

T h e C h u r c h e s i n I n t e r n a t i o n a l A f f a i r s

Reports 2010-2013

**Commission of the Churches on International Affairs
of the World Council of Churches**

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of the World Council of Churches**

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IN MEMORIAM

Lois McCullough Dauvey

1948 – 2014

A devoted ecumenical colleague,
who served as a member of the CCIA,
Moderator of the WCC Programme Committee,
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MODERATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Significant changes have been taking place in the world during the second half of the period between the Ninth Assembly, leading up to the Tenth assembly of the WCC, which was held in October 2013. This particular period also witnessed anxieties and uncertainties in international relations and the effects of them posed many challenges to the churches and the ecumenical movement. The CCIA, which has been mandated to address the emerging global issues, tried to address several of those concerns during the past four years through various processes and programmatic actions.

There were several milestones in the history of WCC and the CCIA during the period. The International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC) – a remarkable and historic ecumenical event and the biggest since the Ninth WCC Assembly – inspired many churches and groups around the world and strengthened their commitment to justice and peace, especially in the context of the Tenth Assembly and its theme, “God of life, lead us to justice and peace”. The Ecumenical Call to Just Peace created a new momentum in the area of advocacy on building communities of peace.

The two CCIA Commission meetings held in Albania (2010) and in the People's Republic of China (2012) and an additional meeting of the working groups in Jamaica (2011) streamlined the programmatic thrusts of the CCIA. The regrouping of the CCIA in four working groups dealing with peace and security, freedom of religion, rights of migrant workers and stateless people and peace in the community with a focus on Millennium Development Goals provided impetus for major programmatic actions undertaken by the CCIA and its advocacy initiatives at the global, regional and national levels during the last four years of its mandate, before it ended the current term. The engagements of the CCIA through various working groups included a three-year study on “Freedom of religion and rights of religious minorities” with emphasis on “Politicization of religion and religionization of politics”. Three study consultations held in Istanbul, Turkey, Thessaloniki, Greece and Havana, Cuba with the participation of experts involved in the field finalized the study process.

Other significant pieces of work included a study on “Rights of migrant workers in the Arabian Gulf region”, a study process and a series of consultations on peace and human security with focus and emphasis on regions such as Africa, Asia and Latin America; regional and global consultations on rights of stateless people, advocacy initiatives and consultations on the campaign against small arms and light weapons in Africa; UN advocacy week actions in New York and Geneva in conjunctions with different UN events focused on countries and issues such as Columbia, Nigeria, Palestine, Middle East, Pakistan, Myanmar, Climate Displaced People, Rights of Indigenous Peoples, etc.

The pastoral solidarity visits organized by the CCIA to various conflict-affected areas and situations demonstrated WCC's commitment to and accompaniment of people and communities suffering and struggling for peace with justice, human rights and human dignity. Those areas and countries included Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Nigeria, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Philippines, Northern Territories of Australia, Cambodia, Guatemala, Columbia, Uruguay, Bolivia, Honduras, and French Polynesia. The advocacy on the right to self-determination of the people of French Polynesia was on the agenda of the CCIA ever since the local churches requested WCC's accompaniment in their struggle. The other advocacy initiatives facilitated and coordinated by the CCIA during this period also cover issues such as peace and reunification of the Korean peninsula, peace and

security in South Asia, Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala, peace and reconciliation in Colombia, peace process in South Sudan, electoral reforms in Africa, Middle East peace process, especially in the contexts of the Arab spring and democratization, peace in Syria, etc.

While engaged in various advocacy actions, as usual the WCC governing bodies and the general secretary from time to time issued statements and letters of concerns addressing pertinent issues. All such important documents as well as minutes, reports and communiques from various consultations and conferences including the public issues actions adopted by the Tenth Assembly of WCC are included in this volume, “The Churches in International Affairs: 2010-2013”. This is yet another effort of pooling together the resources of advocacy actions coordinated and facilitated by the CCIA during the past four years. This is also the reflection of the remarkable work carried out, facilitated and coordinated by the CCIA. As the moderator of the CCIA I express my profound thanks to all those who have been part of our efforts.

It is also gratifying to note that the current commission before ending its term provided advice to the leadership of the WCC and its newly elected governing board to revitalise the CCIA in future by way of restructuring the Commission and evolving a new composition of the CCIA in the post Tenth assembly period, which will be formed in the central committee meeting in July 2014.

