



ADOPTED

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Original

Report of the Policy Reference Committee

1. “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 fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” *Constitution. Article I Basis.*

Mandate

2. The Policy Reference Committee (PRC) presents policy recommendations for assembly action related to the reports of the moderator of the central committee and the general secretary, particularly as they relate to the mandate of the PRC, recommendations related to membership matters, and proposals for amendments to the Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches (WCC). Additionally, the PRC presents for action the assembly statement on unity: “God’s Gift and Call to Unity – and our commitment” (Unity Statement). In undertaking its work, the PRC has worked in two sub-groups, one that considered the reports of the Moderator, the General Secretary, membership issues and the Constitution and Rules and one that reviewed and amended the Unity Statement. The 10th Assembly referred to the PRC documents A01, A02, A04, A05 and the Unity Statement in the Programme Book, WCC 10th Assembly, Busan 2013, pp. 101- 105. The PRC also addressed the Flowchart of Consensus Procedures included in the Programme Book at p.94.

Report of the Moderator of the Central Committee (A 01)

3. The PRC received with appreciation the report of the Moderator (A 01). Giving thanks for his leadership as Moderator of the central committee during the period between Porto Alegre and Busan, the PRC recognizes in this last Report of the Moderator personal reflections, as well as an account of the challenges and accomplishments of the period.

4. The PRC noted the Moderator’s attention to the importance of integrating the primary streams of work present in the WCC’s programme areas—theological reflection, Christian education, mission and diakonia—acknowledging their mutual interdependence, maintaining a holistic view of the Christian faith and of the ecumenical journey. With respect to maintaining the prophetic voice and vision of the World Council of Churches drawing from the spirituality and theology of the member churches, the PRC noted the increased attention of the Council to listen to and lift up the insights of the member churches in their particular contexts.

5. The PRC noted the Moderator’s observation about the changing ecumenical landscape, the growth of Pentecostalism and the increase of Christianity as a whole in the southern hemisphere and in Asia. The PRC notes that the WCC has in place membership policies and criteria for membership, and a common understanding and vision among the member churches related to proselytism. The PRC also notes that the WCC convenes commissions and consultations with churches beyond its institutional boundaries; engaging the wider ecumenical movement, including, for example, the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC and the Joint Consultative Group between the Pentecostals and the WCC, as well as the Global Christian Forum.

6. The PRC welcomed the Moderator's reflection on the presence of the Assembly here in Asia, where the Christian family is a minority living together with other majority religious expressions. Particularly in Korea, the witness of the assembly participants joining in hopeful prayer for unity and peace has a meaningful resonance. The high priority given over the years by the WCC to interreligious dialogue, and the Council's capacity to integrate programme areas is demonstrated in the preparation of joint statements such as the Assembly resource document, "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World." (Resource Book, WCC 10th Assembly, Busan 2013, pp.77-81.)

Resolutions:

The Tenth Assembly of the World Council of Churches

- a. *Expresses* its appreciation for the leadership of the Moderator Rev. Dr. Walter Altmann and Vice Moderators H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr. Gennadios of Sassima and Rev. Dr. Margaretha M. Hendriks-Ririmasse during the period from Porto Alegre to Busan;
- b. *Joins* in expressing appreciation to the local Korean churches for their preparations and hospitality on behalf of the WCC and to local and national authorities of the Republic of Korea for their warm welcome;
- c. *Joins* in expressing appreciation to the former General Secretary, the Rev. Samuel Kobia for his leadership of the Council at the beginning of this period and to the General Secretary Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, for their service to the ecumenical movement, diligence and great personal dedication;
- d. *Welcomes* the Moderator's reflection on the diversity of participants present at the Assembly, and recognizes this diversity as providing an opportunity for the churches to reflect further on the implications and opportunities for unity and diversity; and *acknowledges* that diversity enriches unity and that some divisive issues need to be addressed both in bilateral dialogues and in the work of the WCC: and *urges* the WCC to ensure that it is a "safe space" for conversations addressing diversity;
- e. *Urges* the WCC to continue to integrate the work of its various program areas, enhancing the impact and effectiveness of the Council's work and voice.

