



Paul Jeffrey/WCC-EAA

## Living out our calling

We are on a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. This is not just an emphasis of the World Council of Churches (WCC) since its Assembly in Busan, it is a statement of our faith and calling as Christians. The Christ whom we follow calls us to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, care for the sick, visit those in prison. But even more, the Christ whom we follow identified with those on the margins of societies, raged at economic injustices, and challenged exclusion and privilege.

In a world where hunger, war, violence, abuse, discrimination, oppression and poverty face us daily, our calling as Christians to work together for justice and peace has never been more vital. Bringing the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance – with its successful, focused actions by committed, diverse Christian organizations – into the WCC gives new impetus and strength to all of our advocacy work. Together, we must express our vision of human dignity and abundant life for all creation in ways that impact our churches, our policymakers and our societies. Together, as pilgrims we seek to be faithful to what the Lord requires of us, in the words of Micah (6:8b), “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly” with our God.

*Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit  
General Secretary  
World Council of Churches*

## About

The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, an initiative of the World Council of Churches, is a global network of churches and related organizations committed to campaigning together on common concerns for justice and human dignity. Current campaigns focus on HIV and AIDS and food security and sustainable agriculture.



World Council  
of Churches

## Alliance strengthened under World Council of Churches

With new staff now in place, the structural and programmatic transition of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance as an ecumenical initiative of the World Council of Churches has been completed! We celebrate the important progress that has been made over these months that ensure that the distinctive style of campaigning and network of the Alliance has a firm foundation for the future.



The new WCC-EAA staff team (from right): Manoj Kurian, Alexandra Pomezny, Francesca Merico, Sara Speicher. Photo: Naveen Qayyum/WCC

### The new WCC-EAA staff team



#### **Dr Manoj Kurian**

EAA coordinator/food campaign coordinator (working 100%)

Manoj is a Malaysian medical doctor trained in Community Health and Health Systems Management. Following his training, he worked for seven years in diverse rural regions in India. From 1999, he headed the health work at the World Council of Churches for 13 years. From 2012, he worked at the International AIDS Society as the Senior Manager, responsible for the Policy and Advocacy work. He is an adjunct faculty at the College of Public Health, Kent State University, USA.

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#### **Francesca Merico**

HIV campaign coordinator (working 50%)

Francesca has been actively involved in the EAA HIV campaign through her work with Caritas Internationalis, particularly focusing on advocacy for greater access to paediatric HIV and TB diagnostics and treatment and the scale up of programmes for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission. She is a lawyer, with specialized training in Children's Rights. Her mother tongue is Italian; she also communicates in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

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#### **Alexandra Pomezny**

Project assistant (working 40%)

Alexandra joined the World Council of Churches in 1993 after working with the Conference of European Churches (CEC). She has worked with a number of different WCC programmes and major WCC events. Her mother tongue is German; she also communicates in French, English and Czech.

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#### **Sara Speicher**

WCC communication consultant (working 40%)

Sara has served as communications coordinator for the EAA since 2004, and interim executive director from May 2014 through February 2015. Based in the UK, she continues to provide communication expertise and guidance in redeveloping advocacy communication tools within the WCC.

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## WCC-EAA International Reference Group meeting 10-11 November 2015

The WCC Executive Committee, meeting in June 2015, reviewed the integration process, including programme plans and budget, and approved the general direction of the WCC-EAA, as well as the terms of reference for the international reference group.

Members of the former EAA Board of Directors have been reappointed as the WCC-EAA International Reference Group. The reference group provides oversight of WCC-EAA plans and budget and the participation of organizations in the Alliance.

Rev. Dr Richard Fee, who has provided brilliant and steadfast leadership to EAA through three incarnations of the EAA board, has indicated it is time for him to step down, especially due to his own retirement from The Presbyterian Church in Canada on 31 August 2015. The WCC and the EAA have expressed their deepest gratitude and appreciation for his commitment, wisdom and guidance through all the successes and challenges of the EAA.

Dr Carl Stecker, Director, Global Diakonia of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has been appointed as the new chair of the WCC-EAA reference group. Carl has been a long-time supporter of the EAA in his positions with Catholic Relief Services and now with ELCA, having served on the HIV and AIDS strategy group before becoming a member of the EAA Board.

