ecumenical Movement.
- n. Adopt rules or bylaws consistent with the Constitution to govern its work;
- o. Delegate to its executive committee such authority necessary to ensure fiduciary responsibility and accountability for governance of the Council, including monitoring programmes, finance and personnel matters;

- p. Take such other actions or delegate such other specific tasks to other bodies or persons necessary to fulfill the responsibilities and exercise the authority established by the Constitution of the World Council of Churches and to deliver the broad goals and policies set by the assembly;
  - q. Report to the assembly the actions and decisions it has taken during its period of office and; it shall be discharged when its report has been received.
6. Election and term of the Executive Committee
- a. There shall be two election processes for the executive committee between assemblies.
  - b. During the organizing meeting, the central committee shall elect the first executive committee comprising twenty members, which executive committee shall serve for the period of the first four years following the assembly (the “first executive committee”).
  - c. During the meeting of the central committee that immediately precedes the end of the four-year term of the first executive committee, the central committee shall elect an executive committee of twenty members to serve until the report of the central committee has been received by the next assembly (the “second executive committee”).
  - d. No member shall serve more than two terms on the executive committee.
  - e. Vacancies on the executive committee shall be filled by elections during the next meeting of the central committee.
7. Committees of the central committee
- a. The central committee shall elect standing committees as described in rule X.
  - b. The central committee may elect as needed at each meeting and for the duration of the meeting, ad hoc committees to advise the central committee on any questions arising which call for special consideration or action by the central committee.
  - c. Committees of the central committee shall work during the meeting of the central committee, shall be supported by World Council of Churches staff working in related areas, and shall propose recommendations for decision to the central committee.
  - d. The central committee may form ad hoc committees to undertake specific mandates of remits to be completed within a specific timeline outside of the meeting of the central committee. The composition of such ad hoc committees shall be proposed to the central committee by the governance and nominations committee in consultation with the general secretary.
  - e. Participants in the central committee (rule VI.2) may be assigned to one committee.
8. Guiding policies on representation
- a. The formation of all committees, commissions, working groups and joint consultative bodies shall have regard to the following principles:

- i. the personal expertise of the individual for the task for which he or she is to be nominated;
- ii. fair and adequate confessional representation;
- iii. fair and adequate geographical and cultural representation;
- iv. fair and adequate representation of the major interests of the World Council of Churches;
- v. the general acceptability of the nominations to the churches to which the nominees belong;
- vi. fair and adequate representation of lay persons, indigenous peoples, and differently-abled people, and balance of men, women and young people.
- b. All nominations will reflect the target balances adopted by central committee for the most recent assembly.
- c. In addition to the foregoing, with respect to the election of members of committees, commissions and consultative bodies, the central committee shall consider the representative character of the combined membership of all such committees in relation to the member churches, giving due regard to the broadest feasible representation of member churches.

## **VII. Nominations committee of the organizing meeting of the central committee**

1. In its first meeting during or immediately after the assembly (the “organizing meeting”), the central committee shall elect a nominations committee which shall:
  - a. Nominate persons from among the members of the central committee for moderator and vice-moderator or vice-moderators of the central committee; and;
  - b. Nominate persons from those elected as members of the central committee to membership of the executive committee.
2. The names of persons to serve on the nominations committee of the organizing meeting shall be proposed by the general secretary, following consultation with the co-moderators of the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration, to the first session of the organizing meeting, and shall include, insofar as possible, balanced representation of the membership of the central committee and representation of the major interests of the World Council of Churches.
3. No person serving on the nominations committee of the organizing meeting shall be eligible for nomination to the positions of moderator, vice moderator(s) or to the executive committee.
4. In making nominations, the nominations committee shall have regard to principles set out in rule IV.4 and/or VI.8 and shall consider the specific skills and profiles necessary to undertake the responsibilities of moderator of the central committee, vice moderator and members of the executive committee.

5. The nominations committee shall present its nominations to the next session of the organizing meeting of the central committee. Any three members of the central committee may make an alternative nomination, provided that each such alternative nominee shall be proposed as an alternative to a particular nominee.
6. Election shall be by ballot unless the central committee shall otherwise determine.
7. Following the election of the moderator and vice moderator(s) and of the executive committee the nominating committee of the organizing meeting shall be discharged.

## **VIII. Executive committee**

1. Governance authority
  - a. The executive committee shall be entrusted with and made accountable for specific governance authority and responsibility of the World Council of Churches as delegated by the central committee, with authority to establish limits and guidelines within which management and staff of the Council shall implement the policies and programs of the Council.
  - b. The executive committee shall be accountable to the central committee, and shall present to each central committee meeting a report of its work. The central committee shall consider such a report and take such action in regard to it as it thinks fit.
2. Composition of executive committee
  - a. The executive committee shall be composed of the moderator and vice-moderator or vice-moderators of the central committee, twenty other members of the central committee and the moderators of programme committee and the finance policy committee of the central committee.
  - b. The moderator, vice moderator(s) and general secretary shall invite to the meetings of the executive committee advisors from among ecumenical partners. The advisors shall have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making.
  - c. The moderator, vice moderator(s) and general secretary are to ensure that the meeting of the executive committee has sufficient resources available to accomplish its work, always having in mind the need for preserving a due balance of the confessions and of the geographical areas and cultural backgrounds, and of the major interests of the World Council of Churches.
  - d. If a member of the executive committee is unable to attend, he/she has the right – provided that the moderator agrees – to send a member of the central committee as a substitute. Such a substitute shall – as far as possible – be of the same region and church family, and shall have the right to speak and the responsibility to participate in decision-making.

3. Leadership of the executive committee
  - a. The moderator of the central committee shall also be the moderator of the executive committee.
  - b. The general secretary of the World Council of Churches shall be the secretary of the executive committee and shall participate in all sessions of the executive committee, except those sessions discussing issues relating to him or her, but shall not vote or use indicator cards.
4. Functions
  - a. The central committee may delegate some of its powers to the executive committee. In exercising the powers delegated to it the executive committee assumes fiduciary responsibility for the governance of the World Council of Churches and shall have the following specific authority and responsibility,
    - i. Ensure implementation of the strategic objectives set by the central committee;
    - ii. Oversee the finances of the World Council of Churches, ensuring its financial stability, overseeing the investments, encouraging income development, approving the budget, and if necessary, imposing limitations on expenditures; provided that the executive committee upon approval of the annual financial report and accounts, shall send the annual financial report and accounts and budget to members of the central committee and the member churches.
    - iii. Open or close any subsidiary legal entities of the World Council of Churches;
    - iv. Monitor resource management, assuring that the human, physical and financial resources the World Council of Churches needs are available and properly employed;
    - v. Monitor programmes and activities of the World Council of Churches, and, when necessary, direct that activities are initiated or terminated;
    - vi. Issue statements on any issue or concern with which the World Council of Churches or its member churches may be confronted, in accordance with rule XII;
    - vii. Recommend to the central committee the mandate and size of commissions and joint consultative bodies to resource the major areas of work of the World Council of Churches;
    - viii. Appoint staff in accordance with rule XI;
    - ix. Establish and monitor personnel policies and staff rules;
    - x. Ensure the integrity of the operations of the World Council of Churches in compliance with Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches, applicable laws, regulations, and best practices;
    - xi. Manage risk, assessing risks to the institution (including financial risk) and ensure that strategies are in place to handle risk;
    - xii. Organize itself into committees, sub-committees and working groups;

- xiii. In between meetings of the central committee, nominate persons for committees, commissions, joint consultative bodies and working groups;
  - xiv. Delegate authority for specific time-bound matters to the moderator and vice moderator(s) and general secretary.
- b. If twenty members of the central committee have concerns arising out of either the financial report and accounts, or the budget, they shall make known their concerns to the general secretary and the executive committee in writing, within forty-five days of the sending of the financial report and accounts and the budget. In that event, the executive committee shall be required to reconsider that item. The executive committee's decision on reconsideration shall be final.
5. Committees of the executive committee
- a. The executive committee shall appoint sub-committees, which shall meet during meetings of the executive committee, and which shall advise the executive committee in exercising its authority and responsibility. Unless otherwise specified, the executive committee shall designate a moderator for each sub-committee. The sub-committee/s may include one or more advisors, who shall advise but not participate in decision-making. The sub-committees shall include the following:
    - i. Programme sub-committee, which shall be moderated by the moderator of the central committee's programme committee and shall assist the executive committee in
      - a) ensuring implementation of the strategic programmatic objectives set by the central committee;
      - b) initiating and terminating projects and activities;
      - c) monitoring and overseeing the ongoing programs, projects and activities, including the task of the allocation of resources;
      - d) providing for and making recommendations for regular evaluation of programmes, projects and activities in light of strategic objectives set by the central committee.
    - ii. Finance sub-committee, which shall be moderated by the moderator of the central committee's finance policy committee and shall assist the executive committee by
      - a) recommending the annual appointment of the auditor;
      - b) recommending for approval the annual budget for the following financial year, and the capital expenditure budget;
      - c) recommending for approval the framework budget for the year after the following financial year;
      - d) monitoring the implementation of the income and fund-raising strategy;
      - e) monitoring adherence to the approved budget, and recommending corrective actions if necessary;
      - f) making proposals for long-term financial goals and strategy for consideration by the finance policy committee;

- g) considering and recommending accounting policies for adoption;
- h) monitoring adherence to policies issued by central committee, including those governing general reserves and investments;
- i) ensuring the proposed loans, guarantees, pledges and any other unusual transactions are presented for approval by executive committee;
- j) ensuring compliance with laws and regulations concerning financial transactions, including the requirement to maintain a documented system of internal controls; and
- k) receive the report of the statutory auditor and recommend approval of the financial statements.

The executive committee may delegate to the leadership of the finance sub-committee, composed of the moderator and two additional sub-committee members, the authority to authorise and approve for issue the financial statements. The leadership of the finance sub-committee may act on financial matters as specifically authorised by the executive committee between meetings, reporting back to the executive committee.

- iii. Personnel, Staffing and Nominations sub-committee, which shall assist the executive committee in:
  - a) As to personnel matters, undertaking oversight of human resources policy and strategy, ensuring the World Council of Churches follows best practice in its treatment, development and deployment of all staff, with specific attention to the following:
    - 1. Recruitment and retention policy including years of service, policy for redundancy and redeployment
    - 2. The code of ethics
    - 3. Staff appraisal and continuing professional development
    - 4. Whistle-blowing policy
    - 5. Grievance and disciplinary policies
    - 6. Support for staff in implementing changes in staffing policy, particular when significant structural change is envisioned
    - 7. Staff rules.
  - b) As to staffing matters, preparing decisions for the appointment of staff according to rule XI;
  - c) As to nominations matters:
    - 1. Recording and processing changes in the membership of the central committee and its committees;
    - 2. Preparing the recommendations of the executive committee to the central committee with regard to the mandate and size of commissions and joint consultative bodies.
  - d) As to governance matters, recording and processing proposals for the amendments to the Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches made in accordance with article VII of the constitution and rule XX.
- iv. Public Issues sub-committee shall assist the executive committee in preparing statements and/or minutes.

- b. Audit Committee. Its terms of reference are approved by the central committee. Elected by the executive committee, it reports directly to the executive committee.

## **IX. Permanent committee on consensus and collaboration**

- 1. At its first full meeting after an assembly, the central committee shall elect from among its members the membership of the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration (the “permanent committee”), consisting of fourteen members, of whom half shall be Orthodox.
- 2. The Orthodox members of the nominations committee of the central committee, in consultation with all Orthodox members of the central committee, shall nominate the seven Orthodox members, and the other members of the nominations committee of the central committee shall nominate the remaining seven. The central committee as a whole shall elect the permanent committee. For election of the permanent committee, the provisions of rule VII.5. shall not apply: no counter nominations shall be accepted from the floor.
- 3. Of the overall membership at least half shall be members of the executive committee. Proxies may substitute for absent members. Advisers may be invited from member churches. Observers may be invited from non-member churches, or on occasion from churches in association with the World Council of Churches.
- 4. Two co-moderators shall be elected by the membership of the permanent committee, one by its Orthodox members, and one by the other members. Any vacancy in the permanent committee will be filled through the same process as the election of its members.
- 5. The term of the members of the outgoing permanent committee shall conclude upon election of replacement members following an assembly. The permanent committee shall be considered a committee of the assembly and shall advise the business committee of the assembly.
- 6. The permanent committee will have responsibility for:
  - a. continuing the authority, mandate, concerns and dynamic of the Special Commission (mandated by the eighth assembly, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1998);
  - b. giving advice and making recommendations to governing bodies during and between assemblies in order to contribute to the formation of consensus on matters proposed for the agenda;
  - c. facilitating improved participation of the Orthodox in the entire life and work of the Council;
  - d. offering counsel and providing opportunity for action in matters of common interest;
  - e. giving attention to matters of ecclesiology.

