



Report of the General Secretary

Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit

I. Our prophetic call – a twofold call from the 10th Assembly

Dear sisters and brothers,

“...making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Ephesians 4:3

1. We have called one another through the 10th Assembly to be led by the God of life. This is formulated in two calls to which we are responding now. One is formulated in the statement on unity, how we understand God’s call to unity today. The other is the call from the message, to join in a pilgrimage of justice and peace. The two are interrelated – in our ecumenical journey up to the 10th Assembly and in our vision and concrete plans for the time ahead of us.

2. Unity in justice and peace is not what rules the world of today. These calls, therefore, require us to be prophetic in bringing our faith and commitment into words and actions. I believe, sisters and brothers, this means that we particularly have to show how the unity in the Spirit is a bond of peace between human beings living in and with God’s wounded creation. The care for the one humanity, the willingness to care for the other’s humanity, to give it a priority, is a concern of our faith in Jesus Christ as God incarnated in our human life. True humanity needs the grace and the commitment to the will of God that comes from true spirituality. The Holy Spirit gives us the wide horizon of the diversity of human life God has created to be generous and humble enough to reflect the love of God.

3. There is a deep need in our time for a new unity of spirituality and humanity, which can be found in our Christian faith, as a contribution to the life of all. Our fellowship of churches is first of all a fellowship in faith, in the response to the grace of God given to us, and in our prayers to God of life. This strong connection between our humanity and our spirituality is how we, as WCC, make a difference together.

4. Let me share an example. On 18 June, on the peaceful terrace of Bossey, I had the opportunity to meet with Gil Won Ok, 86 years old, born in Pyong-yang, now living in Seoul, one of the surviving representatives of the Korean Comfort Women. As a child and teenager she was forced to be a sex-slave for Japanese military men. Her body was damaged. Her life started as a struggle to survive.

5. I will summarise her prophetic message to me, to us all: “If we want to survive, let there be no more war! It destroys people like me; children, youth, women, everybody. Let us have justice, at least to acknowledge the wrongdoing and to apologise. Everybody can fail. But we need to say the truth, to say what is right and wrong. Without justice there is no way to a future in peace. This is the will of Jesus Christ.” Talking and praying together, we shared in our human and spiritual life. She could, according to her age, have been my mother, but she never could give birth to a child, so she adopted a son who is a pastor in the Korean Methodist Church. Now she was on a journey challenging me, and others, to share her message, a pilgrimage of justice and peace, still in time for us to hear.

6. I had the honour to walk hand in hand with her over to the conference room in Bossey where the consultation on peace and reunification on the Korean peninsula was taking place. For several reasons which I explained to you at the assembly, we could not meet between North and South Korea there.

Knowing that, I proposed this consultation and it was accepted already during my visit to North Korea in September last year.

7. In that space of dialogue and sharing between people from South and North Korea and many other connected churches around the world, we were again reminded in real and concrete terms of the high cost paid by so many when there is a lack of peace and justice. First of all, we are human beings connected to one another. There is one Korean people and one Korean peninsula, still divided by the wars of the 20th century. The division is a root cause to the hostility, of division caused by the lack of peace, of division of families, of threats, of the suffering of innocent people. But we also experienced a real human fellowship through the days together. We shared our spiritual relationship, in prayer, Bible-studies, and in sharing the fellowship around the tables, even at the Lord's Table. We saw a sign of the unity we pray for and work for, an experience of what a pilgrimage of justice and peace means.

8. This could be heard as a romantic and naive approach to some of the most blocked and unsolved contexts of our time. I am mindful that as we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I, today we are addressing urgent geo-political conflicts and interests, security and military activities, human rights and peace in the Korean peninsula and in many other areas of conflicts in the world. In this case as in other issues of justice and peace we are addressing, we should claim that a crisis and a conflict caused by human activities and misbehaviour, basically affecting the ordinary human beings living there, must be and can be addressed by other human initiatives and relations. This requires also a spiritual courage.