The WCC Executive Committee has recommended that the reference group be expanded to include representation from other WCC constituencies, such as Orthodox, youth and indigenous people. The approved Terms of Reference reaffirm that all reference group members shall be associated with a church or related organization participating in the EAA, and serve with their endorsement.

The first face-to-face meeting of the International Reference Group will be held 10-11 November, and will overlap with a meeting of the two campaign strategy groups, 9-10 November.

### Members of the EAA reference group:

#### **Rev. Christo Greyling**

Director: Faith Partnership for Development, World Vision International

#### **Dr Henk Jochemsen**

Director, Prisma

#### **Hendrica Okondo**

Global Programmes Manager, World YWCA

#### **Rev. Christopher Rajkumar**

(Food Strategy Group Representative)

Executive Secretary, Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation, National Council of Churches in India

#### **Isabel Richardson**

Executive Secretary, Madras Christian Council of Social Services

#### **Kristiina Rintakoski**

Advocacy Director, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission

#### **Dr Carl Stecker** (Chair)

Director for Diakonia: Global Mission Unit, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

#### **Lyn van Rooyen** (HIV Strategy Group Representative)

Executive Director, Christian AIDS Bureau of Southern Africa

#### **Msgr. Robert Vitillo**

Head of Delegation to the United Nations in Geneva, Caritas Internationalis

## Strengthened campaigning and a renewed role for EAA participating organizations

The distinctive network and advocacy approach of the EAA are unique strengths that the WCC and the international reference group are keen to maintain and build upon. EAA's advocacy can be further strengthened by WCC's own work on public witness, HIV and AIDS, health and healing, climate change, economic justice, and water, not to mention the rich resources WCC can pull together for worship and theological reflection.

As Dr Isabel Phiri, WCC Associate General Secretary for Public Witness and Diakonia reflected from WCC Executive Committee discussions, "There is enthusiasm about the work of EAA. We spent substantial time reflecting about EAA in WCC and the other things we are doing in WCC to make sure there are synergies, especially between EHAIA and EAA."

Phiri reflected, "What I see happening is strengthening each – EAA campaigning and EHAIA theological and biblical reflection and work on causes of HIV, and strengthening health and healing and what WCC is working on in the area of health. With food, it is the same thing, how do we strengthen the food campaign plan of action, along with climate change, water network and economy of life for all?"

"The truth is, as EAA comes to WCC it is also sharpening the work of WCC, so that we are more clear in the way we are working together but also the issues that we are working on. Water security has a say on food security but in a different way than the campaign so we do it in a complementary way," Phiri said.

**"HIV and food security are going to be on the agenda for a very long time."**

Phiri also reflected from her experience on The Lancet Commission, whose recent report highlighted the continued priority of HIV but the need for many sectors to work in a more integrated and holistic way. "I have argued that this has been the approach of the faith community all along. This is an opportunity for us as people of faith to speak louder on the issues we are already convinced about. HIV is still key, but we must now also look at how food security affects HIV, climate change, health systems in general, the policies of the governments in different areas? So we have a wider platform for our work. We have a long way to go – HIV and food security are going to be on the agenda for a very long time."

# Live the Promise

## HIV Campaign

The Live the Promise Campaign of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance seeks continued priority on the response to HIV and AIDS, the elimination of stigma, and a significant faith-based contribution to the vision of 'getting to zero' – zero new infections, zero discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths."

## Planning for the International AIDS Conference and Faith Pre-Conference

The 21st International AIDS Conference will be held in Durban, 17-22 July 2016. A local host committee has already started work in identifying venues for the interfaith pre-conference and exploring possibilities for a midweek prayer service. There are also plans to engage the faith community regionally in the lead up to the conference, to re-energize their own work on HIV and provide a platform to discuss the issues that will be raised at AIDS 2016

## Dignity, Freedom and Grace: Christian Perspectives on Human Rights and HIV

A publication building on EAA's dialogues on faith, human rights and HIV is in its final stage and will be available in early 2016. Edited by Gillian Paterson and Callie Long, the publication provides perspectives on the development of modern human rights approaches, the responses of Christians and cultures, and the particular human rights and faith challenges for HIV and AIDS. Personal testimonies by people living with and affected by HIV, and contextual Christian responses to HIV lead to theological reflections on human rights and HIV. The aim of the publication is to provide a resource for a spectrum of Christian groups who are attempting to engage with issues of human rights, in

the context of their own local, national and global responses to HIV and AIDS. The publication has been made possible through support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.

