



Report of the Executive Committee, June 2016

According to WCC Rule VIII. 1. 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.”*

After its election in Busan, the executive committee held its first meeting in Bossey, Switzerland, February 2014, and presented its first accountability report to the central committee in July 2014 (cf. Report of the Executive Committee, Doc Gen 02). Subsequently, the executive committee met five times:

- (a) in Geneva, Switzerland, 9 July 2014, after the meeting of the central committee;
- (b) in Paralimni, Cyprus, 21-26 November 2014;
- (c) in Etchmiadzin, Armenia, 8-13 June 2015;
- (d) in Bossey, Switzerland, 13-18 November 2015, and
- (e) in Trondheim, Norway, 20-21 June 2016, prior to the meeting of the central committee.

After careful consideration, members of the executive committee decided to cancel the April 2016 meeting and welcomed the idea of holding their November 2016 meeting in China.

The work of the executive committee is extensively reflected in the Minutes presented to the central committee for approval, as well as in the detailed account of each meeting sent by the general secretary to all members of the central committee. Therefore, this report is, somehow, a summary of both. It includes five chapters, the last one responding to questions raised by the central committee in its last meeting, when receiving the report of the executive committee:

- 1. An account of the meetings
- 2. Decisions taken by the executive committee
- 3. Matters monitored by the executive committee
- 4. Matters studied by the executive committee and recommendations to the central committee for action
- 5. Recommendations of the central committee regarding the report of the executive committee, and
- 6. Some concluding remarks

1. An account of the meetings

The meeting in July 2014 was a short encounter following the central committee meeting. It mainly focused on following up with decisions taken at the central committee, taking a few management decisions (e.g. appointment of auditors) and monitoring matters that needed particular attention (e.g. programmatic integration of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, EAA).

It is affirmed that:

- (a) All meetings of the executive committee have been intentionally part of our common pilgrimage of justice and peace;
- (b) All full meetings of the executive committee (i.e. except those short meetings held in connection with the central committee) have included a significant relational component, offering members of

- the committee the opportunity to discover the spiritual, theological and historical heritage of member churches and interact with them;
- (c) At each meeting the executive committee benefited from the presence of advisors, ecumenical partners or experts, who accompanied the work and participated with the committee members in the pilgrimage of justice and peace.

The meeting in **November 2014**, generously hosted by one of the members of our central committee, H.E. Metropolitan Dr Vassilios of Constantia and Ammochostos, in his diocese, was both a spiritual pilgrimage to the roots of Christianity, as places where Saint Paul and Barnabas had preached were visited, and a pilgrimage of justice and peace, as the meeting took place in a divided country and in the broader context of the Middle East. The meeting included a discussion with the UN Special Advisor on Cyprus, Mr Espen Barth Eide, who offered a more hopeful perspective on the prospects for the unity of the island and its people. Exposed to the situation in the Middle East, the executive committee issued a “Statement on Forced Displacement, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in the Middle East” and reaffirmed its commitment to launch a study on “Violence in the name of religion and violence against religions”. The leadership of the central committee met with H.E. Nicos Anastasiadis, President of the Republic of Cyprus. H.B. Archbishop Chrysostomos II of Cyprus kindly received the executive committee.

The committee benefited from the presence of Dr Elias El-Halabi (Middle East Council of Churches) and Ms Paulina Parhiala (ACT Alliance), participating as advisors.

The meeting in **June 2015**, again, generously hosted by H.H. Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians Karekin II, one of the WCC presidents, has been part of our pilgrimage of justice and peace as the executive committee participated in the centennial commemoration of the Armenian genocide in 2015 and expressed solidarity with the Armenian people and the church, issuing a “Statement on the Centenary of the Armenian Genocide”. The executive committee met with Catholicos Karekin and was introduced to the life and witness of the church in Armenia. Armenian President, H.E. Serzh Sargsyan, received a delegation of the WCC and expressed deep gratitude to the WCC which officially recognized the Armenian Genocide in 1983.

The committee benefited from the presence of three advisors: Rev. Prof. Dr Fernando Enns (Reference Group on Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace), Rev. Dr Guy Liagre (Conference of European Churches), and Dr Karen Nazaryan (ACT Alliance).