APPROVED

Report of the General Secretary (A 02)

7. The PRC received with appreciation the report of the General Secretary (A 02) and the opportunity to engage the General Secretary in further dialogue about matters raised by his report. The PRC expressed appreciation for the General Secretary's spiritual focus, approach and achievements, including careful stewardship of the financial assets of the Council during a critical period of financial instability.

8. The PRC noted the efforts of the General Secretary for justice and peace, especially engaging with member church and interfaith leaders in Nigeria, with the churches and civil authorities in the Korean peninsula in preparation for the Tenth Assembly and increasingly with high-level contacts at the United Nations around a treaty on the international arms trade and with UN agencies on issues of common concern.

9. The PRC noted the General Secretary's attention to engage with the churches to discern where God is leading efforts to express Christian solidarity, and witness to justice and peace from the particular vantage point of the churches. The PRC recognized the importance of the Council's focus on accompanying peoples and churches in conflict situations, integrating the expertise from diverse

aspects of the Council's work, amplifying the effectiveness and meaning of the WCC's work and its voice in the world.

10. The particular significance of meaningful "Christian Solidarity" and solidarity with peoples and churches in conflict situations was recalled in two examples, one bearing witness to the past, and one present. The project "Brazil: Nunca Mais!" preserved in the archives of the WCC testimonies from political prisoners in Brazil during the military dictatorship (1964-1985). Together, the General Secretary and the moderator delivered these archives to the public prosecutor in 2011, where they have been made available electronically to the public at large informing the process of truth and reconciliation. Recently, in Nigeria, the WCC engaged a multi-dimensional approach to the conflict there, sending "Living Letters" to the churches, drawing upon its decades of engagement with leaders of other faiths, consulting with interfaith partners, and engaging the local interfaith community, all meaningful steps to forestall the intensification of conflicts and to contribute to the restoration of peace.

11. The General Secretary recalled that the WCC gathered in Kingston Jamaica concluding the Decade to Overcome Violence -- Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace. The International Ecumenical Peace Convocation provided inspiration and resources that will guide the pilgrimage of justice and peace including the future programmes of the WCC.

12. The General Secretary noted that the 500th anniversary of the Reformation will provide an opportunity for a Faith and Order world conference on Renewal in 2017. The PRC observed that the world is heading, during the next eight years, towards centennial commemorations that relate directly to the Assembly theme "God of Life, lead us to Justice and Peace," especially, for example, the beginning of the First World War and the Armenian genocide, which will provide opportunities for the WCC to speak about the spiritual dimensions of justice, peace and human dignity.

Resolutions:

The Tenth Assembly of the World Council of Churches

- f. *expresses* its appreciation for the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, commending the General Secretary in particular for the spirituality of his leadership and his careful stewardship of the Council through its recent financial crisis;
- g. *urges* continuation of the main program areas for the work of the WCC, including unity and mission, ecumenical formation, advocacy in public witness and diakonia, fellowship of women and men, solidarity with peoples and churches in conflict situations, and, interreligious dialogue;
- h. *asks* that the theme of the Tenth Assembly be integrated into the future programmatic work of the WCC, "A pilgrimage of Justice and Peace", by using the work already undertaken (e.g. document "Economy of Life");
- i. affirms the important work of the Bossey Ecumenical Institute in all of its dimensions, as a graduate school for ecumenical formation, a venue for ecumenical gathering and a place of hospitality for the wider community;
- j. *encourages* the General Secretary to continue developing an enhanced communication strategy and policy, with specific reference to new forms of information and communications technology, keeping in mind the importance of inclusion and accessibility, and *urges* that communication efforts include representations from the life and witness of a broad array of member churches; and

- k. *affirms* the importance of integrating the spiritual and theological work of the churches and the expertise drawn from commissions of the WCC into the ongoing work of the WCC in all of its dimensions.

APPROVED

Membership Matters (A 05)

13. The PRC received a report on membership matters that addressed two main dimensions: (1) membership matters related to WCC member churches; (2) membership matters related to non-member churches, especially applications for WCC membership. The PRC was informed that the department of Church and Ecumenical Relations (CER) works under the leadership of the General Secretary and in close collaboration with regional relations programme executives and in consultation with the governing bodies to ensure a common, coherent and focused approach to membership matters.