## Update on the Framework for Dialogue

Since its official launch in August 2013, the Framework for Dialogue between Religious Leaders and Networks of People Living with HIV, a tool developed by EAA, GNP+, INERELA+ and UNAIDS, has been implemented in Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Malawi. Nigeria has recently concluded the Stigma Index study and is planning its first national dialogue in December 2015. All current dialogue processes have already showed a real potential in bringing to the table religious leaders and people living with HIV to shift ideas and perceptions and open collaboration. Practical actions have included the development and implementation of workplace policies for faith-based organizations, sermon guides on stigma, and congregational training plans. In addition to joint actions, however, dialogue processes have opened doors for people living with HIV and religious leaders to continue to talk together, share needs and provide advocacy and support.

For more information about how to initiate the Framework for Dialogue process in your country, and learn more about previous dialogue processes, visit [www.frameworkfordialogue.org](http://www.frameworkfordialogue.org).

## Tackling continued patent obstacles to treatment access

The Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) was created in 2010 with the aim to lower the prices of HIV

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medicines and to facilitate the development of more appropriate, safe and affordable HIV treatment through voluntary licensing and patent pooling. The first step for the MPP is to identify the priority ARVs for which licenses are needed. Then, it seeks to enter in negotiation with the patent holder to obtain a license. Licenses enable generic manufacturing or the sale of ARVs in countries in which they are patented, allow countries to benefit from access to more affordable medicines, and enhance competition.

“In these five years, the MPP has made significant progress, signing voluntary licenses on 12 priority antiretrovirals with six patent holders and 59 sub-licenses with 14 generic manufacturers. Its generic partners have supplied more than six million patient-years of WHO-recommended ARVs in 117 countries, including countries that were previously unable to benefit from generic competition” reported Esteban Burrone, Head of Policy at the MPP in Geneva, “And the EAA has been very helpful in these years, in particular on getting pharma involved with our work”, he said.

Indeed, in the past years, the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance has been very active in supporting the work of the MPP through the EAA Access to Treatment Working Group (A2T WG).

“We have been among the first organizations to applaud and recognize the importance of the MPP model in promoting access to treatment for all,” stated David Deakin, chair of the EAA A2T Working Group. “Licensing remains a critical mechanism for increasing the supply of quality affordable ARVs. It is an important step to guarantee access to treatment for all. This is why the EAA A2T working group advocated with key pharmaceutical companies to join the MPP”

The MPP is now moving to a second phase. “Per UNITAID request, we are looking at the possibility of expanding into Hepatitis drugs and TB drugs, always through voluntary licensing and patent pooling. We have been doing feasibility studies and the Board will decide in November how to move on”, reported Esteban.

Lots of challenges remain: the MPP obtained numerous licenses, but not many new HIV products were developed by generic companies. There are still a few big pharma companies that are reluctant to enter into negotiation with the MPP, in particular for adult drugs. Second and third line HIV drugs remain an issue as there is not enough market predictability and because of their cost. More needs to be done at the national level so that governments become aware of quality affordable generics and speed up registration of new products in their countries. And last, but not least, none of the WHO-recommended regimens for children exist in paediatric fixed-dose combinations, requiring caregivers to use adult formulations, un-adapted paediatric drugs or alternative regimens.

The new WCC – Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance team will discuss Goal 2 of its work plan “All can access treatment for life” during the upcoming Strategy Group meeting this November, and will look at ways to help tackle the continued barriers to access to treatment.

### **New WHO guidelines are “powerful tool for advocacy”**

In September, WHO came out with new guidelines for use of antiretroviral drugs in HIV treatment and prevention. The guidelines have two key recommendations: ART should be offered to everyone living with HIV at any CD4 count, and use of daily oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is recommended as a prevention choice for people at “substantial risk” of HIV infection as part of combination prevention approaches.

As Chris Collins, Chief, Community Mobilization Division, UNAIDS, said in a message to his listserve, “The guidelines are designed to inform national HIV programme managers, but they are also potentially a powerful tool for advocacy.” The guidelines help make the case for:

- Immediate treatment access for all: Everyone living with HIV should have access to HIV treatment upon learning their HIV status. The WHO recommendation also means expanded services are needed to help people, including key populations, access treatment and address barriers to access, and to remain in care.