The meeting in **November 2015** took place in the aftermath of the tragic events in Paris. A Sunday service at St Peter’s Cathedral, prepared with the Protestant Church of Geneva, included long moments of silence and prayers for the victims of the events. The “Statement on terrorist attack in Paris”, issued by the executive committee was read during the worship service. Meeting in Bossey, the executive committee took the opportunity to visit the Ecumenical Centre and be introduced to the staff of the WCC. Prior to the executive committee meeting, a meeting with moderators of the commissions took place to assess how the work of commissions relates to the pilgrimage of justice and peace. Moderators of the commissions were also invited to participate in the committee and sub-committee work, so that programmatic interaction with the commissions was strengthened.

The committee benefited from the presence of: Mr Sushant Agrawal (moderator, ACT Alliance), Dr John Nduna (general secretary, ACT Alliance), Rev. Dr Susan Durber (moderator, Faith and Order Commission), Bishop Dr Mor Gevarghese Coorilos (moderator, CWME), Rev. Prof. Dr Fernando Enns (moderator, Reference Group on Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace; also representing the Commission on Ecumenical Formation), Mr Alan Bittiner (moderator, Audit Committee), Ms Tara Tautari (consensus facilitator).

Finally, the meeting in **June 2016**, ended only yesterday, was a one and half day meeting which focused mainly on preparations for the central committee and a careful consideration of some of the issues on the agenda of the central committee (e.g. programme plans 2017; draft statements; finances; and nominations with particular consideration of the mid-term election of the executive committee).

2. Decisions taken by the executive committee

Within the framework of its responsibilities (spelled out in Rule VIII. 4. b. i-xiv.), the executive committee took the following decisions¹:

Adopted the Financial Report 2014 and the Financial Report 2015 The reports were issued in April 2015 and April 2016 respectively, and may be consulted at:

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/other/wcc-financial-report-2014-1>

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/other/wcc-financial-report-2015>

Adopted the Revised Budget 2015 Budget 2015 was approved by executive committee in November 2014, with total income of CHF 27.3 million. However, following the Swiss National Bank's decision in January 2015 no longer to support the Euro/Swiss franc exchange rate at 1.2, the estimated value in Swiss francs of contributions to be received in Euro and other currencies in 2015 decreased by about 9%, or approximately CHF 2 million. The general secretary took action to adjust the budget 2015, which was reissued in April 2015 as a revised budget. In June 2015, executive committee adopted the revised budget 2015, with CHF 25.2 million of total income.

Approved the Budget 2016 Actions were implemented in 2015 to adjust for the lower value of income in Swiss francs anticipated also for 2016, even while contributions in foreign currencies remained relatively steady. Amongst other steps, eight administrative or specialised staff positions were closed. Budget 2016 was approved by executive committee in November 2015. The budget included total income at CHF 25.4 million, slightly higher than revised budget 2015, and close to the actual total income reported in 2015, at CHF 25.6 million.

Approved capital expenditure limits at CHF 477,000 for 2015 and CHF 490,000 for 2016.

Approved a transfer to the building development project In 2015, the committee approved a transfer of a maximum of CHF 800,000 from the general reserves to the designated fund for the building project.

Approved a transfer to the assembly fund In 2015, the committee approved a transfer of CHF 250,000 from general reserves to the assembly fund.

Approved a transfer to programme funds In 2015, the committee approved a transfer of CHF 250,000 from the designated programme fund to the programme fund, to be applied towards the cost of central committee 2016.

Approved a transfer from the general reserves to programme funds In April 2016, the executive committee released CHF 340,000 from the general reserves to the programme funds, with effect in 2015. General reserves were at target level at 31 December 2015 after the approved transfer. It might be noted here that for the first time the executive committee took a decision by electronic communication under Rule XVIII. 8. At the meeting in June 2016, the executive committee received the expenditure plan for these funds (*Fund for priority areas*).

Approved the policy for reimbursement of travel costs A revised *Policy for reimbursement of travel costs for WCC governing, consultative and advisory bodies* was discussed, adopted and communicated to members of the governing bodies by the general secretary.

Approved the issuance of a guarantee to the bank, in the interests of ensuring the liquidation of the WCC Retirement Fund was completed, provided that (a) funds were received from the WCC Retirement Fund, and (b) the guarantee limited the risk to the WCC to the amount of the funds received.

¹ Decisions are listed following the order of functions of executive committee in the WCC Rules.

Revised and approved policies Integrated Policy for the Ecumenical Institute at the Château de Bossey; and Policy for screening new funding partners.