7. The permanent committee will report to the central committee and to the executive committee.

## X. Standing committees of the central committee

1. Standing committees shall be understood to be those permanent committees defined in this rule. Standing committees are to accomplish the work required of their mandates during meetings of the central committee.
2. At the first decision session of the second meeting of the central committee, the central committee shall receive from the executive committee a proposal for appointments to standing committees of the central committee.
  - a. The committees shall include, but not be limited to:
    - i. Governance and Nominations Committee
    - ii. Programme Committee
    - iii. Finance Policy Committee
    - iv. Policy Reference Committee
    - v. Public Issues Committee
    - vi. Communications Committee
  - b. Members of the central committee shall each be proposed for one standing committee of the central committee, with due regard being paid to the specific expertise and interests of the member and overall balances within the committee.
  - c. Participants in the central committee (rule VI.2) may also be assigned to participate in the work of one standing committee.
3. The Governance and Nominations Committee will have responsibility for:
  - a. Assisting the central committee to monitor the organisational structure, including committees, sub-committees, commissions, consultative bodies and working groups in accordance with the Constitution and Rules;
  - b. preparing nominations for the election of the committees of the central committee, commissions and consultative bodies;
  - c. monitoring the adoption of rules and bylaws consistent with the Constitution to govern the work of the Council;
  - d. receiving and processing any proposals for the amendments of the Constitution and Rules;
  - e. receiving and processing replacements or substitutions in the membership of the central and the executive committees for action by the central committee.
4. Programme Committee
  - a. The central committee shall elect from among its members the moderator and the twenty-three members of the programme committee together with up to eight advisors.
  - b. The programme committee will have responsibility for:
    - i. Considering in particular the theological inter-relationship of World Council of Churches' programmes and the implication of programmes

- and activities for the relationships among member churches and with ecumenical partners;
- ii. Assisting the central committee, by considering various inputs, clarifying options and devising a process to determine and develop the strategies that will deliver the broad outcomes set by the assembly. At the second meeting of central committee this will involve helping central committee engage with proposals for the eight-year strategy;
  - iii. Assisting the central committee to hear, with respect to programmatic work, the views and hopes of the churches, respond to key issues identified by commissions, and review, reshape and develop the goals of program work in the light of changing circumstances and needs;
  - iv. Reviewing the executive committee's report on program work, and bringing to the central committee recommendations for action;
  - v. Ensuring adequate plans are in place for the mid-term and pre-assembly program evaluation.
5. Finance Policy Committee will have responsibility for recommending policies related to:
- a. The membership contributions scheme and campaign, general reserves and investments;
  - b. Long term financial goals and the income and fund-raising strategy to achieve them, consistent with the vision and strategic objectives of the World Council of Churches;
  - c. Significant issues concerning financial reporting, internal controls, accountability and compliance with laws and regulations, based upon reports from the finance sub-committee of the executive committee.
6. The Policy Reference Committee will have responsibility for:
- a. Assessing relationships among member churches and with ecumenical partners, and suggesting appropriate actions to the central committee;
  - b. Assisting the central committee to take note of and analyze ecclesial and ecumenical developments;
  - c. Assisting the central committee in the preparation of policy guidelines for relationships;
  - d. Considering membership matters and bringing to the central committee recommendations for action.
7. The Public Issues Committee will have responsibility for:
- a. Assisting the central committee in the preparation of policy guidelines for international affairs;
  - b. Analysing emerging issues in international affairs affecting the life and witness of the member churches, including those identified by the assembly, commissions and consultative bodies;
  - c. Proposing public statements and/ or minutes for action by the central committee;

- d. Receiving and analysing proposals from members of the central committee for public statements and/or minutes;
  - e. Preparing public statements and/ or minutes for action by the central committee (according to established procedures).
8. The Communications Committee will have responsibility for:
- a. Making recommendations toward the long term strategic goals of communicating the World Council of Churches, giving direction on what themes and storylines best serve the Council and its member churches and what should be the thematic focus of communications;
  - b. Exploring how programmes, the general secretariat, central committee and executive committee all contribute to the work of communicating the Council and what goals and plans should be set;
  - c. Exploring how member churches contribute to communicating the Council;
  - d. Ensuring that the Council is developing strategic collaboration with other communications agencies, such as the World Association for Christian Communication, and regional networks, particularly in communications for justice and peace throughout the worldwide ecumenical movement in society.
  - e. Assisting the central committee to consider, approve, and evaluate the general direction of the Council's communication strategic plan.

## XI. Staff

- 1. A general secretary shall be elected by the central committee in accordance with rule XIX.10.a.ii and the procedures adopted by the central committee for the search for and election of the general secretary. When the position of general secretary becomes vacant, the executive committee shall appoint an acting general secretary and initiate the search process for a new general secretary.
- 2. The general secretary shall lead the work of the World Council of Churches and shall serve as its chief executive officer, including final responsibility for work of the Council and its staff.
- 3. In addition to the general secretary, the central committee shall elect one or more deputy general secretaries. The general secretary shall nominate his or her candidate(s) for the open position(s) and the central committee shall vote to elect the nomination in accordance with rule XIX.10.a.ii.
- 4. The general secretary shall provide for the appointment of or appoint staff to conduct the continuing operations of the Council.
  - a. For staff positions of direct responsibility for major programme or management areas of the Council, and those to whom are directly delegated responsibilities of the general secretary, the general secretary shall propose persons to fill such positions, and the executive committee shall make the appointment(s). At the beginning of the tenure of a new general secretary and at the time of any significant programmatic or structural reorganization, the general secretary and the executive committee together shall determine

- which specific staff positions come under this provision. Appointments to these positions shall be reported to the central committee.
- b. The general secretary shall appoint other programme executive staff, and report those staff appointments to the executive committee.
  - c. The general secretary shall appoint specialized, administrative and house staff.
- 5. The normal terms of appointment for the general secretary and for the deputy general secretary or secretaries shall be five years, unless some other period is stated in the resolution making the appointment.
  - 6. Retirement shall normally be that designated by Swiss law, but in no case shall it be later than the end of the year in which a staff member reaches the age of sixty-eight.
  - 7. The general secretary shall ensure that the following policies regarding the staff of the World Council of Churches are implemented for all staff levels:
    - a. The primary consideration in the recruitment and appointment of staff shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.
    - b. Due account shall be taken of the importance of recruiting staff on as broad and fair a confessional and geographical basis as possible.
    - c. All posts shall be open equally to men and women and selection of personnel shall be made without distinction as to race and gender.
    - d. Commitment to the aims and spirit of the World Council of Churches.
    - e. Applicants from member churches shall demonstrate support of their application from the leadership of the member church.
    - f. Every effort shall be taken to have staff and leadership inclusive of both men and women and balanced according to region and confession.

## **XII. Public statements**

- 1. In the performance of its functions, the World Council of Churches through its assembly or through its central committee may issue statements on any situation or concern with which the Council or its constituent churches may be confronted.
- 2. While such statements may have great significance and influence as the expression of the judgment or concern of so widely representative a Christian body, yet their authority will consist only in the weight which they carry by their own truth and wisdom, and the publishing of such statements shall not be held to imply that the Council as such has, or can have, any constitutional authority over the constituent churches or right to speak for them.
- 3. Any commission may recommend statements to the assembly or to the central committee for its consideration and action.

4. When, in the judgment of a commission, a statement should be issued before approval of the assembly or central committee can be obtained, the commission may do so provided the statement relates to matters within its own field of concern and action, has the approval of the moderator of the central committee and the general secretary, and the commission makes clear that neither the World Council of Churches nor any of its member churches is committed by the statement.
5. Between meetings of the central committee, when in their judgment the situation requires, a statement may be issued, provided that such statements are not contrary to the established policy of the Council, by:
  - a. the executive committee when meeting apart from the sessions of the central committee; or
  - b. the moderator and vice-moderator or vice-moderators of the central committee and the general secretary acting together; or
  - c. the moderator of the central committee or the general secretary on his or her own authority respectively.

### **XIII. Associate councils**

1. Any national Christian council, national council of churches or national ecumenical council, established for purposes of ecumenical fellowship and activity, may be recognized by the central committee as an associate council, provided:
  - a. the applicant council, knowing the basis upon which the World Council of Churches is founded, expresses its desire to cooperate with the Council towards the achievement of one or more of the functions and purposes of this Council; and
  - b. the member churches of the World Council of Churches in the area have been consulted prior to the action.
2. Each associate council:
  - a. shall be invited to send a delegated representative to the assembly;
  - b. may, at the discretion of the central committee, be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the central committee; and
  - c. shall be provided with copies of all general communications sent to all member churches of the World Council of Churches.
3. In addition to communicating directly with its member churches, the Council shall inform each associate council regarding important ecumenical developments and consult it regarding proposed Council programmes in its country.
4. In consultation with the associate councils, the central committee shall establish and review from time to time guidelines regarding the relationships between the World Council of Churches and national councils of churches.

#### **XIV. Regional ecumenical organizations**

1. The World Council of Churches recognizes regional ecumenical organizations as essential partners in the ecumenical enterprise.
2. Such regional ecumenical organizations as may be designated by the central committee:
  - a. shall be invited to send a delegated representative to the assembly;
  - b. shall be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the central committee; and
  - c. shall be provided with copies of all general communications sent to all member churches of the World Council of Churches.
3. In addition to communicating directly with its member churches, the Council shall inform each of these regional ecumenical organizations regarding important ecumenical developments and consult it regarding proposed World Council of Churches programmes in its region.
4. The central committee, together with the regional ecumenical organizations, shall establish and review as appropriate guiding principles for relationships and cooperation between the World Council of Churches and regional ecumenical organizations, including the means whereby programmatic responsibilities could be shared among them.

#### **XV. Christian world communions**

1. The World Council of Churches recognizes the role of Christian world communions or world confessional bodies in the ecumenical movement.
2. Such Christian world communions as may be designated by the central committee and which express their desire to this effect:
  - a. shall be invited to send a delegated representative to the assembly; and
  - b. shall be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the central committee; and
  - c. shall be provided with copies of all general communications sent to all member churches of the World Council of Churches.
3. The central committee shall establish and review as appropriate guidelines for relationships and cooperation with Christian world communions.

#### **XVI. Specialized ministries engaged in witness and service**

1. Specialized ministries are those church-based, church-related or ecumenical offices and organizations and alliances or associations thereof within the family of World Council of Churches member churches, serving the ecumenical movement particularly in the areas of mission, diakonia, relief, development and advocacy.

Any specialized ministry committed to ecumenical witness and service may be recognized by the central committee as an ecumenical organization with which the World Council of Churches has working relationship, provided:

- a. the organization, knowing the basis upon which the World Council of Churches is founded, expresses its willingness to relate to and cooperate with it on those terms; and
  - b. the member church or churches with whom the specialized ministry is related do not formally oppose this form of relationship.
2. Each specialized ministry thus recognised:
- a. shall be invited to send a delegated representative to the assembly;
  - b. shall be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the central committee; and
  - c. shall be provided with copies of all general communications sent to all member churches of the World Council of Churches.
3. In addition to communicating directly with its member churches, the Council may inform each of these specialized ministries regarding important ecumenical developments and consult with it regarding proposed World Council of Churches programmes in its area of commitment and expertise.
4. In consultation with specialized ministries, the central committee shall establish and review from time to time guidelines regarding the relationships between the World Council of Churches and specialized ministries.

## **XVII. International ecumenical organizations**

- 1. Ecumenical organizations other than those mentioned under rules XIII, XIV, XV, and XVI may be recognized by the central committee as organizations with which the World Council of Churches has working relationships, provided:
  - a. the organization is international in nature (global, regional or sub-regional) and its objectives are consistent with the functions and purposes of the Council; and
  - b. the organization, knowing the basis upon which the World Council of Churches is founded, expresses its desire to relate to and cooperate with it.
- 2. On the basis of reciprocity, each international ecumenical organization:
  - a. shall be invited to send a delegated representative to the assembly; and
  - b. shall be provided with copies of general communications sent to all member churches of the World Council of Churches.

## **XVIII. Legal provisions**

- 1. The duration of the World Council of Churches is unlimited.
- 2. The legal headquarters of the Council shall be at Grand-Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland. It is registered in Geneva as an association according to art. 60ff. of the Swiss civil code. Regional offices may be organized in different parts of the world by decision of the central committee.

