



Adopted

**LETTER TO THE CHINA CHRISTIAN COUNCIL AND THE THREE-SELF PATRIOTIC MOVEMENT
(REVISED)**

To the leadership and members of the China Christian Council and the Three Self Patriotic Movement Committee

Greetings to you and peace in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) has been privileged to meet during 17-23 November 2016 in Shanghai and Nanjing, at the kind invitation of the *China Christian Council* and the *Three Self Patriotic Movement Committee*. In inviting and hosting us here with such openness and generosity, you have extended your hospitality not only to us as individuals, but to the whole global ecumenical fellowship of churches on whose behalf we gather and work. We hope and pray that this meeting, and our exchanges with the leadership of your organizations, the Christian institutions, and with the authorities in this country will lead to closer relations, deeper ecumenical understanding of China, and to new commitments to our common Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

This is the first time a WCC governing body has met in the People's Republic of China, and through this experience we have gained enormously in our understanding of the current situation of the Chinese churches and nation. In addition to conducting the regular business of the Executive Committee, we met with your leadership, witnessed the institutions of the churches in action, and shared in worship and fellowship with Chinese sisters and brothers in Christ. We are grateful for your facilitation of the Executive Committee leadership's meeting with the SARA of the Chinese government.

We also visited the Nanjing Massacre Memorial – a poignant and painful reminder of the scourge of war and of the human capacity for unspeakable violence and cruelty to fellow human beings. We shared in prayerful remembrance of the more than 300,000 victims of this massacre. We deeply regret that these atrocities have still not been recognized and apologized for by the Japanese government. This visit was another experience underlining the imperative of the pilgrimage of justice and peace, when such crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide are still taking place in our own times, depriving so many people of the peace, justice and development to which all aspire.

China has experienced enormous economic growth over the last decades of peace and stability in this country, the evidence of which is everywhere to be seen. Millions have been lifted out of poverty by this growth, raising renewed hope of the possibility of eradicating the most extreme forms of poverty globally. In addition, we have noted with appreciation

China's example and leadership in ratifying the Paris Agreement on climate change and in scaling up its investment in developing renewable energy.

The growing gaps between rich and poor everywhere in the world must be addressed for the wellbeing of all and for the sustainability of the whole society. Environmental challenges as a side effect of increased economic activity, production, and transportation, are challenges for this country and for many others, pending the transition to a low carbon economy that all countries must make. And we are also conscious that China's rise in the global arena has been accompanied by new tensions and disputes, which we pray will be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy.

During our time with you in Shanghai and Nanjing, we have been inspired by seeing and hearing what the churches are doing in this country in their various ministries of witness and diakonia, in the context of such progress and such challenges. We have been greatly impressed by the churches' outreach to people of all ages, the commitment to ecumenical and interfaith relations and cooperation, and the scale and breadth of the social services provided by the churches and their institutions.

Among the church-related institutions in China, the *Amity Foundation* already operates the world's largest bible printing service and has long been recognized as an important organization in the field of humanitarian and development work within China. It is a welcome sign of the growth and vitality of the churches in this country that *Amity Foundation* is expanding the scope of its diaconal service beyond China's borders. We welcome the fact that *Amity Foundation* – an ACT Alliance member – has established an office in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. We encourage deeper engagement by the *Amity Foundation* in the global diaconal ministry of the ecumenical movement.

We have been honoured and grateful to have been connected to the remarkable growth and development of the churches in this dynamic country through our fellowship with you during the many years of the Chinese churches' participation in the ecumenical movement. This visit has made it even clearer to us that the worldwide fellowship of churches will benefit greatly from further and increased mutual exchange, learning and cooperation between other WCC member churches and the churches and their institutions in China. We share the same Christian calling, and are together on a common ecumenical pilgrimage of justice and peace, seeking to promote just peace in the community, with the earth, in the marketplace, and among the nations.

We look forward to continuing on this pilgrim path with you, in China and in the wider world.

Yours in Christ,

(WCC Executive Committee Leadership)