Rev. Kjell Magne Bondevik
Moderator, CCIA
Oslo, Norway 15 May 2014

DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) tried to address and respond to several important global, regional and national issues that warranted our attention and reflection during the years 2010-2013 covered in this report. Those issues covered in this report are based on situations and issues that had a direct bearing on the life of the churches which deserve closer attention by the WCC and the CCIA. The strength of the CCIA/WCC in advocacy include its member churches; its global constituencies; its long history; its experiences and credibility; its access to the UN and other international decision-makers; and its strong reputation among the broader civil society. Its weaknesses in advocacy are that because it is a global fellowship of churches based on principles that followed on consultations, it can appear to be slow to respond or quickly act in some contexts, and may not publically speak out on issues opposed by a member church. However, the unique role is that it is well positioned to provide an ecumenical space for advocacy at different levels.

During this period under review of the public issues actions and churches' role in international affairs (2010-2013), the CCIA had two full-fledged meetings of the commission – in Durrës, Albania in 2010 and in Shanghai and Nanjing in the People's Republic of China in 2012. Additionally we had another joint meeting of four CCIA working groups, which was held in Kingston, Jamaica in 2011. The year 2010 also coincided with the 50th meeting of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA). The 51st meeting of the CCIA held in People's Republic of China was a landmark in the history of the WCC and the Chinese Churches. This was the first international ecumenical event permitted by the government to be hosted by the China Christian Council (CCC) ever since the People's Republic of China was founded in 1948.

It has been a privilege and honour for us to recognize the support and encouragement given to us by some renowned personalities working in the international arena who provided support as resource persons at various CCIA programmes: Ms Aung San Suu Kyi, the legendary democratic movement leader of Burma and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Dr Bertrand G. Ramcharan, United Nations special rapporteurs such as Prof. Heiner Bielefeldt (freedom of religion or belief), Prof. François Crépeau (human rights of migrants), and Ms Joy Ngozi Ezeilo (trafficking in persons, especially women and children), etc.; they are but a few among those personalities who helped us during the last four years of the commission. The 50th commission meeting decided on several thematic foci for possible ecumenical engagements of advocacy on various issues and themes and priority areas for future ecumenical engagement in international advocacy. The 51st meeting of the commission received and analysed several study reports and public advocacy actions. The commission expressed its concern on a situation of fragmented advocacy roles for some time, especially CCIA's role in New York. It is gratifying that the leadership now took the decision to reinstate the mandate of the UNLO (recently renamed EUNO)/WCC again within the CCIA structure which will be helpful for effective advocacy coordination in future. The meeting in China also discussed in detail about the nature and structure of the current CCIA and its role in the post-Busan Assembly era. The commission and its core group reviewed the by-laws of the CCIA and made several proposals in order to be consistent with the overall structural and programmatic changes in WCC. New proposals on the composition of the membership of a new commission have been worked out by the CCIA core group in a meeting held in Oslo, Norway based on the recommendations and suggestions by the 51st meeting held in China.

The CCIA has been known for its unique role of coordinating the ecumenical advocacy on international affairs and also ensuring coherent and coordinated ecumenical approaches in our ecumenical actions. We have to often take on more tasks that can be adequately followed up. This also raises a question we have to often face on our capacity and the need for the WCC to be involved in every issue. This vital question is constantly being raised from many quarters including the commission. One of the main contributions during the period of the commission's work helped to sharpen the focus of the CCIA. The numerous issues covered in this report indicates the enormous volume of work WCC has been undertaking while responding to emerging global, regional and national issues. The CCIA is very soon approaching its existence of seven decades since it was founded in 1946. While being primarily an organ dealing with international affairs, of a fellowship of churches, we face numerous problems and challenges. However, we continue to be faithful to our call to be partakers of justice and peace for fullness of life of all God's people and their struggle. We are constantly reminded of the values of the prophetic witness.

While concluding the introduction to this volume, I would also like to add that I will conclude my work on 31st July 2014 as director of the CCIA for 5 years of service and a total of 14 years in WCC. I take this opportunity to thank profoundly the three general secretaries with whom I have closely worked during my tenure – Rev. Dr Konrad Raiser, Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia and Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit. I have often been seeking advice and clarification on past CCIA issues from some former CCIA staff, especially four of my predecessors, former CCIA directors Dr Ninan Koshy, Rev. Dwain C. Epps, Mr Peter Weiderud and Rev. Elenora Giddings-Ivory and I thank them all. Let me also express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to all my colleagues in the CCIA team, who have been making significant contributions.

Mathews George Chunakara
Director, CCIA
Geneva, 15 May 2014