3. The World Council of Churches is legally represented by its executive committee or by such persons as may be empowered by the executive committee to represent it.
4. The World Council of Churches shall be legally bound by the joint signatures of two of the following persons: the moderator and vice-moderator or vice-moderators of the central committee, the general secretary, the deputy general secretary or secretaries. The moderator of the central committee (or a vice-moderator acting together with the general secretary or a deputy general secretary of the World Council of Churches) shall have power to authorise other persons, chosen by them, as registered signatories to act on behalf of the World Council of Churches in fields circumscribed in the power of attorney.
5. The Council shall obtain the means necessary for the pursuance of its work from the contributions of its member churches and from donations or bequests.
6. The Council shall not pursue commercial functions but it shall have the right to act as an agency of interchurch aid and to publish literature in connection with its aims. It is not entitled to distribute any surplus income by way of profit or bonus among its members.
7. Members of the governing bodies of the Council or of the assembly shall have no personal liability with regard to the obligations or commitments of the Council. The commitments entered upon by the Council are guaranteed solely by its own assets.
8. Electronic communications—including e-mail, teleconference, video-conference and similar technologies—may be used for purposes of consultation and decision making by the general secretary, moderator and vice-moderator(s) of the central committee, leadership of committees and commissions, and committees of the World Council of Churches. The meeting shall be considered valid when all participants in the meeting have access to the designated form of communication and notice of the meeting and its process have been duly provided. Decisions by these methods can be taken when at least two-thirds of those who have a right to participate in decision making have participated in the meeting.
9. Decisions that can be taken by vote according to rule XIX can also be taken by postal or electronic vote provided that (1) information upon which the decision could be taken has been provided, (2) a notice period has been provided of at least forty-five days between the date of the notice of the vote and due date for the response, and (3) the thresholds for approval indicated in rule XIX are reached by votes cast as against the possible number of votes that could be cast in response to the postal request. The election of a general secretary shall not take place by postal vote. A copy of the communication shall be sent by post and electronically.

## **XIX. Conduct of meetings**

### 1. General

- a. These provisions for conduct of meetings shall apply to meetings of the assembly, the central committee, the executive committee and all other bodies of the World Council of Churches. During an assembly, the titles “president, moderator and vice-moderators of the central committee” shall refer to the persons holding those offices in the outgoing central committee. During the term of a central committee such titles shall refer to the current presidents and leadership of that central committee.
- b. “Delegate” shall mean an official representative of a member church to an assembly with the right to speak and the responsibility to participate in decision-making (rule IV.1.a). For meetings of the central committee, “delegate” shall mean a member of the central committee or that member’s substitute (rule VI.1.b), with the right to speak and the responsibility to participate in decision-making.
- c. “Participant” shall include delegates as well as persons invited to the assembly or a meeting of the central committee as persons with the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making (rule IV.1.b and VI.2).

### 2. Categories of sessions

The assembly shall sit in one of the following categories of sessions: general, hearing or decision. The business committee shall determine the category of session appropriate for different parts of the agenda.

#### a. *General session*

General sessions shall be reserved for ceremonial occasions, public acts of witness and formal addresses. Only matters proposed by the central committee or by the business committee shall be included in general sessions. No decisions shall be made during general sessions.

#### b. *Hearing session*

Hearing sessions shall be designated for plenary presentations, discussion, dialogue, and exchange of ideas as a resource for developing understanding, deepening fellowship among member churches and coming to a common mind on matters on the agenda. A wide range of perspectives shall be encouraged during hearing sessions. No decisions shall be made during hearing sessions, other than to move to a decision session, if deemed necessary or to deal with a point of order or procedural proposals.

#### c. *Decision session*

Decision sessions shall be designated for matters requiring a decision, including:

- i. adoption of the agenda;
- ii. proposal for change in the agenda;
- iii. appointments and elections;
- iv. reception or adoption of reports or recommendations;
- v. actions to be taken on recommendations or proposals of committees or commissions, or arising out of hearing sessions;
- vi. adoption of accounts and financial audits; and
- vii. amendment of constitution or rules.

**3. Moderating sessions**

- a. A moderator for each session of the assembly shall be designated before an assembly by the outgoing central committee, and during an assembly by the business committee, as follows:
  - i. in general sessions one of the presidents or the moderator of the central committee shall preside;
  - ii. in hearing sessions one of the presidents, the moderator or a vice-moderator of the central committee, or a delegate with specific expertise in the subject matter of the hearing, shall preside;
  - iii. in decision sessions the moderator or a vice-moderator of the central committee or delegate to the assembly who was a member of the outgoing central committee shall preside.
- b. The role of session moderators shall be:
  - i. to convene the session, including announcing the category of session;
  - ii. to facilitate and encourage discussion and dialogue, for the exchange and development of ideas, and to assist the meeting to come to a common mind;
  - iii. during decision sessions, to test any emerging agreement on a particular point and whether the meeting is ready to move to a decision by consensus;
  - iv. in the event the category of session is to change during a session, to announce the change in category, providing a break in the session to mark the change in category; and
  - v. to close the session.
- c. The moderator shall consult with the recorder for the session to ensure that the developing consensus is accurately noted and any changed wording promptly made available to the meeting.
- d. All moderators shall undertake specific training in conducting meetings based upon the consensus model of decision-making, as described in these rules and the accompanying guidelines.

**4. Moderator of the assembly**

The moderator of the assembly shall announce the opening, suspension and the adjournment of the assembly.

**5. Official minutes, records and reports**

- a. The business committee shall appoint recorders from among delegates for each decision session. Their role shall be to follow the discussion of a decision session, to record the language of the emerging consensus, including final language of decisions taken, and to assist the moderator of the session in discerning an emerging consensus. Recorders shall also assist the moderator in ensuring that the final agreed wording of a proposal is translated and available to delegates before a decision is made.
- b. The business committee shall appoint rapporteurs for each hearing session and for committee meetings for which official minutes are not maintained, to prepare a report of the meeting including major themes and specific

- proposals. A rapporteur appointed for a committee meeting shall function as a recorder of that meeting.
- c. The business committee shall appoint minute-takers to record the official minutes of general, hearing and decision sessions of an assembly or any meeting for which formal minutes must be kept, and shall include a record of the discussion, motions and decisions. The minutes will normally incorporate by reference any report of the meeting. The minutes shall be signed by the moderator and the minute-taker for the session and shall be sent to the participants of the meeting. For all minutes other than minutes of an assembly, if there is no objection within six months from the sending of the minutes, the minutes shall be considered to be accepted. The first full central committee meeting following an assembly shall confirm the minutes of the assembly.
  - d. Decision sessions shall produce official minutes, a record and/or report.
  - e. If, after the close of a meeting, a member church declares that it cannot support a decision of the meeting, the member church may submit its objection in writing and have its position recorded in the minutes or report of a subsequent meeting. The decision itself shall not be rescinded by this action.
6. Agenda
- a. Matters may be included on the agenda of a meeting according to rule IV.3 and procedures established by the business and programme committees, and any other committee established by central committee for that purpose. Normally, matters included on an agenda will be based upon reports, recommendations or proposals that previously have been fully considered and have the consensus support of the proposing group or committee.
  - b. The business committee shall ensure that the moderator is advised before each session, and if appropriate during breaks within a session, as to the conduct of the business and the priority of various agenda items.
  - c. A delegate may propose to the business committee an item of business to be included on, or any change in, the agenda. If after consideration the business committee has not agreed to the proposal, the delegate may appeal the decision to the moderator of the assembly in writing. The moderator shall at a convenient time inform the assembly of the proposal, and a member of the business committee shall explain the reasons for this refusal. The delegate may give reasons for proposing it. The moderator shall then without further debate put the following question: Shall the assembly accept this proposal? If the assembly agrees to accept the proposal, the business committee as soon as possible shall bring proposals for the inclusion of the matter or the change in the agenda.
  - d. Matters concerning ecclesiological self-understanding: Where a matter being raised is considered by a delegate to go against the ecclesiological self-understanding of his or her church, the delegate may request that it not be submitted for decision. The moderator shall seek the advice of the business committee in consultation with this delegate and other members

of the same church or confession present at the session. If agreed that the matter does in fact go against the ecclesiological self-understanding of the delegate's church, the moderator shall announce that the matter will be removed from the agenda of the decision session and may be considered in a hearing session. The materials and minutes of the discussion shall be sent to the member churches for their study and comment.

- e. Subject to the provisions of this rule, the agenda shall be proposed, amended and/or adopted in accordance with rule IV.3, IV.5, and VI.3.d.

## 7. Speaking

- a. In hearing sessions, participants wishing to speak either may submit to the moderator a written request or may queue at the microphones when the moderator so invites, but may speak only when called by the moderator.
- b. In decision sessions of the assembly or central committee, only delegates may speak. Delegates wishing to speak either may submit to the moderator a written request or may queue at the microphones when the moderator so invites, but may speak only when called by the moderator.
- c. In sessions of committees and advisory bodies where both hearing and decision may take place, participants who are not delegates have the right to speak but not to take part in decision-making.
- d. The moderator shall decide who shall speak, ensuring that a fair distribution of opinions is heard, and may take advice on the order of speakers from a small sub-committee of the business committee. If time allows and others are not left unheard, the moderator may permit speakers to intervene more than once.
- e. When called by the moderator, a speaker shall speak from a microphone, first stating his or her name, church, country, and role at the meeting, and shall address all remarks to the moderator.
- f. Remarks will normally be limited to three minutes; however, the moderator may use discretion in allowing extra time if there is a difficulty in language or interpretation or if the issues being discussed are unusually complex.
- g. Procedural proposals – hearing or decision sessions: Provided that a speaker is not interrupted, a delegate may ask for clarification of the pending matter or may raise suggestions about procedure. The moderator immediately shall provide clarification or respond to the suggestion for change of procedure.
- h. Points of order – hearing or decision sessions: This provision is available to question whether procedures being followed are in accordance with these rules, to object to offensive language, to make a point of personal explanation, or to request that a meeting move to closed session. Points of order may be raised by a participant at any time, even by interrupting another speaker. A participant gains the attention of the moderator by standing and calling, "point of order!" The moderator shall ask the participant to state the point of order and then (without discussion) shall rule on it immediately.
- i. If any delegate disagrees with the moderator's decision on a procedural proposal or point of order, the delegate may appeal against it. In this case the moderator will put this question, without discussion, to the meeting;

"Does the meeting concur with the decision of the moderator?" The delegates present shall decide the question according to the decision-making procedures then being employed.

8. Reaching consensus: seeking the common mind of the meeting
  - a. Consensus shall be understood as seeking the common mind of the meeting without resort to a formal vote, in a process of genuine dialogue that is respectful, mutually supportive and empowering, whilst prayerfully seeking to discern God's will.
  - b. Decisions will normally be by consensus, unless otherwise specified by the rules.
  - c. A consensus decision on a particular matter shall be recorded when one of the following occurs:
    - i. all delegates are in agreement (unanimity); or
    - ii. most are in agreement and those who disagree are satisfied that the discussion has been both full and fair and do not object that the proposal expresses the general mind of the meeting.
  - d. A consensus decision shall mean that there is agreement about the outcome of a discussion. This may mean agreement to accept a proposal or a variation of a proposal; it also may mean agreement about another outcome, including agreement to reject a proposal, to postpone a matter, that no decision can be reached, or that there are various opinions that may be held. When consensus has been reached that various opinions can be held concerning a matter, those various opinions shall be recorded in the final wording of the minutes and the report and the record of the meeting.
9. Decision-making by consensus
  - a. A proposal or recommendation considered in a decision session may be affirmed, modified or rejected. Delegates may suggest modifications, and the moderator may allow discussion on more than one modification at a time. Reaching a common mind may require a series of steps, if there is a variety of opinions being expressed. As discussion proceeds, the moderator may ask the meeting to affirm what is held in common before encouraging discussion on those aspects of a proposal about which more diverse opinions have been voiced.
  - b. To assist the moderator in discerning the mind of the meeting and to move efficiently towards consensus, the recorder of the session shall maintain a record of the discussion. Delegates may be provided with indicator cards to facilitate participation.
  - c. A delegate or the moderator may suggest that the matter under discussion be referred for further work to an appropriate group holding a range of points of view. This suggestion itself shall be tested to discern the mind of the meeting. If agreed, the business committee shall schedule consideration of the matter for a later session.
  - d. When it seems that the meeting is close to agreement on an outcome, the moderator shall ensure that the wording of the proposal (or the proposal as

varied during the course of the discussion) is clear to all delegates, and then test whether there is consensus on that outcome. If all are agreed consistent with rule XIX.8.c.i, the moderator shall declare that consensus has been reached and the decision made. If the meeting is not unanimous, the moderator shall invite those who hold a minority view to explain their reasons if they wish and to indicate whether they can agree with a decision pursuant to rule XIX.8.c.ii. If so, consensus shall be declared.