Received and approved the reports of the audit committee

Adopted the Financial Report 2015, issued 27 April 2016 further to the recommendation of the audit committee, and on the decision of the leadership of the finance sub-committee, authority having been delegated by the executive committee.

Appointed PricewaterhouseCoopers as auditor for 2016, as recommended by the audit committee.

Approved the revised limit for capital expenditure 2016.

Approved Summary Programme Report for 2014 The format of the summary for programme activity reports was welcomed as it gave a full overview of the wide range of activities without overwhelming details.

Approved Summary Programme Report 2015 and requested that (a) a list of abbreviations used in the documents is added to the summary reports and plans, and (b) the general secretary to present in its next meeting an overview of the churches involved in the planning and implementation of the programmatic work.

Approved Programme plans for 2015 and 2016 The committee received the revision of the Plans 2016 according to requirements of the financial strategy and guidance from funding partners and the executive committee. The strategic document on *WCC's Programmatic Work – Integrated, Focused and Result Oriented* was also received; the committee suggested that the pilgrimage needs to be seen as a guiding principle which increasingly will shape the work of the Council. Furthermore, “criteria for priority setting” were requested with the aim of focusing the programmatic work. After their presentation and discussion, these criteria were approved.

Approved the integration of Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance as an ecumenical initiative within WCC, effective from 1 March 2015. In November 2014, executive committee delegated to the general secretary the authority to determine if the financial conditions for integration were met; and delegated to the leadership of central committee the authority to approve the WCC-EAA Plans 2015, and to include EAA within WCC as an ecumenical initiative. The delegated decisions were made, and approval granted, on signature of the Memorandum of Understanding between EAA and WCC on 27 February 2015.

Approved the following public statements and minutes:

- Statement on Forced Displacement, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in the Middle East
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/executive-committee/cyprus-november-2014/forced-displacement-refugees-and-internally-displaced-persons-idps-in-the-middle-east>
- Minute on Racial tension in the USA (Decision of the Grand Jury not to Indict in the Case of the Death of Michael Brown)
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/executive-committee/cyprus-november-2014/minute-on-racial-tensions-in-the-united-states-of-america>
- Statement on the Centenary of the Armenian Genocide
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/executive-committee/etchmiadzin-june-2015/statement-on-the-centenary-of-the-armenian-genocide>
- Statement on Responses to Migrant Crises
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/executive-committee/etchmiadzin-june-2015/statement-on-responses-to-migrant-crises-doc-no-29-rev>
- Statement on the situation in Israel and Palestine
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/executive-committee/2015-nov/statement-on-situation-in-israel-and-palestine>

- Minute on election in Myanmar
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/executive-committee/2015-nov/minute-on-election-in-myanmar>
- Statement on UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, December 2015
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/executive-committee/2015-nov/statement-on-cop21>
- Statement on terrorist attacks in Paris
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/executive-committee/2015-nov/statement-on-terrorist-attacks-in-paris>
- Statement on the situation in Israel and Palestine
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/executive-committee/2015-nov/statement-on-situation-in-israel-and-palestine>

Pilgrimage of justice and peace The committee kept the pilgrimage high on its agenda. The moderator of the reference group was invited to two meetings, while moderators of commissions were also invited to one meeting of the executive committee. Among many actions taken on this matter, the committee:

- encouraged the general secretary and staff to make efforts to increase integration, articulation, visibility and clarity of the pilgrimage of justice and peace process in the programme work;
- approved that the pilgrimage of justice and peace should have an annual focus on a region and a corresponding focus to be developed in conversation with member churches and ecumenical partners in that particular region;
- approved that in 2016 the pilgrimage of justice and peace focuses on the urgent situation in the Middle East and particularly in Israel and Palestine;
- approved that in 2017 the pilgrimage of justice and peace focuses on an African country;
- recommended that in addition to the regional focus the thematic focus for 2016 and 2017 be on peace-building in the context of religion and violence;
- recommended mutual consultation between the Faith and Order working group on the pilgrimage of justice and peace and ecclesiology, and the PJP theological study group in order to ensure coordination of the theological reflection on the pilgrimage;
- recommended regular meetings of the moderators of commissions and the PJP reference group.

Appointed the Director of Faith and Order, after a careful process, with the positive advice of the interim leadership of the commission and the recommendation of the general secretary.

Appointed the Director of Communication upon recommendation of the general secretary.