14. The PRC welcomed the CER's work accompanying mergers and unions of churches in which WCC member churches are involved, and its report of mergers that have taken place since Porto Alegre. The PRC reviewed the Rules related to membership adopted in Porto Alegre, particularly as the application of rules adopted during the Ninth Assembly have affected membership applications (particularly the criterion of size and exception from the criterion of size), and received a report of new members in categories of member churches, and new formal relationships with International Ecumenical Organizations and Specialized Ministries. Additionally, the PRC discussed the implementation of a "pro-active" strategy on membership, encouraging well established and ecumenically committed churches to apply for membership in the WCC.

Resolutions:

The Tenth Assembly of the World Council of Churches

- l. *welcomes* the mergers and unions in which WCC member churches were involved that have taken place during the period between Porto Alegre and Busan;
- m. *directs* the CER to continue to monitor mergers and unions in which WCC member churches are involved, providing, if requested, advice and support in close cooperation with the general secretariat, regional relations executives, Mission and Evangelism and Faith and Order;
- n. *welcomes* new relationships with International Ecumenical Organizations and Specialized Ministries, and welcomes new WCC member churches:
 - Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil (2008);
 - Lao Evangelical Church (2008);
 - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (2013);
- o. *refers to the central committee* for reflection and policy proposal on how the ecumenical commitment of an applicant church is defined, so that WCC membership policy is not dependent on other ecumenical organizations' membership policies;
- p. *refers to the central committee* for further reflection on the meaning of "exceptional reasons" (*Rule I.3.b.iii*) as relates to exceptions from the criterion of size; and
- q. *directs* the WCC to continue the pro-active approach to membership, encouraging well established and ecumenically committed churches to apply for membership increasing the global profile of WCC.

APPROVED

WCC Constitution and Rules (A 04)

15. The PRC received a report of the process that had been undertaken during the period from Porto Alegre to Busan resulting in the amendment of the Rules of the WCC by the central committee in Crete, and the proposal for amendments to the Constitution by the central committee. The PRC was reminded that the Constitution can only be amended in accordance with Article VII of the Constitution, by the Assembly following notice to the member churches, and that amendments to Rules I (Membership), VI (Central Committee) and XX (Amendments) come into effect only after confirmation by the Assembly. The PRC noted that the proper procedures had been followed in accordance with Constitution Article VII, including notice to the member churches, and Rule XX. The PRC notes that the amendments included in Rule XX relate only to re-numbering of cross-references.

16. The PRC discussed comments received to Rule VIII (Executive Committee), section 4, noting that following the central committee meeting in Crete, concerns had been raised related to the finality of financial statements and also related to the clarity of sections pertaining to the delegation of authority from the central committee to the executive committee.

17. Additionally, the PRC discussed the issue of quorum as outlined in Document A 04 as it relates to the responsibilities of members of the governing bodies.

18. The PRC noted an anomaly in the flow charts summarizing consensus procedures and recommends, to avoid misunderstanding, a correction to terminology describing the final step (Programme Book, page 94).

19. Finally, the PRC discussed questions that had been raised from the floor of the assembly regarding the interpretation of the term “fair and adequate” as it appears in Rule VI.8.a and relates to Rule VI.8.b, and received an intervention bearing twenty-nine co-signatures requesting that the next central committee include as a priority on the agenda a process to review and address issues surrounding the churches responsibility to reflect the diversity of the churches by meeting target balances set by the WCC. Recognizing that the new Rule VI that addresses these issues had not yet been confirmed and put into practice, the PRC proposes a process of monitoring the implementation of amended Rule VI, along with a recommendation to further explore with the member churches individual and combined commitment to the issue of target balances.