- e. If, after every effort has been made to reach consensus, agreement cannot be reached and it is the opinion of an officer or the business committee that a decision must be made before the meeting concludes, the moderator shall ask the business committee to formulate a proposal for how the matter may be considered again in a new form. At the later decision session where this new approach is considered, the meeting itself shall decide whether a decision must be made at this meeting, and, if so, shall proceed on any one of the following courses, which may be followed sequentially:
  - i. to work further towards consensus on the proposal in its new form;
  - ii. to work to reach agreement among most delegates with some delegates recording an objection, in which event a meeting shall record acceptance of the proposal, providing that each delegate who does not agree is satisfied with that outcome and has the right to have his or her viewpoint recorded in the minutes, in the report, and in the record of the meeting; or
  - iii. to move into voting procedures to decide the matter (rule XIX.10).
- f. When a meeting discusses by consensus procedures a matter for which decision must be reached at that meeting and there is no ready agreement in accordance with rule XIX.9.e.i or ii, the moderator may offer a procedural proposal: "That the meeting resolve the proposal now by vote". Except for matters described in rule XIX.6.d, "matters concerning ecclesiological self-understanding", the moderator shall announce that a vote to decide this change of procedure shall be taken. Delegates shall indicate by voting whether they agree that the matter shall be decided by a vote. If 85 percent of delegates present vote in favour of moving the matter to a voting process, the matter shall so move. If fewer than 85 percent of delegates present vote in favour of moving the matter to a voting process, the matter shall not so move, and the meeting shall decide, again by vote of 85 percent of delegates present, whether discussion should continue to achieve consensus or whether discussion should be discontinued.

## 10. Decision-making by vote

- a. Some matters require decision by vote, rather than by consensus. These include:
  - i. constitutional changes (two-thirds majority);
  - ii. elections (simple majority with specific procedures for election of the general secretary);
  - iii. selection of assembly venue (simple majority);

- iv. adoption of yearly accounts, financial audit reports and appointment of the auditors (simple majority).
- b. For matters that have been moved from consensus procedures to decision-making by vote in accordance with rule XIX.9.e.iii or rule XIX.9.f, and for matters reserved to a voting procedure according to subsection a. of this section, the following procedures shall be followed:
  - i. All motions must be moved and seconded by a delegate, and the mover has the right to speak first.
  - ii. In discussion following the seconding of a motion, no delegate may speak more than once, except that the delegate who moved the motion may answer objections at the end of the discussion.
  - iii. Any delegate may move an amendment, and if a seconder supports it, the amendment shall be considered simultaneously with the original proposal.
  - iv. When discussion is concluded, including the right of the mover to reply (XIX.10.b.ii.), the moderator shall call for the vote and shall put any amendment first. If approved, it will be incorporated in the original proposal, which will then be put to the vote without further discussion.
  - v. If the mover seeks to withdraw a motion or amendment during the discussion, the moderator will seek the consent of the meeting for the withdrawal.
- c. A delegate may move to close the discussion, but in doing so shall not interrupt a speaker. If seconded, the moderator shall call for a vote on this motion immediately without discussion. If two-thirds of the meeting agree, the voting process will then begin. If the motion fails, discussion will proceed, but the same motion to close discussion may be moved again as the discussion continues, but not by the delegate who moved it the first time.
- d. Voting shall be by show of hands or indicator cards and the moderator shall ask first for those in favour, then for those against, and finally for those who wish to abstain from voting. The moderator shall announce the result of the vote immediately.
- e. If the moderator is in doubt, or for any other reason decides to do so, or if a delegate requests it, a vote on the matter shall be taken immediately by count of a show of hands or indicator cards. The moderator may call tellers to count those voting and abstaining. A delegate may ask that voting be by secret written ballot, and if seconded and if a majority of delegates present and voting agree, a secret written ballot shall be taken. The moderator shall announce the result of any count or secret written ballot.
- f. A majority of the delegates present, including those who choose to abstain from voting, shall determine a matter being decided by vote unless a higher proportion is required by the constitution or these rules. If the vote results in a tie, the matter shall be regarded as defeated.
- g. If the moderator wishes to participate in the discussion, he or she shall relinquish the position of moderator of the session to another presiding officer until the matter has been resolved.

- h. A moderator entitled to vote as a delegate may do so, but may not cast the decisive vote in the event of a tie.
- i. Any two delegates who voted with the majority for a previously approved matter may request that the business committee propose reconsideration of the matter. The business committee shall bring the proposal to the next decision session and may express an opinion as to whether the matter should be reconsidered. Reconsideration shall take place only if two-thirds of delegates present agree.
- j. Anyone voting with a minority or abstaining from voting may have his or her opinion recorded in the minutes, in the report, and/or the record of the meeting.

#### 11. Languages

The working languages in use in the World Council of Churches are English, French, German, Russian and Spanish. The general secretary shall make reasonable effort to provide interpretation for any one of those languages into the others and shall endeavour to provide written translation of the specific wording of proposals. A participant may speak in another language only if he or she provides for interpretation into one of the working languages. The general secretary shall provide all possible assistance to any participant requiring an interpreter.

### **XX. Amendments**

Amendments to these rules may be proposed at any session of the assembly or at any session of the central committee by any member and shall be decided according to the procedures in rule XIX.9; if the meeting shifts from consensus to voting, then the procedures in rule XIX.10 will apply. In this case, the proposed change must receive a two-thirds majority of those present to be adopted. No alteration in rules I, VI and XX shall come into effect until it has been confirmed by the assembly. Notice of a proposal to make any amendment shall be given in writing at least twenty-four hours before the session of the assembly or central committee at which it is to be considered.

## **Excerpt from the Supplement to the Rules**

*The supplement to the rules contains decisions of the World Council of Churches central committee, as well as guidelines and procedures established to assist the central and executive committees in the conduct of the business of the World Council of Churches. This excerpt includes the provisions that might assist the assembly and the central committee in its first meeting.*

### **The Moderator and Vice Moderators Profile, Nomination and Election**

**1. Profile:** The process of identifying, nominating and electing persons to the positions of moderator and vice moderator shall include consideration of the particular profiles that might most serve the World Council of Churches, including prominence, skill and experience in ecumenical settings, as well as ability to undertake the responsibilities included in rule VI.3.

Those considered for nomination to the position of moderator shall include persons who are widely recognized for their ecumenical experience, have demonstrated the ability to moderate complex meetings, are familiar with the work of the World Council of Churches, and are able to work with and promote consensus procedures.

The nomination process shall take into account the inter-relationship of the four members of the leadership team, that is, the complementarity between each nominee and the general secretary and the others being nominated for moderator or vice moderator.

The nominations process also shall take into account historical, confessional geographical and cultural factors.

**2. Nomination process:** The moderator, and vice moderator(s) are nominated from among the newly elected members of the central committee during its organizing meeting which is held during or immediately after the assembly (the “organizing meeting”) rule VII.

There shall be an interval between the first and second sessions sufficient for the nominations committee to consider the relevant backgrounds of the members of the central committee and to form a common mind.

### **The Central Committee Guidelines for Mid-term Election**

1. The mid-term election of executive committee shall be conducted according to rule VI.6.
2. The governance and nominations committee of the central committee shall prepare nominations for the mid-term election, providing that:

- i) there should be a substantial change in the membership, so that normally no more than a quarter of the elected members should continue;
- ii) those who had already served on a previous executive committee should be among the first considered for replacement;
- iii) the provisions of rule VII.3, 4, 5 and 6 shall apply;
- iv) it should not be assumed that those representing smaller churches will be replaced while those representing larger churches continue;
- v) it remains the case that the first priority is to elect to executive committee people with the skills and experience to do the job.

# Guidelines for the Conduct of Meetings of the World Council of Churches

*The rule for the conduct of meetings (rule XIX), and these guidelines, are worded as applying to a meeting of the assembly of the World Council of Churches.*

*They are to be used similarly in meetings of all governing and consultative bodies of the World Council of Churches.*

## **1. Consensus procedures**

In the interval between the 1998 Harare assembly and Porto Alegre in 2006, the central committee accepted the recommendation of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC, to adopt a consensus model of decision-making as an alternative to the parliamentary model. More precisely the central committee in 2005 adopted amendments to its rule for the conduct of meetings.

The rules of the World Council of Churches, including revised rule XIX, “Conduct of Meetings”, provide the authority for how meetings of all World Council of Churches bodies are expected to function. These guidelines are offered as a supplementary resource to help participants appreciate the potential of consensus procedures, as well as to explain some other features of the World Council of Churches.

## **2. Theological basis**

The World Council of Churches is called to bear witness to unity in a world which is marked by tensions, antagonisms, conflicts, wars and rumours of wars (cf. Matt. 24:6). In this situation the Council can bear witness not only by its programmes and resolutions, but also by the way it does its business. It can shape its rules and procedures in such a way as to express a faith “made effective in love” (Gal. 5:6). This means that member churches, as well as representatives of those churches, will treat each other with respect and will seek to build one another up in love (cf. 1 Cor. 13:1-6, 14:12).

Some churches around the world, and some parts of the Council itself, have found that making decisions by consensus is a better way of reflecting the nature of the church as described in the New Testament than is the “parliamentary” approach. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, St Paul speaks of parts of the body needing each other. A fully functioning body integrates the gifts of all its members. Similarly, any ecumenical body will function best when it makes optimum use of the abilities, history, experience, commitment and spiritual tradition of all the members.

Consensus procedures allow more room for consultation, exploration, questioning and prayerful reflection, with less rigidity than formal voting procedures. By promoting collaboration rather than adversarial debate, consensus procedures help the assembly (or a commission or committee) to seek the mind of Christ together. Rather than striving to succeed in debate, participants are encouraged to submit to one another and to seek to “understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17).

The consensus model for decision-making also encourages prayerful listening to one another and growth in understanding between ecclesial traditions. At the same

time it requires discipline on the part of participants and moderators. There must also be rules. But the aim is to arrive at a common mind rather than simply the will of the majority. When consensus is declared, all who have participated can confidently affirm: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” (Acts 15:28).

### **3. Building community**

Developing consensus outcomes requires a culture in which there is willingness mutually to seek God’s will in humility and openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because the World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches with a common basis in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour,<sup>1</sup> each time an assembly gathers there is fresh opportunity to affirm and express the rich relationship of being a community in Christ. Through those appointed to represent them, the member churches “seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of God.”<sup>2</sup> This assumes an awareness and appreciation of the contribution fellow participants bring to the meeting. As we seek to discern God’s will on issues (often starting from very different viewpoints), we acknowledge that each has unique God-given gifts and insights, and that all contributions are worthy of respect and consideration.

An assembly draws together people from many different countries, cultures and church traditions. It takes time to build the trust and relationships that form real *koinonia*. As we acknowledge the Lordship of Christ and listen for the word of God in daily prayer and Bible study together, the bonds of community are strengthened. Our diversity and unity in Jesus Christ is celebrated also as we grow to understand each other better while eating, working, relaxing, talking and praying together in more informal ways throughout the life of the assembly. Gradually a climate of trust is able to be developed.

### **4. Small groups**

Each member of an assembly is part of a small “home” Bible study group throughout the time of the meeting, providing valuable opportunity within that small unit of the whole to experience *koinonia*, through:

- forming fellowship bonds which are necessary for the care and support of each other throughout the time of the assembly;
- feeling safe, in a context where concerns and confidences can be shared, where prayer requests and probing questions can be raised; and
- finding that theological differences can be enriching and that prior stereotyping is irrelevant as friendships form.

In the course of plenary sessions, another type of small group may be used. From time to time this may be helpful for a brief period of discussion, perhaps in table groups (which is possible during central committee meetings) or among three or four neighbours of the same language preference are seated close together in a plenary session. Complex issues can become clearer after a brief sharing time, and fresh

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1. WCC constitution article 1.

2. *Ibid.*

approaches to a seemingly impossible dilemma may develop into a creative solution when the plenary resumes.

## 5. Categories of session

At the beginning of each session, the moderator announces whether it is to be a general, a hearing or a decision session. On occasions it may be necessary to move from one category to another within the same sitting of the assembly. Where this occurs, the moderator may announce a brief pause in proceedings for a time of prayerful reflection or the singing of a song.

### a) General session

General sessions are the formal, ceremonial occasions. No discussion or decision occurs, and the content is pre-determined by the central committee or the business committee.

### b) Hearing session

In a hearing session, information about reports or proposals is presented. All participants (delegates plus others who have the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making) may contribute in a hearing session when recognized by the moderator. The moderator encourages participants to explore a wide range of perspectives through question and comment, so that the meeting is fully resourced about possible options before a way forward is discerned by the assembly.

This may mean, if time allows and others are not left unheard, that participants are given the opportunity to speak more than once in the course of the discussion. Participants signify to the moderator their desire to speak by standing at one of the microphones until called by the moderator to contribute or by written request via a steward.

A moderator may call upon those who have queued to speak or those who have submitted written requests. Participants who had submitted written requests to speak may join those queuing for a turn to speak. A moderator may use the final portion of a hearing session to return to previously submitted written requests to speak.

No decisions are taken in a hearing session, except to deal with a point of order or procedural proposal if one arises, or to change to a decision session if it is agreed to finalize a particular matter in that same sitting.

### c) Decision session

In a decision session, only delegates may speak. (Delegates will have been resourced in their decision-making responsibility by other participants when the issue was presented in an earlier hearing session.) Contributions are expected to develop a proposal progressively, each speaker's taking heed of insights from other contributors in discerning the common mind of the meeting about the way forward for the assembly.