Selected four young persons for each consultative body from among candidates proposed by member churches, making all possible efforts to include churches not represented in governing and consultative bodies and improve balances.

3. Matters monitored by the executive committee

Within the framework of its responsibilities (spelled out in Rule VIII. 4. b. i-xiv.), the executive committee has dealt with the following matters:

Received the reports of the general secretary The general secretary's visits to and contacts with member churches were appreciated, as important ways of strengthening the fellowship; the general secretary was encouraged to continue the engagement with international organizations, as this had helped the Council to bring back its voice to public debates; the financial situation of the Council and its capacity to continue playing its convening role within the ecumenical movement was extensively discussed with the general secretary.

Accompanied and guided the programme planning The executive committee accompanied and guided the Council's programmatic work on the basis of the WCC Strategic Plan 2014-2017 as approved by the central committee in 2014. The committee requested criteria for setting programme priorities and for ending projects and activities. It has also requested simple tools of information that would include: the title of the project, a mandate from the assembly or central committee or executive committee, objectives, total budget for the project, and page number where the project can be found within the detailed plans. Finally, it has requested programme plans (mainly for 2016) which would be realistic from the perspective of finance and staffing, would make proposals for new ways of working for staff and would include closer cooperation with member churches and ecumenical partners.

Discussed the reports of consultative and advisory bodies The committee received and commented on the reports, expressed appreciation for the work undertaken by each consultative and advisory body, and offered advice for the work of certain reference groups, e.g. the reference group on human sexuality.

Accompanied and directed the work of the following ecumenical initiatives:

- **WCC-EAA** The committee monitored and eventually approved the integration of the WCC and Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA).
- **WCC-EHAIA** The committee requested, received and eventually affirmed an updated version of the EHAIA Action Plan in which the global perspective and the integration between EHAIA and the WCC-EAA were further developed.
- **WCC-EAPPI** The committee listened to reports on this ecumenical initiative, encouraged the general secretary to proceed with a management assessment of the programme, and received the report. On the basis of the conclusions and recommendations of the report, the committee asked for a further evaluation of the programme.
- **WCC-EIPN** The committee approved the formation of an Ecumenical Indigenous Peoples Network (EIPN) as proposed by the 10th assembly, Busan 2103. An EIPN Reference Group has been formed and the programmatic work has been intensified as a new ecumenical initiative.

Accompanied and guided the new WCC-UNICEF collaboration Under the overall heading "*Churches engaging for children in the pilgrimage of justice and peace*", the committee encouraged a stronger cooperation between the WCC and UNICEF, underlining that this partnership would also contribute to the dialogue on violence against children. At the request of the committee a memorandum of understanding for the cooperation with UNICEF was prepared, highlighting the ecumenical ethos and values as guiding principles for the planning and implementation of joint work.

Accompanied and directed the WCC-ACT Alliance collaboration The report of the consultation jointly organized with ACT Alliance ("The Malawi Consultation" in 2014) was received and the proposal for a deeper cooperation between the fellowship of the WCC, ACT Alliance and specialized ministries was affirmed. The recommendations from the Malawi report, having both a direct impact on the relationships of the programmatic work of the WCC were followed-up and monitored. The formation of a study group on diakonia was requested. The WCC was involved in the process of consultation launched by ACT Alliance as they were developing a new membership strategy.

Received and discussed progress reports on the Financial Strategy 2014-2017

Received and discussed progress reports on the Income Development Strategy (Opportunities for Income Development 2014 to 2017).

Received and discussed reports on investments

Discussed the report on compliance with the policy for offices outside Switzerland and, further to the point of emphasis raised by the audit committee, requested that a report on the status of the issues be presented in its next meeting.

Received reports on the building development project

Monitored the financial results of the Château de Bossey, offering guidance, concrete proposals and encouragement until break-even results be reached (in 2015).

Received and discussed and commented communications reports

Reviewed the by-laws of CWME and EEF, made proposals who were accepted by the Commission, and recommended that the central committee to approve the amended by-laws.

Reviewed the terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation and recommended that the central committee approve the proposed terms of reference, including the expected results, methodologies and profile of the mid-term evaluation team.

Received an accountability report on the programme work. done.

Received the proposal for meetings with leaders of member churches and affirmed the importance of such meetings for strengthening the fellowship.

Received the update on the management assessment of EAPPI, affirmed the need for a full evaluation of the EAPPI programme as planned and requested the general secretary to share the evaluation report with the executive committee in its next meeting.