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- Increasing availability of PrEP: National programmes should also move to incorporate PrEP as a prevention option for people at substantial risk of HIV infection, as part of comprehensive prevention and informed by the local context. As of today, only a few countries have begun to incorporate PrEP in national programs.
- New investments are needed and costs must come down: Millions of people will not benefit from HIV science unless donors and countries commit new funding and use funds for maximum impact. UNAIDS has estimated there is 1 to 17 return on investment on AIDS financing in terms of health costs averted, increased productivity and other benefits. Flexibilities in intellectual property law must be used to bring ARV costs down.
- Communities must be supported and key populations are a priority: The new WHO guidelines call for “full participation of communities in developing and implementing programmes,” and speak to the need to “promote and expand community-based services, especially services led by key populations.”

As Collins states, “The new WHO guidelines can help advocates insist on the political and human rights imperative of equal access for all, and the need for AIDS financing and programming to catch up with the science.”

### **Setting the path for the future: New UNAIDS Strategy and Sustainable Development Goals**

UNAIDS will adopt a new global strategy 2016-2021: Fast Tracking to Zero at its upcoming Programme Coordinating Board. Key to the strategy is a Fast-Track approach to reach a set of time-bound targets by 2020. The targets include reducing new HIV infections by 75%, ensuring 90% of all people living with HIV know their HIV status, ensuring 90% of people who know their status have access to treatment and that 90% of people on treatment have suppressed viral loads, keeping them healthy and reducing the risk of transmission.

**“The new WHO guidelines can help advocates insist on the political and human rights imperative of equal access for all, and the need for AIDS financing and programming to catch up with the science.”**

The strategic plan and the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals will guide the agenda and outcome of the planned UN high level meeting on HIV and AIDS in 2016. UNAIDS has stated that “The response to HIV spans many of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and is included under Sustainable Goal 3, to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.”

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Lifting up the faith-based voice and providing input into the 2016 high-level outcome document will be critical. WCC-EAA will be working with its participating organizations and other civil society groups to ensure a strong and collaborative response so that the vision of the end of the AIDS epidemic by 2030 can become a reality.

### **Take action with EAA participating organizations**

Children without AIDS: About 30,000 people have signed a petition calling on the German government to further invest in the dissemination of appropriate testing methods for children and support the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria with at least 400 million Euros a year. The petition also calls the pharmaceutical industry to further develop appropriate AIDS testing & treatment for children and make them affordable for poor countries. The Campaign was endorsed by the EAA, and signatures are still being collected online until the end of November 2015. The hand-over of the petition to the German Chancellery Office and the Association of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers will happen just before World AIDS Day: <http://childrenwithoutaids.org/>

Fast Tracking in Africa: Religious leaders and champions from 18 Eastern and Southern African countries gathered in early September to consider the potential impact of "Fast Track: Ending the AIDS Epidemic by 2030" in the region. With leadership from EAA participating organization, INERELA+, the conference issued a call to action, which is now open for expressions of support by other religious leaders, faith-based organizations, and advocates. <http://www.cabsa.org.za/content/call-action-religious-leaders-and-champions-support-fast-track-agenda-towards-ending-aids-ep>

## **Resources**

A suggested liturgy for World AIDS Day 2015 is currently being developed and will soon be made available through the WCC-EAA.

The Lancet, one of the most respected health journals, dedicated its 7 July issue to faith-based health care, noting "An estimated 84% of the world's population is religiously affiliated. Faith is a powerful force in the lives of individuals and communities worldwide. This series argues that building on the extensive experience, strengths, and capacities of faith-based organisations (eg, geographical coverage, influence, and infrastructure) offers a unique opportunity to improve health outcomes." <http://www.thelancet.com/series/faith-based-health-care>

### **HIV Campaign online**

WCC-EAA HIV Strategy Group members are listed at <http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/about-us/hiv-and-aids-strategy-group/index.html>

See also:  
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/eaalive-the-promise-hiv-campaign>

Follow us at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/Livethepromise>



# Food for Life

## Food for Life Campaign

The Food for Life Campaign of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance aims to eradicate hunger, promote adequate nutrition, and strive towards just and sustainable food systems. The Campaign places particular emphasis on sustainable agricultural practices and the situation of smallholder producers and their access to and control over natural resources such as land, water and seeds.