9. To change the human-made tragic and stalled conditions, there must be somebody who has a vision for another reality, for another future, for another life together as human beings. There must be somebody who is willing to give priority to that human dimension first of all, to see the world from the perspective of the victims of conflicts, both men and women, old and young. There must be somebody who is willing to be in the shoes of the other, and see and act accordingly. There must be somebody who has the courage to build human relationships across the lines of conflicts, who can see a common cause as higher than the more narrow interests of one group.

10. In December we participated as the WCC in the memorial services in South Africa for one of those leaders, the late President Nelson Mandela. Where are the leaders of the world today that have such perspectives and visions? Or, who are the communities ready to foster and nurture those attitudes that could give formation to a leader like Mandela?

11. If people of faith, in our case the churches, do not have this human perspective, this courage, vision and resilience to continue working for unity in the bonds of justice and peace, who shall we then expect to have it?

12. So what is the connection here to the call to unity in the Church? The 10th Assembly helped us to see that everything we do, including our efforts for unity in our Christian faith, are responses to God's call to life in fellowship. This fellowship is given by God through the faith and the baptism of the church; it is a spiritual gift. This unity in faith is also truly human, an expression of creation. It should be manifested as a unity based on the values that can establish and secure human fellowship: justice and peace.

13. This first call, the call to unity, is therefore a call to commit ourselves again and again to make our unity visible, and to show that "the unity of creation, the unity of humankind and the unity of the Church are interconnected." When we do so, we bear witness to the God of life that has created us all and called us to life in fellowship, in sharing, in caring for one another and for the whole world, the whole *oikoumene*. The unity statement from Busan is increasingly recognised as bringing these valuable insights of the 65 years of different streams of the work in the WCC together in an unprecedented and clear way. When we see in principle and in practice how these are not only interconnected, but inseparable, we see the deep meaning of our work. We should do our utmost to use that statement on unity to inspire and empower efforts for visible unity in life and witness. In a recent meeting with the general secretaries of regional ecumenical organisations and national councils of churches in Nairobi, I shared my reflection about how

the ecumenical instruments we have can serve the visible unity of the church, and how that is a ministry to the world. That does not mean that work for church unity can address all the world's problems. But I believe that efforts to overcome church divisions can be empowered and strengthened if they are seen as dimensions of the unity that God of life wants for creation and humanity as well.

14. In our time humanity is also united in a new way in increasing common threats to our life together. But these challenges call for our most basic human solidarity. Our response as churches should be based on our understanding of how we respond to the unity the God of life has called for. Our profile should be based on our faith.

15. I offer some examples from the agenda of our work these days:

16. In addressing climate change, we have called for an inter-faith summit in New York in September. We need to show how these challenges are affecting all humanity and the whole of God's creation, and how we together as peoples of faith share the commitment to change and the hope that faith can give.

17. Some of the most difficult issues of injustice in our world are the realities of economic inequality. We will discuss in this meeting how we as an ecumenical fellowship, together with ecumenical partners (World Communion of Reformed Churches, Council for World Mission and the Lutheran World Federation and others) can follow up on the recommendations for our programme work offered earlier this year by an expert panel. Our perspective is most of all concerned with how financial systems and politics are affecting the poor, or making people poor, women and men, and not at least the youth. The preferential option for the poor is our common ecumenical perspective, grounded in our faith.

18. Facing the reality that the armed conflicts of today's world causes the highest levels of refugees and displaced people ever, more than 50 million, higher than during World War II. When the richer nations in Europe, like my own country Norway, are asked to receive some of them, such as refugees from Syria, the values of a shared human solidarity is challenged. It is contradictory to our Christian and humanistic values when these rich nations refuse to receive them or ask primarily for those who are the easiest to integrate, and do not want to welcome those who are wounded or need refuge the most. We as churches have to address these issues from the perspective of faith in the God of life who cares for all humanity, particularly those who are the most vulnerable. Our faith perspective requires another response, as the churches in Norway have given.