Because changes to an original proposal can occur during the discussion, care needs to be taken that the agreed wording at all stages is clear to everybody, and that

time for interpretation is allowed as necessary. The session recorder<sup>3</sup> has an important part in assisting the moderator in this role.

For the few agenda items where the rules specify that voting procedures are to be used, the rules provide an outline of how that is regulated.<sup>4</sup> On rare occasions in a decision session when a consensus outcome cannot be reached, the meeting may choose to decide an urgent polarized issue by formal voting procedures also.<sup>5</sup>

## **6. Role of moderators**

A number of different people share the work of moderating sessions throughout the assembly meeting. Moderators are designated prior to the assembly by the outgoing central committee, and if necessary during an assembly by the business committee.<sup>6</sup> Each moderator is expected to have been trained in consensus procedures and to be familiar with the ethos and functioning of the World Council of Churches.

The responsibilities of a moderator are:

- to preside in a manner that assists the assembly to be open to discerning the will of God;
- to encourage the meeting to move towards a common mind; and
- to ensure that the needs and purposes of the Council are met in the way business is carried out.

In so doing, a moderator is expected:

- to facilitate the exchange and development of ideas, encouraging trust and integrity in contributions;
- to ensure respect and support for all who participate;
- to seek indications of the delegates' response to each speech, and reflect back the mood of the meeting as it becomes apparent;
- to summarize the discussion from time to time, assisting the assembly to focus the move towards a consensus outcome;
- to encourage creative modifications of a proposal which take heed of insights expressed by earlier speakers;
- to invite participants, as occasion demands, to spend a few minutes in conversation with near neighbours;

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3. Person appointed by the business committee to follow the discussion of a decision session, to record the languages of the emerging consensus, including final language of decisions taken, and to assist the moderator of the session in discerning an emerging consensus. Recorders shall also assist the moderator in ensuring that the final agreed wording of a proposal is translated and available to delegates before a decision is made. Normally a delegate will be appointed recorder. Rule XIX.5.

4. Rule XIX.10.

5. Rule XIX.9.e, 9.f.

6. Rule XIX.3.

- to test emerging agreement in decision sessions, to ascertain if the meeting is ready to move to a decision by consensus.

A moderator's role as a non-partisan facilitator is crucial to the flow of the meeting towards a consensus outcome. To that end, the moderator:

- convenes the session, announcing which category of session it is;
- announces any change in session category which may occur during a session, and may provide a brief break in the sitting at that time for reflective prayer or the singing of a song;
- encourages a fair range of views in selecting speakers from those whose desire to contribute has been indicated either in writing or by queuing at the microphone;
- liaises frequently with the recorder throughout the session, ensuring the wording of any agreed variation to a proposal is available to participants in an appropriately clear form;
- does not participate in deliberations (unless arrangements are made to relinquish the role of moderator while the particular matter is being decided);
- is entitled to a personal vote as a delegate of her/his own church in formal voting procedures, but not to a deciding vote where the outcome of a count is tied; and
- closes the session.

## **7. Setting the agenda**

### *a) Programme agenda*

The broad outcomes for the programmatic activities of the World Council of Churches are set by the assembly, upon recommendation of the assembly programme guidelines committee. After the assembly, the central committee, assisted by its programme committee, engages to determine and develop the strategies that will deliver these outcomes, setting programme strategies and goals. In between two assemblies, the programme committee assists the central committee to hear, with respect to programme work, the views and hopes of the churches, respond to key issues identified by commissions, and review, reshape and develop the goals of programme work in light of changing circumstances and needs. The executive committee ensures the implementation of the strategic programmatic objectives set by the central committee.

An additional advisory body to the central committee and its executive committee is the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration (resulting from the work of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC). It helps between assembly meetings in guiding the process of programme agenda setting and in monitoring the overall balance of the work of the Council, and during assemblies advises the business committee.

### *b) Business agenda*

The business agenda of this assembly meeting is proposed by the central committee (through its assembly planning committee) to the first decision session of the

assembly. A delegate may suggest an item of business through the business committee, which has the responsibility during the assembly of monitoring when agenda changes should be brought to a plenary for approval.

The governing bodies each have responsibility for specifically identified areas of governance, including, but not limited to:

- **Assembly:** reception of the accounts and report of the outgoing central committee; election of presidents; election of central committee members; revision of the constitution and confirmation of certain rules changes; determination of overall policies, including programme policies;
- **Central committee:** election of the leadership of the central committee (moderator, vice-moderators, general secretary); election of executive committee; appointment of commissions and advisory groups; elaboration of institutional policies and strategic plans for programme and finance; initiation and termination of programmes.
- **Executive committee:** ensuring implementation of strategic objectives set by the central committee; overseeing finances, institutional risk and resource management; monitoring programmes and activities; staff appointments.

Normally, the leadership of the central committee and the executive committee monitor the setting of the business agenda of an assembly or the central committee, ensuring that an annotated agenda with supporting documents is made available well ahead of the meeting. Some smaller agenda items may be included on the agenda of a sub-committee right from the start, rather than waiting for listing in a plenary before being referred to the sub-committee for more detailed consideration. To ensure widespread awareness of matters being considered, all participants will be issued annotated agendas of the different reference or sub-committees. Hence those not involved with a particular sub-committee, who have any concerns or insights on a particular agenda item, can share them with the sub-committee before the matter comes back to the plenary for decision-making.

How individual members of governing bodies introduce a matter to the business agenda of an assembly is addressed in the sub-section: “How to raise concerns” under “Role of delegates and participants” in section 8.

## **8. Role of delegates and participants**

### *a) How to contribute*

When a participant wishes to contribute in a plenary session, she/he indicates this to the moderator and waits to be called. This can be done either by queuing at a microphone when the moderator so invites or by submitting a written request (name, church, country and essence of contribution) via a steward.

When called to speak, all remarks are addressed to the moderator. A participant states her/his name, church, country, language preference, and (in a hearing session) whether she/he is a delegate or other participant. If one of the working languages of the Council is used, simultaneous interpretation will be provided. If participants speak in another language, it is their responsibility to provide interpretation.

Remarks are limited to three minutes to enable as many contributions as possible within one session. Speakers should have a clear idea beforehand of what they will say, with the main points crystallized to as few words as possible.

*b) How to raise concerns*

Any participant may raise concerns outside of sessions with a member of the business committee. Concerns may include the appropriateness of a proposal, its priority in the agenda or the manner in which it is to be addressed, or suggestions for additions to the proposed agenda.<sup>7</sup>

During a hearing session, procedural suggestions about how an issue is handled can be raised if necessary in the course of the discussion (consensus procedures are used for hearing sessions).

During a decision session, a delegate:

- may raise questions about procedure;
- may challenge the result of a vote if there is doubt about the outcome: a counted vote is then taken immediately;
- may request a secret written ballot, such request needing to be seconded and agreed by a two-thirds majority before proceeding;
- may appeal against a moderator's ruling on a point of order; the moderator will put to the meeting without discussion the question of whether delegates concur with the moderator's ruling, and it is decided by either consensus or voting procedures (according to which are in place at the time).

In either a hearing session or a decision session, if a delegate considers that a matter under discussion goes against the ecclesiological self-understanding<sup>8</sup> of her/his church, there is a process for bringing that concern to the attention of the assembly.<sup>9</sup>

*c) How to listen and respond (ethics of participation)*

Consensus procedures assume all are listening for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as each speaker contributes. So participants try to build creatively on the insights of earlier contributions as much as possible, always keeping in mind the goal of discerning a way forward for the assembly on which the meeting can agree.

It is assumed that all contributions are made with integrity and conviction, and so all speakers are treated with respect even where their understanding is quite different from one's own. Growth in participants' awareness of the richness and diversity of the Christian church is always the outcome of World Council of Churches gatherings, whatever specific decisions are taken on particular matters.

Because a consensus outcome usually arises from progressive development of a proposal during the course of hearing and decision sessions, there is no place for proxy or absentee votes when the mind of the meeting is being discerned (or when a

7. Rule XIX.6.a, 6.c.

8. The self-understanding of a church on matters of faith, doctrine and ethics.

9. Section 12: safety valves; rule XIX.6.d.

formal vote is taken). Only those present and participating can be part of the communal discernment which develops, about God's will for the way forward at this time.

Similarly, where a participant has chosen not to attend a designated sub-committee that has been part of the process of considering a particular report or issue, it is generally inappropriate for her/him to raise objection to the outcome, or to record a minority opinion, when the report is presented in a subsequent plenary session. The place for the objection to be heard would have been in the smaller committee forum, where a different conclusion might have been reached in listening to others' contributions.

In central committee where a substitute for a delegate is allowed in certain circumstances, it is the responsibility of the delegate to fully brief the person taking her/his place.

*d) How to report afterwards (advocacy for decisions of assembly)*

Participating in a World Council of Churches assembly is a rare privilege. It is the responsibility of participants to ensure that the fruits of the experience are made known back in their home churches. This means advocacy for the resolutions of the assembly, even when in some particular instances the outcome might not have been the participant's first preference for wording.

And of course the rich ecumenical encounters will colour participants' total involvement in the life of their home church for years to come!

## **9. Making decisions – consensus<sup>10</sup>**

### *a) Understanding consensus*

Consensus is a process of seeking the common mind of the meeting without resort to a formal vote, engaging in genuine dialogue that is respectful, mutually supportive and empowering whilst prayerfully seeking to discern God's will.

A consensus outcome is declared when one of the following occurs:

- all those entitled to make decisions are in agreement about an outcome (unanimity); or
- most are in agreement and the few for whom it is not their first preference nonetheless accept they have been fairly heard and could live with that outcome, and so agree to consensus being recorded as the mind of the meeting.

Agreement about an outcome is not limited merely to approving the wording of a proposal. That *may* be what is agreed. But it may be that consensus is reached about another outcome, including such possibilities as agreeing to reject a proposal, or to refer a matter for further work, or to affirm that a variety of positions may be held by Christian churches on this issue.

There are no formal amendments in consensus procedures. Speakers may suggest variations to the wording of a proposal as discussion proceeds, and incremental changes can be agreed by the meeting as a possible outcome progressively becomes apparent. Consensus procedures assume all are eager to listen for insights from others

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10. See appendix A: flow chart of consensus procedures.

that may help in the search to discern God's will for the way forward. Hence there will be an attitude of respectful anticipation, as all delegates work towards the common goal.

*b) Indicator cards*

In a big gathering, hearing all contributions and being aware of how delegates are responding to the ideas expressed by each speaker may be difficult. Indicator cards can assist in this process in both hearing and decision sessions. Blue and orange cards are provided for each delegate's use.<sup>11</sup> After a speaker finishes his or her remarks, the moderator gauges the proportion of those supportive of that point of view by calling for delegates to hold a card discreetly at chest level – orange to indicate warmth towards an idea or acceptance of it, blue to show coolness or disapproval. By reporting to the meeting what is visible in response each time, the moderator is able to help the meeting understand what aspects need more exploration, and thus gradually move forward to an outcome acceptable to all.

Indicator cards may also be used to show the moderator that a delegate considers it is time to move on – a speaker may be getting repetitious or irrelevant, or the points may have been well made already by other speakers. In this case, a delegate may hold the two coloured cards crossed in front of the chest as a silent indication to the moderator that prolonging debate does not seem helpful. If the number of crossed cards indicates that many delegates are of the same mind, the moderator may ask the speaker to conclude, or invite one with a different perspective to contribute next, or check whether the meeting is ready to move to recording a consensus decision.

*c) Small conversation groups*

Breaking into small conversation groups is one way of enabling fuller participation – just turning to near neighbours of the same language preference in a plenary setting for a few moments of sharing ideas. Often an apparent deadlock can be relieved by such a technique, and when the plenary resumes, fresh insights may have emerged which lead to a creative way for an outcome to be achieved.

*d) Checking for consensus*

As discussion proceeds, it may become clear there are basic principles the meeting is able to affirm immediately, before the continuing search for a common mind on more diverse aspects of the proposal. The moderator can state what seems to be an underlying agreement, and then check with the meeting with such a question as: "Do we have consensus on this aspect at this stage?" Delegates are invited to show indicator cards, and the moderator is able to see if:

- all are in agreement (orange), in which case the consensus agreement is recorded, and continuing discussion can focus on the more contentious aspects;
- there is still a mixed response (many of both orange and blue), in which case more discussion on the whole issue is clearly needed; or

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11. These colours are chosen because even those who are colour blind can distinguish between orange and blue.

- only one or two are unable to agree at this point (mostly orange, one or two blue), in which case the moderator's next questions can check whether those few feel their point of view has been heard, and whether they can accept the position reached by the others and agree to a consensus outcome being recorded, even though the wording is not their first preference.