## Achieving “Zero Hunger” key to all Sustainable Development Goals

At the UN General Assembly in September, world leaders adopted a set of 17 global goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each goal has specific targets that have to be achieved over the next 15 years.

To reach the goals, faith communities need to be at the heart of this concerted action in mobilizing communities, along with governments, civil society and the private sector.



These goals also remind us that the 'Food for Life Campaign' needs a comprehensive approach to make a tangible impact. As we go through the SDGs, it becomes obvious that to achieve Goal 2 of 'Zero Hunger', we have to place our campaign in the wider context and work with strategic partnerships, across sectors and disciplines. Be it, Over-

coming Poverty (Goal 1); Promoting Gender Equality (Goal 3); Promoting Quality Education (Goal 4), Clean water and Sanitation (Goal 6), Promoting Decent Work and Economic Growth (Goal 8); Reducing Inequality (Goal 10); Promoting Sustainable Cities and Communities (Goal 11); Responsible Consumption and Production (Goal 12), Climate Action (Goal 13) Promoting Life on Earth - Below Water and in Land (Goals 14, 15); Ensuring Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (Goals 16); and Ensuring Partnerships for the Goals (Goals 17).

Faith communities carry the great legacy of human endeavour, ingenuity and achievement; diversity; culture and wisdom through millennia. We can collectively mobilize this rich experience and legacy to bring about a positive transformation of society. Our faiths and our foundational values dictate that everyone has a fundamental right to be free from hunger and under-nutrition!

## Focusing on agricultural impact at 2015 Paris Climate Conference

Agriculture and food security are major issues in climate change discussions. How we produce food, distribute it and consume it has a major environmental impact. According to the FAO, agricultural activities, including indirect effects from deforestation and other land conversions, account for about one-third of the total global warming potential from greenhouse gas emissions. And the effects of climate change in changing weather conditions are already threatening vulnerable populations with even more food insecurity.

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The WCC-EAA is contributing its food security focus to ecumenical activism on climate change. Along with WCC and ACT Alliance delegations, the representatives of the Food for Life Campaign will be involved at the 21st Conference of Parties – United Nations Climate Change Conference, 30 November – 11 December. Among WCC-EAA participating organizations focusing on food and agriculture issues there are Brot für die Welt, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Church of Sweden, CIDSE (Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, National Council of Churches of India, Caritas Internationalis, ICCO and World Vision.

**“Peoples’ Nutrition Is Not a Business”:  
2015 Right to Food and Nutrition Watch  
launched**

The civil society-led Right to Food and Nutrition Watch was released at the FAO Headquarters in Rome on 9 October 2015, shedding light on the control businesses have over food systems and policies.

Commonly referred to as ‘corporate capture’, the increasing control of businesses over food systems and resources, institutions, policy spaces and governance structures, is putting human rights at great risk. The world is witnessing this reality from the Americas to Asia, particularly since the 2008 world food crisis that shook societies across the globe. It is clear that the present economic model cannot guarantee the conditions for national governments to fulfill their human rights obligations, including the right to adequate food and nutrition.

Corporate-based approaches have led to an artificial separation of nutrition and sustainable food systems, resulting in vertical, technical and product-based solutions that ignore social, economic, political, environmental, health and cultural determinants. In a world where hundreds of millions go undernourished while half a billion suffer from obesity, communities worldwide see the prevention of corporate capture as a critical issue. Peoples’ nutritional sovereignty and core human rights principles are unalienable pillars in tackling inequity, oppression and discrimination and democratizing national and global societies.

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The Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2015 places nutrition under the spotlight and exposes the impact of business operations on peoples’ livelihoods. The concept of nutrition is assessed from a human rights perspective, going beyond the mere measurement of nutrients in food and human bodies to considering the

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socio-economic and cultural context in which human beings feed themselves. "Peoples' Nutrition Is Not a Business" explores the competing visions of nutrition, the causes of malnutrition and the policy responses, which often affect women disproportionately, both behind the scenes and in the public sphere. It uncovers pervasive corporate abuse and impunity, and puts forward recommendations for states to prevent and punish initiatives that hamper the enjoyment of the right to adequate food and nutrition.

The WCC-EAA is a member of the Right to Food and Nutrition Watch Consortium.