19. The rich reflection of the ecumenical dialogue towards unity in ecclesiology offered in the Faith and Order document "The Church: Towards a Common Vision" is now in the process of study and reception in the churches. This document brings the fruits of many years of work, but also the faith commitment we share in our ability of being Church together and being Church for the others together.

20. I have also been involved in the reception process of the mission statement we received in Busan, "Together Towards Life". It apparently has the potential to revitalise the understanding of mission in many churches, and the WCC should offer space and inspiration for the churches to share how they respond to the mission challenges of our time. These challenges call for new commitment to serve humanity and creation in a renewed faith in the Gospel. We should discuss the possibility to have a joint world conference for Faith and Order with Mission and Evangelism in 2018 where we raise the issues of ecclesiology and renewal of our mission.

21. The two calls must be responded to with focus and creativity, strength and openness, not setting the one up against the other. We see how there is a prophetic calling to represent another perspective of unity, to show it in our own relationships of grace and solidarity.

II. A Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

22. The idea to plan and work as a fellowship of churches in the WCC now as a pilgrimage of justice and peace is a rather ambitious one. It might even at first sound like a strange construction or a fancy slogan. The more I have been pondering on what it might mean, and now also working under this perspective since the 10th Assembly, I am increasingly convinced that this is a proper profile for the council's work in our time. I have been launching it in my visits to churches, preaching and giving speeches, discussions with veterans of the ecumenical movement and with students, presenting our profile in conversations like the one I had with Pope Francis and in our Round Table meeting with funding partners, and elaborating our strategic plan together with colleagues, defining what we prioritise and do for the next four and eight years. Let me share why I find this vision inspiring, relevant and convincing for us.

23. The pilgrimage must mean that we are willing to be on a journey of faith. It is a movement we are ready to make together. We are together, following, going with our Lord Jesus Christ, praying as he taught us: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!" It is a journey into something new, a new terrain, where God leads us to bring and to search for justice and peace, the signs of the Kingdom of God, the gifts of the Spirit. We are one in the Spirit that can convince the world what is right, what is sin, what is the judgement of God, and what is the recreating power of forgiveness, reconciliation and hope.

24. We are committed to stay together, the WCC 1st Assembly said in 1948. The churches and the world need to see that the followers of Jesus Christ are overcoming our divisions, joining hands in prayer and action.

25. In 2013, the message from the assembly said that we are committed to move together. These are two sides of the same coin. Unity requires that we search for our basis, our common ground, but also to move into new times together.

26. We are called to go and tell that the cross of Jesus is now to be seen in the light of the resurrection of Christ. The injustices, the failure to promote the good, the vicious circle of sin and evil and death, have all been broken, replaced, overcome. They do not have the last words in the world. The new word is that the God of life has broken the binds of death, that we who have received this word are involved in sharing this new reality.

27. Therefore, the pilgrimage of justice and peace brings us back to our common and shared faith in the triune God, the God of life. The pilgrimage of justice and peace helps us to move beyond our own limitations and boundaries, our own self-preoccupation in our personal lives and in our churches, into the mission of God in this world. We are praying and serving people together; the pilgrimage emphasises that first of all the ecumenical movement is a movement in faith.

28. Furthermore, the issues of justice and peace are core values of the fellowship the God of life has created the world to have with creation and with one another as human beings. These are the values of the kingdom of God that can change the world and the hearts of human beings, manifested in the coming of Jesus, and in the sacrifice and love of the crucified and resurrected one. These are the values of *koinonia*, of participation in the one God, sharing and receiving, serving and giving glory to God together in the Church, through the Holy Spirit.