*e) When consensus seems elusive*

After a reasonable attempt to achieve an agreed outcome, if it seems a consensus outcome is still elusive and the meeting is polarized with more than one potential outcome, one of a number of possibilities is available to the meeting (perhaps guided by the moderator), including:

- agreeing to refer the matter to a select working group to report back to a later session (ensuring the group's membership includes people from each of the firmly held positions);
- agreeing to refer the matter to another body or to member churches for more work, and not considering it further at this assembly;
- agreeing to affirm that there are various opinions Christian churches may hold;
- agreeing that the matter be no longer considered.

*f) In reaching any of these conclusions, certain questions should be asked, such as:*

- “Must a decision on this matter be made today?” If no, the matter should be deferred to a later session (tomorrow, next week, or some other time). Further seasoning by a committee and informal discussion among those with strong views will often bring the meeting to a different level of agreement at a later session. If yes (and this is quite rare), the attention of the meeting must shift from approving or not approving the proposal at hand to finding other ways of meeting the pressing or time-critical need. Interim solutions can sometimes be found while the meeting searches for consensus on the original question.
- “Can this proposal be acted upon, on the understanding that some members (or member churches) cannot support it?” If no, the proposal should be deferred for further work, as above. If yes, the effect is that those persons, or member churches, or parts of the Council, being of a dissenting opinion, nevertheless allow a policy or programme to go forward without endorsing it. This is sometimes called “standing aside”. In social and political issues it may sometimes be appropriate for some member churches or some committee or commission of the World Council of Churches to speak without committing the Council as a whole to one point of view.
- “Have we asked the right question?” When agreement on the issue, as posed, is not possible, this should not be regarded as failure. Sometimes a different question will yield a consensus. Sometimes it is helpful to ask, “What can we say together?” The meeting may not be of one mind on a particular

statement on a difficult issue, but may find great value in articulating its various perspectives and the fruits of its discussion. There may be foundational principles on which we all agree. A clear articulation of these, followed by a description of the diverse conclusions that Christians of good conscience have reached, can be a powerful product of a discussion.

*g) When a decision must be taken NOW*

If in the opinion of the general secretary or the moderator or vice moderator(s) of the central committee or the business committee it is vital for a decision to be made before the meeting concludes and yet the meeting is nowhere near a consensus outcome, the rules provide a process for the business committee to re-formulate the proposal.<sup>12</sup> When the reworded proposal is then brought back to a later session, it is the responsibility of the meeting to decide (by consensus procedures) whether it agrees a decision must be made at this meeting, and whether it is prepared to continue working towards a consensus outcome on the reformulated proposal. If a decision must be made immediately, but opinion remains divided about what that decision should be, the meeting can agree by at least an eighty-five (85) percent majority to decide the matter by formal voting procedures.

## 10. Making decisions—formal voting procedures

### a) Exceptions to using consensus

It is expected that all decisions of the WCC will be made by consensus, except for:<sup>13</sup>

- changes to the constitution;
- elections;
- selection of an assembly venue; and
- adoption of yearly accounts, financial audit reports and appointment of the auditors.

Each of these matters will initially be presented in a hearing session, where questions and discussion using consensus procedures may occur. At the start of the decision session where the matter will be decided, the moderator announces that the method to be used is voting by show of hands or cards. Simplified rules for formal voting procedures<sup>14</sup> are then employed for determining the matter, in which:

- all motions must be moved and seconded by a delegate;
- the mover has the right to speak first;
- an amendment may be introduced and if seconded it will be considered along with the motion;

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12. Rule XIX.9.e.

13. Rule XIX.10.a.

14. Rule XIX.10.; appendix B: flow chart for formal voting procedures.

- no one may speak more than once except that the mover may answer objections immediately before the vote is taken;
- withdrawal of a motion requires the permission of the meeting;
- any delegate may move to close the discussion, waiting for a call from the moderator before so doing;
- voting is by show of hands or cards, those in favour first, those against next and then those abstaining;
- anyone voting with the minority or abstaining may have his or her opinion recorded in the minutes, the report of the meeting and the session record;
- there is provision for reconsideration of an earlier decision of the meeting;
- points of order and procedural proposals may be raised;
- approval requires two-thirds of those present to be in favour (unless otherwise specified or agreed by the meeting).

*b) Moving from consensus to formal vote*

Very rarely it may be necessary to resort to formal voting procedures when it is imperative that an outcome be decided immediately and it has not been possible to reach consensus. The process for moving from consensus to formal voting procedures requires the moderator to announce that a vote to decide this change will be taken, eighty-five (85) percent of delegates present being needed to agree to do so.<sup>15</sup>

## **11. Procedural proposals and points of order**

*a) Procedural proposals*

Any delegate in the course of either a hearing session or a decision session, or any participant in the course of a hearing session, may ask for clarification of the pending matter or may raise suggestions about procedure which can be considered by the meeting and decided immediately. A delegate seeking to do so may not interrupt a speaker but must wait for the call of the moderator.

*b) Points of order*

Points of order may be raised by any participant during either hearing or decision sessions at any time, even by interrupting another speaker. A participant gains the attention of the moderator with the words, "point of order!" The moderator asks the participant to state the point of order and then (without debate):

- rules on it immediately; or
- asks the assembly to decide the matter.

Points of order which may be raised are:

- to question whether procedures being followed are in accordance with the rules which allow for a personal explanation if a subsequent speaker grossly misrepresents his/her remarks;

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15. Rule XIX.9.f.

- to raise objection if remarks are thought to be offensive or derogatory;
  - to request that the meeting move to a closed session until the matter under discussion is decided (closed session requires that all but delegates leave the session).
- c) *If the moderator's ruling on a point of order or a procedural proposal is challenged, the challenger may speak and the moderator reply before the delegates present decide the question either by consensus or by two-thirds majority vote, according to the decision-making procedures then being employed.*

## **12. Safety valves**

Seeking the common mind of a meeting about the way forward needs some safeguards. No delegate or member church need feel pressured into an unacceptable position. All opinions are valued and on the occasions when, after careful consideration and listening, a minority cannot accept what has become the general mind of the meeting, there is reassurance in the following provisions.

a) *Consensus outcome on what?*

A consensus outcome may be reached that a variety of stances are appropriate for member churches to hold on a particular issue, and so the wording of the agreed resolution notes and affirms those differing perspectives.

b) *Definition of consensus—not only unanimity*

The definition of consensus is not confined to unanimity. It also includes the situation where most are in agreement and those few who cannot completely agree are satisfied that their point of view has been heard, that the discussion has been both full and fair, and that their church is not compromised in having a consensus outcome recorded on this matter.

c) *Recording minority opinions*

After every effort to discern a consensus outcome, occasionally a decision cannot be reached even though it is necessary to finalize the matter immediately. Among the possible outcomes for such a scenario is the provision for accepting the discernment of most delegates with some few others recording a different point of view. This can occur when those who cannot agree with the majority are yet satisfied with the outcome and exercise the right to record their opinion opposing the resolution in the minutes and to have their viewpoint noted in the record of the session.

d) *Ecclesiological self-understanding<sup>16</sup>*

Where a matter being raised is considered by a delegate to go against the ecclesiological self-understanding of his or her church, the delegate may request that it not be submitted for decision. The moderator shall seek the advice of the business committee in consultation with this delegate and other members of the same church or confession present at the session. If agreed that the matter does in fact go against

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16. Rule XIX.6.d.

the ecclesiological self-understanding of the delegate's church, the moderator shall announce that the matter will be removed from the agenda of the decision session and may be considered in a hearing session. The materials and minutes of the discussion shall be sent to the member churches for their study and comment.

*e) A member church may act after the assembly*

If after the close of an assembly a member church finds it cannot support a decision of the assembly, there is provision for that to be officially recorded.<sup>17</sup>

### **13. Language**

Normally there are five working languages of the assembly – English, French, German, Russian and Spanish. Participants may contribute in another language if they can provide interpretation into one of these. The business committee will assist such participants to be able to contribute as fully as possible.

### **14. Election process**

*a) Assembly committees*

During the first decision session of the assembly, the business committee will present nominations for election of the membership of all assembly committees (including the nominations committee). Committees begin their work immediately.

*b) Central committee*

- Prior to the assembly, member churches are invited to nominate candidates for the central committee from amongst assembly delegates. Consultation between churches in each region is encouraged, such that a name supported by more than one church will carry more weight for the nominations committee.
- During the assembly, regional meetings provide opportunity for discussion about particular nominations.
- Principles guiding the work of the nominations committee:<sup>18</sup>
  - the personal qualifications of the individual for the task for which she/he is being nominated;
  - fair and adequate confessional representation;
  - fair and adequate geographical and cultural representation;
  - fair and adequate representation of the major interests of the Council;
  - the general acceptability of the nominations to the churches to which the nominees belong;
  - not more than seven persons from any one member church;
  - adequate representation of lay persons and an adequate balance of men, women and young people.
- Early in the life of the assembly, the nominations committee presents a first proposal on the anticipated profile of the central committee (without names) for consideration and approval by the assembly.

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17. Rule XIX.5.e.

18. Rule IV.4.c,d,e, and f.

- Subsequently, a first reading of nominations is presented in a hearing session, during which discussion about the list in general is encouraged. No proposed changes to names will be considered in this session.
- Delegates may bring proposals for changes to specific nominations to the nominations committee outside of the plenary meeting. Any proposal needs to be in writing, must be signed by six delegates from at least three member churches, and must propose an alternative nominee as an alternative to a particular nominee. Alternative nominations need to offer a replacement with the same demographic profile (region, gender, age, etc.), unless the replacement nominee will improve the balances sought.
- When the second reading of the list of nominations is brought to a decision session, the nominations committee gives an account of the proposals suggested for changes to the slate of names, and any variations resulting from them. If the assembly is not ready to approve the list, further time is given for out-of-session proposals as described above, and the list is brought to a subsequent decision session for the election.

