



Report of the Communications Committee

Based on our faith that the incarnation of the Word of God was, as such, an act of communication which communicated the divine to the human, and was transmitted to the world through communicative mission (*kerygma*), we strongly believe in the importance of appropriate communication to engage with our Christian testimony within the ecumenical body and towards the world. There is no community without relationships, and no relationships without communication.

The communications committee has considered its mandate and seeks to respond in the following manner:

A. Making recommendations toward the long-term strategic goals of communicating the World Council of Churches, giving direction on what themes and story lines best serve the Council and its member churches and what should be the thematic focus of communications;

WCC-related communications should:

1. Strengthen the fellowship of churches;
2. be in partnership with member churches and ecumenical partners
3. inspire people to act and to engage in the pilgrimage of justice and peace;
4. be innovative and maximise the use of new technologies and media to build community and strengthen relationships;
5. emphasise the method of story-telling and how this sharing illuminates what it means to be part of the pilgrimage of justice and peace;
6. seek mutuality in its internal and external communication within the WCC and the fellowship, avoiding a “top-down” approach and instead listening to and sharing the grassroots voices when setting WCC priorities;
7. create images of empowerment that reflect justice and peace;
8. contribute to building and shaping a community that enhances participation, freedom, accountability and cultural diversity;
9. reflect communications practices that include considerations of status, gender, age and identity in line with the universal right to communication¹;
10. contribute to the crucial visible role of building peace and security;
11. enhance human dignity;
12. aid in the finance and development work of the WCC;

13. seize every opportunity to maximise the use of church and public media in local and national settings to share the work of the WCC and its member churches, and to use the language and the narrative that attract such coverage.

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;

An overall WCC communication strategy should be developed that involves WCC governing bodies, advisory bodies and other groups directly involved in WCC work, e.g. general secretariat, central committee and executive committee, etc. Therefore they should:

1. design their own particular communications plan that enhances transparency and adheres to the aforementioned principles; for example, supporting a possible letter to member churches about the communication recommendations and inviting responses on how communications can be mutually shared;
2. include opportunities for communications training of these bodies;
3. identify and address current barriers to communication and to ensure smooth and well-functioning communication attempting to strike the right balance between nice-to-know and need-to-know;
4. develop communication between staff and departments of WCC with a focus to ensure exchange and coordination, and to make strategic communication an inherent part of all areas of WCC work.

C. Exploring how member churches contribute to communicating the Council

The exploration of contributions of member churches should include:

1. collaboration with the communications strategies, departments and other resources of member churches relative to the aforementioned principals of the mandate in section A and B;
2. consideration of communication partnerships with specialised ministries and partners engaged in their work.

D. Include 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;

1. Member church communication departments should be primary partners with the WCC, furthermore collaboration with other communication agencies should be an integral part of the WCC communications.

E. Assisting the central committee to consider, approve, and evaluate the general direction of the Council's communication strategic plan;

Please see section B. Furthermore, the central committee should:

1. see itself as a community of communicators of the work of the fellowship;
2. contribute to the consideration of innovative communications efforts that can expand the audience of church-related actors made aware of these initiatives along with attention to language that reaches out beyond the faith community.

The communications committee recommends that the central committee *receive* these principles and guidelines as a framework for the WCC communications work.

APPROVED

ⁱ <http://www.crisinfo.org/> and http://www.ichrp.org/en/article_19_udhr