29. More and more I am in awe when facing the reality of the church, this fellowship created through the sharing of the word of God, becoming one through the participation in the life and death of Jesus through baptism, Eucharist and faith, and the miracle of how the Spirit is moving us towards one another through the one ecumenical movement. More and more I am struck by the reality of how God has moved the churches to be one, and how that movement from the very beginning has been a move towards justice and peace. This we have seen recently in developments like the merger of churches in Sweden into "The Uniting Church in Sweden", represented in our meeting, and in meetings like the encounter between The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope Francis in Jerusalem in May this year.

30. We share in a realistic, sober, humble and hopeful description of where we have been led so far. We carry with us strength and much fruit from the past phases of the ecumenical movement. However, we need to be able to move more lightly. As pilgrims, we have to be able to leave something behind us, not using the church or the ecumenical movement as an arena for our institutional or personal ambitions, but as a way to promote a theology of solidarity and a theology of vulnerability as we, ourselves are the wounded and healed. This is what it means to follow Jesus Christ.

31. And we are called to move into the realities where justice and peace are under threat or under siege from many who are undermining it or ignoring it. From the most personal relationships to the most global relationships between us, the call to justice, peace and unity is our call as human beings, and as people of faith.

III. A Journey of Generations Together

32. If the pilgrimage forward is to have any meaning, it must be a way to include and provide formation to young people. It has to shape how we give dignity, space, and encouragement to the next generations through the way we relate to one another and the priorities we set for our common life. And immediately we learn that if we talk about a search for justice and peace, younger people will give insights and provide formation for those who are older. They might have even stronger desires and commitments than we have. And there is no reason to wonder about that. They both have fresh eyes and fresh reactions.

33. Many young people around the world understand very well why we as churches need to talk about justice and peace. 70% of the people of South Sudan are below age 30. They are killed by the use of weapons and become victims of the older generations' failure to build a nation with peaceful means. This is the case for many young people asking for democracy, justice and peace in Syria. Why should they be met with a massive use of violence; and why should their generation be sacrificed as soldiers, and as a generation, lose their opportunities for prosperity and development?

34. The unemployed of Europe are to a large extent young people. The number of victims of meaningless and cruel violence in Nigeria have reached new heights in the abduction of more than 200 young girls.

35. When we address health issues, such as HIV/AIDS, we are addressing more than anything the lives of young people now and tomorrow. When we discuss the issues of family life, of marriage, of different sexual orientations, we touch on, to a large extent, how young people find their way forward in life with their identities, with the challenges of life, and with the gifts of life in their hands.

36. The ecumenical movement has given young people a space for their faith, their commitment, their questions and their fight to become agents for justice and a shared future. As a response to the assembly we have given more weight to ecumenical formation in our programmes. We also have said that youth bring a cross-cutting perspective that needs to find expression in all our work, not only as a separate youth programme.

37. In all churches I visit, there is a deep concern about how the next generations of young adults and parents will find their place in the church together with their children and friends. This is a challenge we have to face together. Moreover, younger people have to be part of the reflections and the actions we take together with the churches and the other ecumenical partners to address this. If we do not, we are not a movement, not even an institution in the future. We indeed need the active participation of younger people in the churches of today and in the WCC of today. Young people belong to the life of the churches and the WCC of today, not only the future leadership.

IV. Some Prioritised Areas for Work for Justice and Peace

38. Our faith compels us as an ecumenical movement to stand in solidarity with churches and people in conflict and crisis situations. We are called to be a prophetic voice in the public sphere with the aim of offering a moral voice that influences processes which lead to justice and peace. Let me be concrete by naming just some of the Council's work since the assembly:

DRC

39. As a follow-up of the Minute on the Situation on the Democratic Republic of Congo adopted at the WCC 10th Assembly, I, along with representation from the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the general secretary of the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC), led a delegation that met with WCC member churches and ecumenical organizations in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