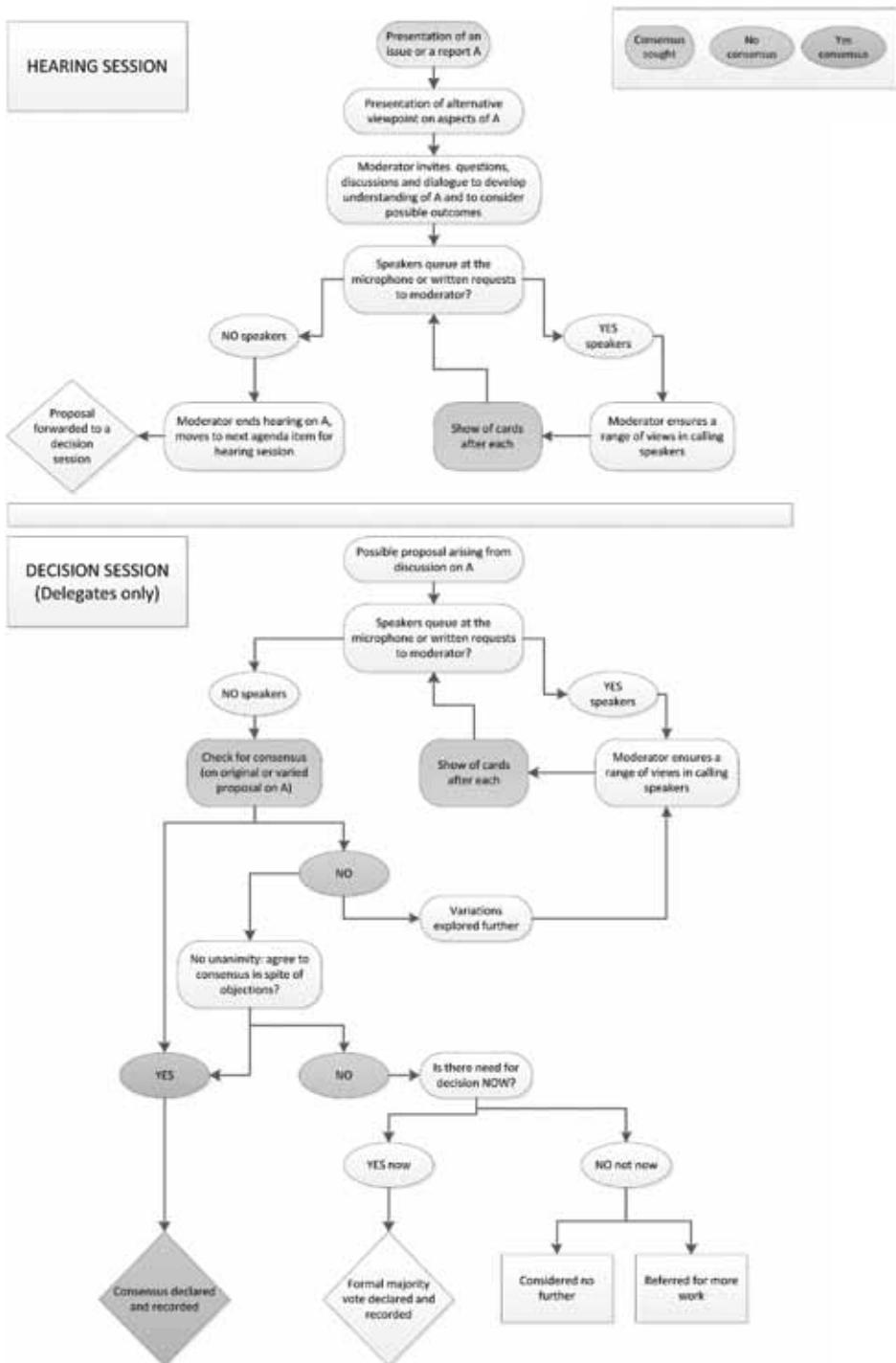
*c) Presidents*

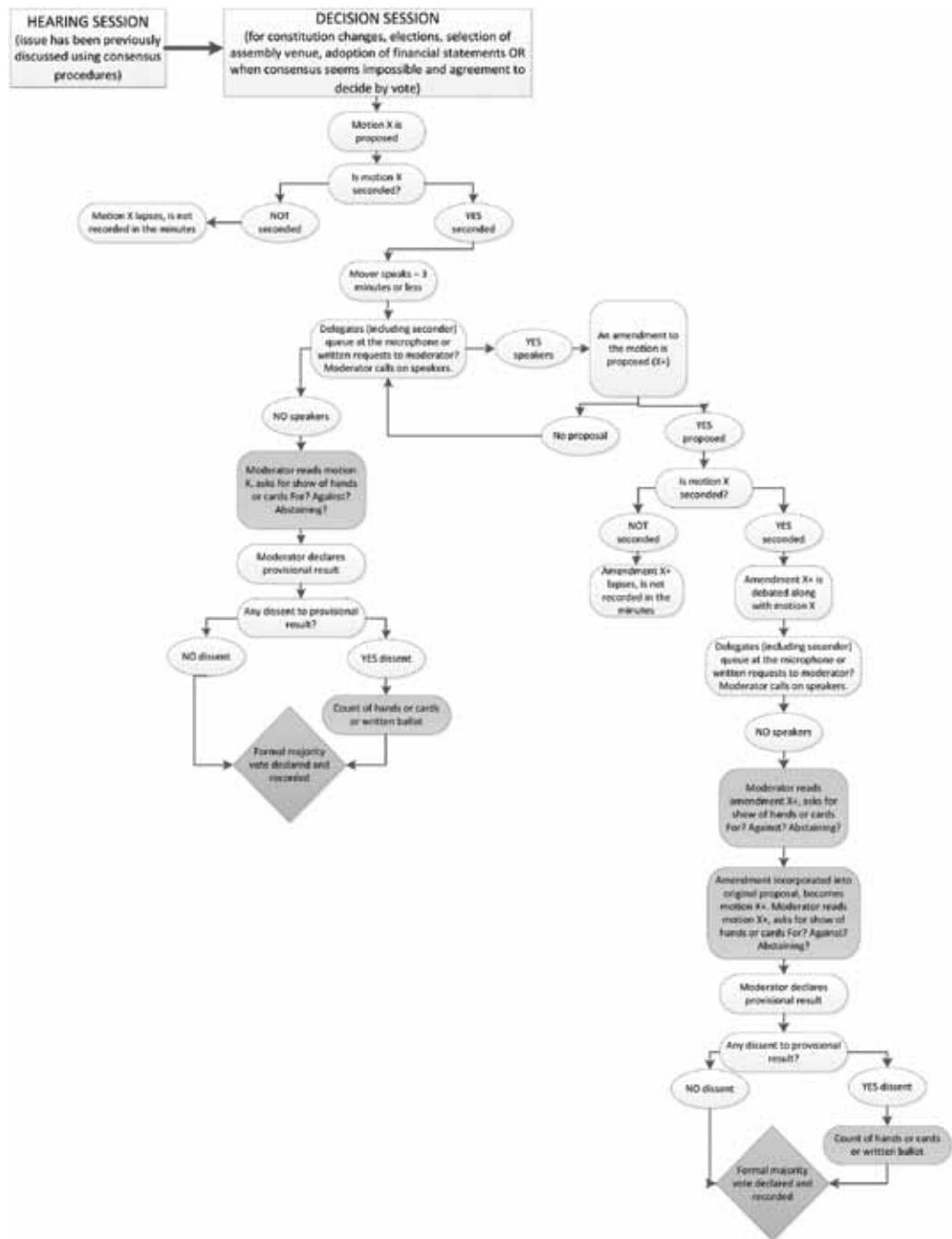
Prior to an assembly, staff will seek advice from regional ecumenical organizations and pre-assembly regional meetings about appropriate names to be considered by the nominations committee, in preparing nominations for the eight presidents of the World Council of Churches.

*d) Voting*

Elections are determined by formal voting procedures.

## Flowchart of Consensus Procedures





# When Christian Solidarity Is Broken: A Pastoral and Educational Response to Sexual Harassment

## Christian community and solidarity

*The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. (Isa. 32:17)*

Christians affirm the basic dignity of all humankind, created in the image of God. In ecumenical gatherings, an environment of welcome and hospitality encourages the full and equal participation of all. The WCC strives to bring together a community based on the values of solidarity and mutual concern that challenges all forms of violence and harassment. The WCC is committed to raise awareness about sexual harassment in order to prevent it from occurring and to provide a safe space free from intimidation for all participants. When human sin breaks the trust in this community, Christians are called to be present for one another, especially for those who struggle for their safety, dignity and rights. God calls us into right relations with one another — to show care and respect for each human being.

## Cultural diversity

Our cultural diversity adds to the strength of our community and is something to be cherished and celebrated. As we encounter one another's differences we should be careful not to assume that our way of being and behaving is comfortable for everyone else. Sometimes our differences of age, gender, culture, spirituality, religion, ability, language, caste, ethnicity and class make it a challenge to understand and communicate effectively with one another. How can each person be encouraged to take seriously his or her own responsibility to act with care in the multidimensional, cross-cultural interactions of the ecumenical world? What may be considered normal friendliness and sociability to one person can be misinterpreted in a culturally mixed group and even between individuals of the same culture or background. This is why we must take extra care and sensitivity with one another in an ecumenical environment. Finding appropriate expressions of the friendship and warmth felt for others in a positive, non-threatening way is a challenge faced by the ecumenical community.

## Violence and power

Harassment is an intolerable manifestation of unequal power relations between people. Sexual harassment often also includes discrimination on the basis of gender, age, race or class, causing stress or humiliation to the person being harassed. This may happen in situations where dominance and abuse of power result in a lack of respect for and mistreatment of people as sexual objects. This ultimately demeans and destroys the dignity of a person. Sexual harassment is most often experienced by women from men. So harassment is not an isolated incident or individual problem. Rather it is a problem stemming from wider patterns and dynamics of power in our

societies. Harassment can also occur between people of the same gender and sometimes involves women harassing men.

*The Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace carries forward the commitment of churches around the world to overcome the institutional and personal violence that women experience. Sexual harassment has been identified as the most common expression of this violence. Incidents of sexual harassment and assault at church and ecumenical meetings have engaged the churches and the ecumenical movement in seeking responsible action and policy. Many churches, organizations and governments have introduced institutional or legislative remedies to protect those who experience the dehumanizing effects of violence and sexual harassment.*

The purpose of these guidelines is to set a positive foundation upon which to build Christian community marked by solidarity, despite the brokenness in our midst. These guidelines are intended to encourage men to reflect on their attitudes towards women and those who are privileged on the basis of race, class, gender, social status, position of leadership and age to reflect on the spirit of justice and community that the ecumenical movement upholds. They are also intended to encourage individuals to assert their dignity and contribute to the renewal of community. How can each of us, in our worship, work and meetings, help to create a reconciled, respectful community, conducive to the full humanity of all?

### **What is sexual harassment and assault?**

On a continuum of severity, harassment ranges from whistles in the street and obscene phone calls to sexual assault. Sexual assault includes rape, sexual intercourse without consent, and sexual contact without consent. Several kinds of behaviour with a sexual connotation, if unsolicited and unwanted and especially if repetitive, can be forms of sexual harassment. Examples are: suggestive looks or comments, teasing or telling of jokes with sexual content, letters, calls or materials of a sexual nature, imposed touching or closeness, pressure for dates or activities with a sexual overtone, or offers to use influence in return for sexual favours. The feelings of the person experiencing any unwelcome behaviour are what is important. This depends on each individual and the context. In the end, harassment is not what someone necessarily intends to do but how his or her actions impact another's person's feelings and well-being.

### **Some steps to prevent and deal with sexual harassment**

- Be clear with yourself and others about your personal boundaries—what sort of closeness with others feels comfortable or appropriate for you?
- Refuse any inappropriate gesture or contact.
- Respect other people's personal boundaries. If you are not sure ask first (i.e. would it be okay if I gave you a hug?).
- If you experience harassment, make it clear that the behaviour is unwelcome. You can say “no” with a look, words or gestures.
- Harassment is never the fault of the person being harassed. By its nature, harassment is unwanted attention or behaviour. It is not consensual.

- If harassment persists, and you are in a public place, make your protests louder so that the public notices the harasser.
- Trust your intuition and feelings if someone's behaviour makes you feel uncomfortable. People who experience harassment sometimes try to rationalize or deny what is really going on.
- Talk about it with people you trust, so that the name of the harasser and the kind of objectionable things done are known. This is important so that others are not subjected to the same treatment. Silence may only provoke more harassment.
- In serious cases where legal or other follow-up action is necessary, a verbal and written record of events will be helpful.
- If you see or hear of someone being harassed, don't keep silent. You could approach the person being harassed to see how you can help. Tell the person doing the harassing that their actions or words are inappropriate and make everyone feel uncomfortable. If the case is severe call for help.
- If you have experienced harassment, the solidarity care team can provide a safe space to talk about the situation and your feelings.

They can also support you with whatever follow-up measures might be appropriate when you return home (i.e. local centre against sexual harassment and assault or support group through a local church).

### **Concluding statement**

The churches and the World Council of Churches are called to develop a truly inclusive community free of violence and injustice. Sexual harassment and all forms of violence will not be tolerated or condoned. Offenders will be held responsible for their behaviour and are subject to appropriate disciplinary action. The location and members of the solidarity care team will be announced at the assembly.

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## **ASSEMBLY DOCUMENTS**

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## **GOD'S GIFT AND CALL TO UNITY— AND OUR COMMITMENT**

1. Creation is a gift from the living God. We celebrate creation's life in its diversity and give thanks for its goodness (Gen. 1). It is the will of God that the whole creation, reconciled in the love of Christ through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, should live together in unity and peace (Eph.1).

### **Our experience**

2. Today, the whole creation, the world and its people, live in the tension between the profoundest hope and the deepest despair. We give thanks for the diversity of human cultures, for the wonder of knowledge and discovery, for communities being rebuilt and enemies reconciled, for people being healed and populations fed. We rejoice when people of different faiths work together for justice and peace. These are signs of hope and new beginnings. But we grieve that there are also places where God's children cry out. Social and economic injustice, poverty and famine, greed and war ravage our world. There is violence and terrorism and the threat of war, particularly nuclear war. Many suffer from HIV and AIDS and other epidemics; peoples are displaced and their lands dispossessed. Many women are victims of violence, inequality and trafficking. Some men also suffer abuse. There are those who are marginalised and excluded. We are all in danger of being alienated from our cultures and disconnected from earth. Creation has been misused and we face threats to the balance of life, a growing ecological crisis and the effects of climate change. These are signs of our disordered relations with God, with one another and with creation, and they dishonour God's gift of life.

3. Within churches we experience a similar tension between celebration and sorrow. There are signs of vibrant life and creative energy in the growth of Christian communities around the world with a new, unprecedented diversity. There is a deepening sense among some churches of needing one another and of being called by Christ to be in unity. In places where churches experience anguish and constant fear of persecution, solidarity between Christians from different traditions in the service of justice and peace is a sign of God's grace. The ecumenical movement has encouraged new friendships forming a seed bed in which unity can grow. There are places where Christians work and witness together in their local communities and new regional agreements of covenanting and closer fellowship. Increasingly, we recognize that we are called to share with, and learn from, those of other faiths, to work with them in common efforts for justice and peace and for the preservation of the integrity of God's beautiful but hurting creation. These deepening relationships bring new challenges and enlarge our understanding.

4. But we grieve that there are also painful experiences of situations where diversity has turned into division and we do not always recognise the face of Christ in each other. We cannot all gather together around the Table in Eucharistic communion. Divisive issues remain and new issues bring sharp challenges which create new divisions within and between churches. Too easily we withdraw into our own traditions and communities, without being challenged and enriched by the gifts others hold out to us. For some, the creative new life of faith seems not to embrace a passion for unity or a longing for fellowship with others. This makes us more ready to tolerate injustice and even conflicts between and within the churches. We are held back as some grow weary and disappointed on the ecumenical path.