Received the update on the ecumenical diakonia document and approves the general direction as presented.

4. Matters studied by the executive committee and recommendations to the central committee for action

All matters listed below are included in documents submitted to the central committee for action:

Applications for membership were carefully monitored (preparation of the folder; advice from the PCCC, visits) and two of them are submitted to the central committee for decision, according to the procedure set in WCC Rule I: (a) The Africa Brotherhood Church, Kenya (African Instituted Churches); (b) Baptist Community in Central Africa (Communauté Baptiste au Centre de l'Afrique), Democratic Republic of Congo (Baptist).

Applications for recognition of an ecumenical organization in working relationships with the WCC, according to Rule XVII, were also monitored and the application of the Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) is submitted to the central committee for action.

Nominations to consultative bodies Proposals for new candidates to governing and consultative bodies were studied and are brought to the central committee for action.

Policy on non-active member churches The need to revise the policies developed by the central committee was confirmed. The proposal was made that a list of non-active member churches be monitored by the executive committee. The policy for non-active member churches is referred to the central committee for action.

Mid-term election of the executive committee The process of the mid-term election was discussed at length as clarifications were needed since this is the first time a new rule would be implemented. The committee offered guidance to the general secretary and accompanied him affirming that the final decision regarding the composition of the next executive committee belongs to the central committee.

Membership of Assembly Planning Committee (APC) and Assembly Worship Planning Committee (AWPC) Advice was offered to the general secretary in his effort to prepare balanced proposals for the two committees. The central committee will take the final action on the membership of the two committees.

Policies on Representation A questionnaire was prepared and addressed to members of governing and consultative bodies. Unfortunately very few responses were received, compared to the number of letters sent. This is a matter that should be followed up thoroughly.

5. Recommendations of the central committee regarding the report of the executive committee

Upon receiving in July 2014 the first report of the executive committee, the central committee recommended that (cf. Report of the Executive Committee, Doc GEN PRC 04, p. 3):

(...) *the executive committee:*

- a. *include in its reports to the central committee references to the particular work of the committees of the executive committee and how that work relates to the mandate of the corresponding committee of the central committee; and*
- b. *make more visible in its further elaboration of the strategic plan the connection to strengthening relationships between and among member churches and with ecumenical partners.*

A. Work of the committees

Programme sub-committee The programme sub-committee has operated on the basis of its mandate as formulated in Rule VIII, 5. i. (a) The programmatic work was planned and implemented in response to the strategic objectives, result-indicators and strategies as formulated in the WCC Strategic Plan 2014-2017. A separate report on results reached in 2014 and 2015 is presented to the central committee. (b) The committee has given guidance to the general secretary in developing criteria for priority setting through the document 'WCC's Programmatic Work: Integrated, Focused and Result-Oriented. Direction and Content for 2016 and 2017' (approved by the executive committee in its meeting in June 2015). This document has helped to initiate and terminate projects and activities bringing the programmatic work increasingly in line with the guiding principle of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. (c) The committee has been monitoring and overseeing the on-going programmatic work by reviewing and approving the annual plans 2014, 2015 and 2016 as well as the annual reports 2014 and 2015. (d) In 2017 the committee will initiate a mid-term evaluation of the programmatic work in the light of the strategic objectives as basis for a proposal for the WCC Strategic Plan 2018-2021 to be presented for review and approval to the central committee in 2018. Separate project evaluations have taken place as needed.

Finance sub-committee The finance sub-committee operated on the basis of its mandate as formulated in Rule VIII, 5, a (ii), references (a) to (k). In July 2014, following the work of the finance policy committee, central committee approved the *Financial Strategy 2104-2017*, the income development strategy (*Opportunities for income development*), the *General reserves policy* and the *Investment policy*. The finance sub-committee then accompanied the implementation of the financial policies set by central committee. The work included monitoring contributions and self-generated income compared to budgets and the strategy's milestones; receiving reports on investment performance and compliance with guidelines; and discussing measures planned to improve cost-efficiency in support services. The sub-committee raised questions, and identified actions for recommendation to executive committee, particularly with regard to transfers from General reserves. A report on the progress with the *Financial Strategy 2014-2017* is presented to the central committee.