The Watch is available in English, French and Spanish at: <http://www.rtfn-watch.org>

### **Committee on World Food Security considers strategy to help 793 million undernourished people worldwide**

At the 42nd Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in Rome on 12-15 October, the intergovernmental body continued its quest to coordinate a global approach to food security.

The latest (2015) edition of the report "The State of Food Insecurity in the World" (SOFI) reveals that 793 million people are undernourished globally. Though this number is down by 167 million over the last decade, the pace of hunger reduction has fallen short of the internationally adopted "Millennium Development Goal" of halving the number of chronically undernourished people.

Additional findings shared at a side-event, "Cultivating Agroecology for Food and Agriculture" by civil society organizations during the CFS included:

- Smallholders and peasants make up almost half the world's people, and they grow at least 70% of the world's food.
- Most of the world's food is grown from peasant-bred seed without the industrial chain's synthetic fertilizers. Peasants breed and nurture 40 livestock species and almost 8,000 breeds, as opposed to the industrial food chain, which focuses on far fewer than 100 breeds of five livestock species.

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- Corporate plant breeders work with 150 crops but focus on barely a dozen.
- What remains of the world's declining fish stocks comes from 336 species accounting for almost two-thirds of the aquatic species we consume. Of 35,200 edible aquatic species, only 336 species from 115 families of fish and invertebrates are commercially farmed. The only group that has demonstrated the capacity to monitor and manage the wide variety of fish in an ecologically sound manner are artisanal fisher folk.
- 78% of the planet's poor are found in rural areas.

These facts urgently underscore our ethical imperative to help the world's poorest farmers find the resources they need to break the cycle of poverty, said Bernhard Walter, member of the Food for Life Campaign strategy group of WCC-Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance and staff member of Brot für die Welt.

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The SOFI 2015 report identified “social protection” schemes as a critical tool to eradicate hunger, Bernhard Walter pointed out. “This strategy is much more than a hand-out,” he said, “rather it is the right of the very people who are the guardians of biodiversity and sustainability of our planet, who will ensure that we will have sufficient and nutritious food for the decades to come, in spite of the potential damage related to climate change.”

### **CFS explores link between right to food, right to water**

The CFS also systematically considered the world’s access to water, and the link between the right to food and the right to water. A report by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition entitled “Water for Food Security and Nutrition” highlighted the value of water as common public good, as well as its centrality in ecosystem functions and territories.

The CFS discussed issues raised by the panel’s report, including:

- placing a special emphasis on small-scale food producers and workers;
- recognizing the necessity of extraterritorial human rights obligations of states, given the trans-boundary nature of water;
- reaffirming commitments to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food as a central component to the work and mandate of the CFS;
- bringing forth the human right to water as a core aspect of the realization of the right to adequate food, recognizing the multiple dimensions and uses of water;
- ensuring regulations safeguard public interests while protecting the ecosystem functions of water;
- clearly prioritizing vulnerable and marginalized populations, particularly women and girls; and
- improving access to drinking water in the workplace.

“We can only improve food security by looking at it through the lens of human rights, by

overcoming poverty and by ensuring gender justice,” said Dr Manoj Kurian, coordinator of the WCC- Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance and its Food for Life Campaign. “Nations will need to be committed to providing the resources, ensuring active participation of the civil society, and protecting policymaking from undue corporate influence and capture,” Kurian added.

### **About the CFS**

The CFS was formed in 1974 as an intergovernmental body serving as a forum for review and follow-up of food security policies. The CFS is working to develop a global strategy for food security and nutrition by promoting policy convergence and accountability, sharing best practices, and supporting and advising countries and regions on food security and nutrition. In 2009, the CFS reformed to include other key players such as civil society and non-governmental organizations (represented by the Civil Society Mechanism), representatives of private sector associations and private philanthropic foundations.

### **Consultation on Right to Food and Life held in Bangalore**

A one-day consultation on 'The Right to Food and Life' was organized by the WCC-Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance and the National Council of Churches (NCCI) in Bangalore, South India, on 1 October 2015. The consultation was a pioneering initiative that brought together activists from different faith communities to share and speak about the work they do and to strategize on the path ahead.

The 50 participants represented member churches of NCCI and WCC; leaders from different faith communities; participating organizations of the WCC-EAA; members of the Ecumenical Water Network; civil society representatives; policy makers; leading activists engaged with land, water, food and social protection issues; and students. The consultation worked towards the Indian Interfaith Communities developing the ideas and resources from this consultation to plan their Common Minimum Agenda to promote and work on an Interfaith Week of Action on Food in October 2015.