5. As those with human failings, we do not always honour the God who is the source of our life. Whenever we abuse life through our practices of exclusion and marginalization, our refusal to pursue justice, our unwillingness to live in peace, our failure to seek unity, and our exploitation of creation, we reject the gifts God holds out to us.

### **Our shared scriptural vision**

6. As we read the Scriptures together our eyes are opened to the place of the community of God's people, the Church, within creation. Men and women are created in the image and likeness of God and given the responsibility to care for life (Gen. 1:27-28). The covenant with Israel marked a decisive moment in the unfolding of God's plan of salvation. The prophets called God's covenanted people to work for justice and peace, to care for the poor, the outcast, and the marginalized, and to be a light to the nations (Micah 6:8; Isaiah 49:6).

7. God sent Jesus Christ who through his ministry and through his death on the cross destroyed the walls of separation and hostility, established a new covenant, and brought about genuine unity and reconciliation in his own Body (Eph. 1:9-10 and 2:14-16). Jesus announced the coming Kingdom of God, had compassion on the crowds, healed the sick and preached good news to the poor (Matt. 9:35-36; Luke 4:14-24). By his life, death and resurrection, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus revealed the communion of the life of God the Holy Trinity, and opened to all a new way of living in communion with one another in the love of God (1 John 1:1-3). Jesus prayed for the unity of his disciples for the sake of the world (John 17:20-24). He entrusted his message and his ministry of unity and reconciliation to his disciples and through them to the Church, which is called to continue his mission (2 Cor. 5:18-20). From the beginning the community of believers lived together, were devoted to the apostolic teaching and fellowship, breaking bread and praying together, caring for the poor, proclaiming the good news and yet struggling with factions and divisions (Acts 2:42; Acts 15).

8. The Church, as the Body of Christ, embodies Jesus' uniting, reconciling and self-sacrificial love to the world on the cross. At the heart of God's own life of communion is forever a cross and forever resurrection – a reality which is revealed to us and through us. We pray and wait with eager longing for God to renew the whole

creation (Rom. 8:19-21). God is always there ahead of us, always surprising us, forgiving our failures and offering us the gift of new life.

### **God's call to unity today**

9. On our ecumenical journey we have come to understand more about God's call to the Church to serve the unity of all creation. The vocation of the Church is to be: foretaste of new creation; prophetic sign to the whole world of the life God intends for all; and servant spreading the good news of God's Kingdom of justice, peace and love.

10. As foretaste God gives to the Church gracious gifts: a faith grounded in Holy Scripture; baptism in which we are in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, and made a new creation; the Eucharist, the fullest expression of communion with God and with one another, which builds up the fellowship and from which we are sent out in mission; an apostolic ministry to draw out and nurture the gifts of all the faithful and to lead the mission of the Church. Synodical and conciliar gatherings too are gifts enabling the fellowship, under the Spirit's guidance, to discern consensus, to teach together and to live sacrificially, serving one another's needs and the world's needs. The unity of the Church is not uniformity; diversity is also a gift, creative and life-giving. But diversity cannot be so great that those in Christ become strangers and enemies to one another, thus damaging the uniting reality of life in Christ.<sup>1</sup>

11. As prophetic sign the Church's vocation is to show forth the life God wills for the whole creation. We are hardly a credible sign as long as our ecclesial divisions, which spring from fundamental disagreements in faith, remain. Divisions and marginalisation on the basis of, for example, ethnicity, race, gender, disability, power, status, and caste also obscure the Church's witness to unity. To be a credible sign our life together must reflect the qualities of patience, humility, generosity, attentive listening to one another, mutual accountability, inclusivity, and a willingness to stay together, not saying 'I have no need of you' (1 Cor. 12:21). We are called to be a community upholding justice in its own life, living together in peace, never settling for the easy peace that silences protest and pain, but struggling for the true peace that comes with justice. Only as Christians are reconciled and renewed by God's Spirit will the Church bear authentic witness to the possibility of reconciled life for all people, for all creation. It is often in its weakness and poverty, suffering as Christ suffers, that the Church is truly sign and mystery of God's grace.<sup>2</sup>

12. As servant the Church is called to make present God's holy and life affirming plan for the world revealed in Jesus Christ. By its very nature the Church is missionary, called and sent to witness to the gift of communion that God intends for all

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1. We pray that as our churches respond to the Faith and Order document, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* ([www.oikoumene.org/Resources/Documents/WCC Commissions/Faith and Order](http://www.oikoumene.org/Resources/Documents/WCC%20Commissions/Faith%20and%20Order)) we may be helped to understand more of the visible unity that God calls us to live in and for the world.

2. We gratefully acknowledge the many programmes of the WCC that have helped us to understand what it means to be a faithful community where divisions of ethnicity, race, gender, power and status are being confronted and overcome.

humanity and for all creation in the Kingdom of God. In its work of service, evangelism and mission done in Christ's way, the Church participates in offering God's life to the world.<sup>3</sup> In the power of the Spirit, the Church is to proclaim the good news in ways that awaken a response in different contexts, languages and cultures, to pursue God's justice, and to work for God's peace. Christians live in the presence of peoples of other faiths, and are called to make common cause, wherever possible, for the well-being of all peoples and creation.

13. The unity of the Church, the unity of the human community and the unity of the whole creation belong together. They are inseparable. The unity of the Church requires a life of justice and peace that impels us to work together for justice and peace in God's world.

### **Our commitment**

14. We affirm the place of the Church in God's design and repent of the divisions among and within our churches, confessing with sorrow that our disunity undermines our witness to the good news of Jesus Christ and makes less credible our witness to that unity God desires for all. We confess our failures to do justice, to work for peace, and to sustain creation. Despite our failings, God is faithful and forgiving and continues to call us to unity. Having faith in God's creating and re-creating power, we long for the Church to be foretaste, credible sign and effective servant of the new life that God is offering to the world. It is in God, who beckons us to life in all its fullness, that joy, hope, and a passion for unity are renewed.

15. And so we urge one another to remain committed to "the primary purpose of the fellowship of churches ... to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe."<sup>4</sup>

16. In faithfulness to this our common calling, we will seek together the full visible unity of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church when we shall express our unity around the one Table of the Lord. In pursuing the unity of the Church we will open ourselves to receive the gifts of other traditions, and offer our gifts to them. We will continue theological conversations, giving attention to new voices and different methods of approach. We will intensify our work for justice, peace and the healing of creation, and address together the complex challenges of contemporary social,

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3. We are thankful for all we have learned through the Decade to Overcome Violence about just peace in God's way focused in 'An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace' from the Jamaica Peace Convocation; and all we have learned about mission in God's way, encapsulated in the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism document, *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, cf. [www.oikoumene.org/Resources/Documents/WCC](http://www.oikoumene.org/Resources/Documents/WCC) Commissions/Mission and Evangelism.

4. *The Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches* as amended by the 9th Assembly, Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2006; III: Purposes and Functions, cf. [www.oikoumene.org/Self-understanding-and-Vision](http://www.oikoumene.org/Self-understanding-and-Vision). We remember the words of the First WCC Assembly in 1948, 'Here at Amsterdam we have...covenanted with one another in constituting this World Council of Churches. We intend to stay together.'

economic and moral issues. We will work for more just, participatory and inclusive ways of living together. We will make common cause for the well-being of humanity and creation with those of other faith communities. Above all, we will pray without ceasing for the unity for which Christ prayed (John 17): a unity of faith, love and compassion that Jesus Christ brought through his ministry; a unity like the unity Jesus shared with the Father; a unity enfolded in the communion of the life and love of the Triune God. Here we receive the mandate for the Church's vocation for unity in mission and service.

17. We turn to God, on whom we depend and we pray:

*O God of life,  
lead us to justice and peace,  
that suffering people may discover hope,  
the scarred world find healing,  
and divided churches become visibly one,  
through the one who prayed for us,  
and in whom we are one body,  
your Son, Jesus Christ,  
who with you and the Holy Spirit,  
is worthy to be praised, one God,  
now and forever. Amen*

## Glossary

AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
adoption of a report	Following reception of a report, the assembly may agree to adopt some or all of its contents as ongoing policy or agreed statement
APC	assembly planning committee
CCA	Christian Conference of Asia
CCC	Caribbean Conference of Churches
CEC	Conference of European Churches
CICARWS	Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service
CLAI	Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias (Latin American Council of Churches)
central committee	The body elected by the assembly to carry out the work of the WCC between assembly meetings
consensus process	A process of seeking the common mind of the meeting without resort to a formal vote, engaging in genuine dialogue that is respectful, mutually supportive and empowering whilst prayerfully seeking to discern God's will
CUV	Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the World Council of Churches, a document of the WCC
CWC	Christian world communion
CWME	Commission on World Mission and Evangelism
decision session	A session when delegates make decisions about agenda matters – other participants do not contribute at this stage
delegate	A person appointed to an assembly as an official representative of a member church, with the right to speak and the responsibility to participate in decision-making
delegated observer	A person officially designated by a non-member church and invited by the central committee to participate in an assembly
delegated representative	A person officially designated by an organization in relationship with WCC and invited by the central committee to participate in an assembly
ecclesiological	The self-understanding of a church on matters of faith, doctrine and self-understanding ethics

executive committee	Elected by central committee, responsible for monitoring programmes and activities of the WCC between central committee meetings
FABC	Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences
general session	A session reserved for ceremonial occasions, public acts of witness and formal addresses
hearing session	A session in which matters are presented with careful attention to the broad range of perspectives member churches hold, issues arising are discussed by participants, and progress is made towards a possible outcome for the assembly. No decisions are taken in this session
indicator card – blue	Held at chest level after a speaker has concluded, it indicates coolness towards a point of view, or not ready to approve
indicator card – orange	Held at chest level after a speaker has concluded, it indicates warmth towards a point of view, or ready to approve
indicator cards – both	Held at chest level at any stage, crossed cards indicate a delegate's opinion that it is time to move on
IEO	International ecumenical organization
leadership of central committee	Moderator and vice-moderators of central committee, and the general secretary
MECC	Middle East Council of Churches
minutes	The official record of general, hearing and decision sessions of an assembly or central or executive committee meeting, including a record of the discussion, motions and decisions. The minutes will normally incorporate by reference any report of the meeting
minute-takers	Appointed by the business committee to record the official minutes of general, hearing and decision sessions of an assembly or any meeting for which formal minutes must be kept. The minute-taker is usually designated from WCC staff
moderator	elected by the central committee the moderator has the primary responsibility for assuring the coherence of the work of the central committee and of the executive committee
moderator	A person designated to moderate a session

<i>madang</i>	Activities surrounding the assembly in Busan (celebration, exhibition, reflection, discussion, lectures): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– to help participants better understand the issues being discussed</li> <li>– to provide a forum for airing concerns of members churches and ecumenical partners</li> <li>– to encourage participation and ecumenical formation of those new to WCC events</li> <li>– to widen horizons through interaction with the many cultures gathered for the assembly</li> </ul>
NCC	National council of churches
participant	A person participating in the work of the assembly— includes delegates and those with the right to speak but not to participate in decision-making (advisers, delegated representatives of ecumenical organization delegated observers from non-member churches, representatives of associate member churches, retiring members of central committee)
PCC	Pacific Conference of Churches
PCCC	Permanent committee on consensus and collaboration
PCPCU	Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
plenary	Meeting in session of the entire assembly in the one place
point of order	An interjection by a participant to make personal explanation if misrepresented, to object to offensive language, or to seek for the issue under discussion to be dealt with in private
president	One of up to eight eminent persons elected by the previous assembly to promote ecumenism and interpret the work of the WCC especially in her/his region; ex-officio a member of central committee
procedural proposal	A proposal for a variation to the procedures.
<i>rappoiteur</i>	Person appointed by the business committee to prepare an account of the discussion of a hearing session or report of a committee meeting for which minutes are not kept. A rapporteur appointed for a committee meeting shall function as a recorder of that meeting
reception of a report	Agreement to consider the substance of a report. No action is implied as a result – either the report as a whole must be adopted if its substance is to become policy, or specific proposals arising from the report must be considered in their own right before agreement to act can be assumed

record of session	An account of the discussion during hearing or decision sessions including final language of decisions taken
recorder	Person appointed by the business committee to follow the discussion of decision session, to record the language of the emerging consensus, including final language of decisions taken, and to assist the moderator of the session in discerning an emerging consensus. Recorders shall also assist the moderator in ensuring that the final agreed wording of a proposal is translated and available to delegates before a decision is made. Normally a delegate will be appointed recorder
REO	Regional ecumenical organization
Report of a meeting	Summary of a meeting including a presentation of major themes and specific proposals
session	A sitting of the assembly in one of general, hearing or decision sessions (as defined)
SM	Specialized ministry
Vice-moderator	Elected by the central committee with responsibilities to act in place of the moderator as necessary
WCC	World Council of Churches