With regard to its attention to strengthening relationships between and among member churches, the finance sub-committee was attentive to the recommendations of the finance policy committee, when reviewing and finalising for approval the *Policy for reimbursement of travel costs for WCC governing, consultative and advisory bodies*, ensuring reference to principles of solidarity and sharing. With regard to the membership

contributions plan, it also emphasised the importance of sustaining and encouraging efforts to ensure a greater percentage of member churches contributing in the plan.

Personnel, Staffing and Nominations sub-committee The sub-committee operated on the basis of its mandate as formulated in Rule VIII, 5. Iii, covering three distinct levels: (a) Assisted the executive committee in taking staffing decisions according to Rule XI; (b) Accompanied the general secretary in sharpening the human resources policies and strategy, in monitoring the years of service policy, and in offering support to staff in times of change, and (c) Studied matters and prepared recommendations of the executive committee to the central committee. A typical case of the distribution of responsibilities between the executive and the central committee was the mid-term election of the executive committee. The sub-committee discussed extensively with the general secretary and brought issues to the attention of the executive committee, but it was clearly mentioned, and right from the beginning, that the final decisions on this matters would be taken by the central committee.

Public Issues sub-committee The sub-committee assisted the executive committee in preparing public statements and/or minutes. These are documents issued under the authority of the executive committee according to WCC Rule XII. Members of the sub-committee (taking into account that this sub-committee does not have a fixed membership, but rather draws on experience according to the matters on its agenda) participated in the discussion on “religion and violence” with the aim of carefully preparing the reflection and potential action by the central committee on this matter.

Audit committee The audit committee reports directly to executive committee, but shares reports with central committee. Its objectives include the monitoring of the audit process, including review of the audit plan, and review with the auditors of any significant issues at the end of the annual financial audit. Such issues would require to be raised with the leadership of the finance sub-committee, prior to decision on approval of the financial statements. In addition, the audit committee has raised points of emphasis from its own observations, for further discussion at executive committee. In 2014-2016, such points included the delegated authorities for transactions in land and buildings; the budget adjustments of 2015 with impact on staff benefits; and matters of legal and regulatory compliance raised by local auditors related to offices outside Switzerland. A summary of the audit committee’s work is presented in a report to central committee.

B. Strengthening relationships

In the central committee’s recommendation “to strengthen relationships between and among member churches and with ecumenical partners” has been taken up in almost all aspects of the Council’s work through the following actions: (a) The general secretary has extensively visited the member-churches and ecumenical partners and has included representatives of churches and partners in the visiting delegations. A full overview of these visits can be found in the reports of the general secretary to the executive committee. (b) Regional staff teams have been formed to intensify visits to member-churches and ecumenical partners, listen to their experiences, insights and concerns, and include their input in the planning of projects and activities. (c) The committee has encouraged and supported the general secretary in his efforts to increasingly plan and implement projects and activities in consultation and cooperation with member churches and ecumenical partners. (d) Joint consultative bodies have been formed to strengthen the relations with the Roman Catholic Church and with Pentecostal churches. Further, the participation in the Global Christian Forum and in the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions has continued and relations with the World Evangelical Alliance have been strengthened.

6. Some Concluding Remarks

Assessing the work of the executive committee for this period it could be observed that in response to the WCC's strategic objectives as approved by the central committee in 2014:

- The number of activities planned and implemented together with member churches and ecumenical partners has increased (see for more information the 'Progress Report on the implementation of the WCC Strategic Plan 2014-2017' (GEN PRO 03), p.3);
- The relations with UN bodies have become stronger which has made the Council's work in public witness in a number of areas more effective (see for more information the 'Progress Report on the implementation of the WCC Strategic Plan 2014-2017' (GEN PRO 03), p.14);
- The Council has strengthened its profile of accompanying churches and ecumenical organisations in peace building in a number of countries, such as DRC, South Sudan, Nigeria and the Middle East (see for more information the 'Progress Report on the implementation of the WCC Strategic Plan 2014-2017' (GEN PRO 03), p.5);
- Communication has become stronger because of a more effective use of social media and a more central place of the life and work of the member churches in the Council's communication especially the website and the weekly newsletter (see for more information the 'Progress Report on the implementation of the WCC Strategic Plan 2014-2017' (GEN PRO 03), pp.15f.);
- Despite the financial difficulties, mainly due to the unexpected developments in the exchange rates, cooperation between the executive committee, leadership and staff allowed for an uninterrupted continuation and stabilisation of the work with a more intensified focus on some important aspects such as peace building.