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The event was inaugurated by women - representing all walks of life, representing the sustenance and nurturing of 'The Right to Food and Life'. They shared their aspiration for a better world and lit a traditional oil lamp. The first part of the consultation was a series of reflections and prayers from leaders for the faith communities – Prof. V Jagannatha, Rev. Fr James Mascarenhas, Swamini Adityananda Saraswati, Amman Mansoor and Prof. HS Bhatia representing Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh faiths. Each representative shared perspectives on 'Right to Life and Food' from their scriptures, what it meant to them personally, and how it was practiced. They also highlighted challenges and ways to overcome them from their faith perspectives.

During the second half of the consultation, Dr Manoj Kurian, Suman Suman (President FIAN India) and Dr C. P Robert (Programme coordinator, CARD KVK) presented the national and global situation with respect to the right to food and water. They also shared the work of faith communities, addressing these challenges.

The third part of the consultation saw a panel of leading activists - advocate Rajendra Sail, Mr. Ranjan K Panda and Rev. Sr. Mariola, working on Land, Food and Water Rights issues sharing their experiences and journeys towards a more just and equitable world. The consultation ended with group work and commitments on both personal and group levels to raise awareness and to be actively involved in the areas discussed. Rev. Christopher Rajkumar, Executive Secretary, Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation from the National Council of Churches in India, facilitated the final session where the participants committed to connecting with each other and sharing information on work that is being done and to develop a new plan for collective action. Building on the consultation, NCCI will hold a substantive and well publicised "Interfaith Discussion on the Right to Food and Life" in Nagpur on 16 October 2015 and a consultation on 'Life-Giving Agriculture' from 24 - 26 Oct 2015 in Odisha. A working group was nominated to follow up on the decisions of the consultation.

## Resources

### Continue the focus: Churches Week of Action on Food

The liturgy and actions suggested for the 2015 Churches Week of Action on Food can be used all year round to raise awareness of food security and the need for sustainable agriculture. See <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/churches-week-of-action-on-food> for resources and ideas.

Numerous WCC-EAA participating organizations organized activities during the week, including Canadian Foodgrains Bank, The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa (FECCIWA), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, National Council of Churches of India, Presbyterian Church (USA), United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India and World Vision International,

### Food for Life Campaign online

WCC-EAA Food Strategy Group members are listed at <http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/ls/about-us/food-strategy-group/index.html>

See also: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/eaal/food-for-life-campaign>

Follow us at: <https://www.facebook.com/foodforlifecampaign>



## Upcoming Events:

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### **26-27 October:**

Catholic HIV and AIDS Network meeting (CHAN), Geneva

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### **26 -28 October:**

UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB), Geneva

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### **9-11 November:**

WCC-EAA strategy groups and international reference group meetings, Geneva

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### **16 November:**

Forum on Business and Human Rights - side event on 'Recognizing Indigenous Peoples' Rights to Land, Territories and Resources and the Challenges in their Access to Mechanisms for Redress' by Rural Missionaries of the Philippines-Northern Mindanao Sub-Region (RMP-NMR) Inc, WCC-EAA, CIVICUS, Asia Indigenous Peoples' Network on Extractive Industries and Energies (AIPNEE), Palais de Nations, Geneva

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### **20 November:**

Universal Children Day

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### **20-23 November:**

12th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP12), Dhaka, Bangladesh,  
<http://www.icaap2015.org/>

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### **November 23 to 26:**

Regional training of church diaconal workers—with a focus on services for people living with Disability on Social Protection, the right to food and Urban & Peri-Urban Agriculture, involving Ecumenical Disability Advocacy Network, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland, WCC- EAA & Mazingira Institute, Kampala, Uganda

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### **29 November – 4 December:**

18th ICASA International Conference on AIDS and STI's in Africa, Harare, Zimbabwe,  
<http://icasa2015zimbabwe.org/>

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### **1 December:**

World AIDS Day

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### **10 December:**

Human Rights Day

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### **30 November - 11 December:**

Twenty first Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21), Paris, France.

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### **December - (Date to be decided):**

National Consultation on 'Right to Food, Life and Peace' , in collaboration with South Sudan Council of Churches.

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