Resolutions:

The Tenth Assembly of the World Council of Churches

- r. amends* the WCC Constitution (as presented in the Programme Book, WCC 10th Assembly, Busan 2013, pp. 37-41);

APPROVED by the required majority¹

- s. confirms* the amendments to the WCC Rule I Membership in the Fellowship of the World Council of Churches, Rule VI Central Committee, and Rule XX Amendments (as presented in the Programme Book, WCC 10th Assembly, Busan 2013, pp. 41-44, 50-55 and p. 76 respectively).

APPROVED by the required majority²

- t. amends* Rule VIII.4.b, by deleting in its entirety the text included in the Programme Book, WCC 10th Assembly, Busan 2013, p. 58, and replacing the deleted text with the following:

Rule VIII.4.b

If twenty members of the central committee have concerns arising out of either the financial statements, or the budget, they shall make known their concerns to the

General Secretary and the Executive Committee in writing, within 45 days of the sending of the financial statements and the budget. In that event, with regard to any concern related to the financial statements, the executive committee shall be required to respond to that concern. With regard to any concern related to the budget, the executive committee shall reconsider that item. The executive committee's decision on reconsideration shall be final.

APPROVED

- u. amends Rule VIII.4.a, by deleting in its entirety the first sentence “The central committee may delegate some of its powers to the executive committee.” Additionally, amending the next sentence by inserting the words “by the central committee” such that the introductory sentence at Rule VIII.4.a will read as follows:***

Rule VIII.4.a

In exercising the powers delegated to it by the central committee, the executive committee assumes fiduciary responsibility for the governance of the World Council of Churches and shall have the following specific authority and responsibility:

APPROVED

- v. includes in the Supplement to the Rules a statement of policy concerning the responsible exercise of fiduciary responsibility entrusted to church representatives elected to the WCC’s governing bodies, with the following explanatory note:***

(a) Members of governing bodies should commit themselves to participate in the entire meeting. Late arrivals and early departures should be avoided. They should constitute a reported and recorded exception, rather than a common practice.

(b) Members of governing bodies may lose the right to be nominated for a second term if persistently departing early or arriving late.

(c) Members of the governing bodies when obliged to leave earlier, should propose a proxy to another member in the meeting.

(d) Proxies to members of the central committee must be approved by central committee; proxies to members of the executive committee must be approved by the executive committee.

(e) Each member of the governing bodies is allowed to serve as proxy only for one member who is obliged to leave earlier. The leadership of the central committee should regularly monitor this matter.

APPROVED

- w. revises the Flowchart of Consensus Procedures, included in the Programme Book, WCC 10th Assembly, Busan 2013, pp. 94, by deleting the words, “Formal majority vote declared and recorded” and inserting the words, “Rule XIX.9.e-f voting procedures”***

APPROVED

- x. refers to the central committee monitoring the implementation of amended Rule VI. 8 as it relates to the “fair and adequate” representation in the composition of committees and commissions of the WCC, as well as further reflection on the implications of “target balances” for the guiding policies on representation, and further reflection on devising concrete strategies to encourage the member churches’ individual and combined commitment to the issue of target balances established by the central committee in advance of the next assembly.***

APPROVED

On the advice of the Business Committee, a recommendation that was originally proposed by the Nominations Committee on membership matters (cf NC 04, p.2, recom. C) was included here and acted upon by the Assembly.

- y. That the new central committee reviews the WCC Rules referring to “member churches who do not fulfill the criterion of size”, taking into consideration, on the one hand, the changes of the ecclesial and ecumenical landscapes and, on the other, the amendment of the WCC Rules at the 9th assembly with regard to these member churches and their ways of participating in the life of the fellowship.

APPROVED

Unity Statement

The sub-committee of the Policy Reference Committee tasked with the responsibility for the revision of the Unity Statement carefully reviewed all recommendations for amendments. As a result of this work, a revised draft of the Unity Statement is appended to the report of the PRC.

Resolutions:

The Tenth Assembly of the World Council of Churches

- z. *adopts* the attached statement *God's Gift and Call to Unity – And Our Commitment*;

APPROVED

- aa. *urges* the WCC to call upon its member churches to respond to the vision and challenging commitments of the Unity Statement.

APPROVED

¹ Rev Dr Jennifer S Leath abstention

² Rev Dr Jennifer S Leath abstention