40. The visit was then followed by a two-day forum on Peace-Building and Community Rehabilitation in the DRC which highlighted the priority issues with which Congolese churches are struggling, namely the security and political situation in the DRC, and particularly the need of civic education for the upcoming elections in 2016; the protection of human rights; gender-based violence, particularly in war-torn provinces, and HIV and AIDS; the protection and management of DRC's natural resources; and the role and place of Congolese youth. The forum was an opportunity to stress the commitment of the WCC and the AACC to work hand in hand with churches in the DRC and accompany them as they journey together in the pilgrimage of justice and peace. A working group based in Kinshasa and composed of several member church representatives, as well as practitioners and academicians, has been set up. The group will be liaising with an in-house WCC staff working group, which will be composed of different WCC colleagues working in the various thematic areas identified. Follow-up work in the coming years will include accompanying Congolese churches as they prepare for the 2016 elections through civic education trainings, raising awareness at the UN Human Rights Council (Geneva) and the UN Security Council (New York City) on various issues such as peace and security in the country, violence against women as a weapon of war and HIV/AIDS, trainings in transformative masculinities, "conflict minerals", empowering Congolese youth as agents of peace and reconciliation to name only a few. In spring 2015, an international consultation on peace and security in the DRC will be organised in Geneva, with the aim of bringing back DRC to the attention of the international arena, introduce WCC partners to the situation in DRC, and encourage churches and ecumenical partners to commit to work on peace and security in the DRC.

41. The agenda of the visit to the DRC included also an encounter with the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by His Special Envoy Simon Kimbangu (Kimbanguist Church). This served as a follow up to decisions and recommendations of the Central Committee prior to the assembly. Together with AACC, OAIC, representatives of Congolese churches and a large delegation of the Kimbanguist Church, we looked together for a way to address the pending concerns for our unity and the so-called "popular theology" within the Kimbanguist Church. The outcome of the meeting was to establish a commission composed of representatives of WCC, AACC, OAIC, Congolese church representatives and the Kimbanguist Church. The commission for accompaniment shall meet regularly in the next year and present a first report to the central committee in 2016. The task of the accompany commission will be to analyze in a collegial way the profile of the church, particularly the nature, content and place of the "popular theology" within the Kimbanguist Church, but also will be attentive to ways this process might be significant for the entire confessional family of the African Instituted Churches and beyond. Such a complex process should be connected with developing a joint strategy for improving theological education, especially for the African Instituted Churches.

South Sudan

42. Immediately after the crisis began in December 2013, ecumenical partners began to address the situation. Our moderator, Dr Agnes Abuom, led several initiatives. The WCC was later asked to accompany the churches so that they had access to the peace talks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where the

Special Envoys of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) are mediating the warring parties. In February, the WCC executive committee issued a minute on the crisis. In April along with our moderator and the general secretaries of ACT Alliance and the YWCA and the ecumenical special envoy representing the AACC, Rev. Samuel Kobia, former general secretary of the WCC, I visited the South Sudanese church leaders and the vice-president of the country to discuss humanitarian support during this crisis as well as the needed process for ending the war. When the cease-fire was signed in Addis Ababa in May, the heads of the three largest churches in South Sudan were there as witnesses of faith, representing the whole people of South Sudan and their prayers for peace with justice.

Nigeria

43. The WCC has been following up the joint Christian-Muslim visit to Nigeria in 2012 by taking on new initiatives. One initiative is focused on the publication of material about Christians and Muslims speaking to the issues of violence and peace. Second, we continue to explore the possibility of joint Christian-Muslim monitoring of the violence in Nigeria. These undertakings emphasise the commitment we have to work for peace among those of different faiths.

Syria

44. The Middle East region is going through critical and difficult times for all people, including Christians. Our programmatic work is now focusing on encouraging Christians in the region to be part of the changes that are taking place and to be pro-active in their input. We have been carefully and closely following the developments in several Arab countries following the uprisings and the transformations that took and are still taking place. I visited many countries in the region on several occasions, where I had the opportunity to listen to the concerns of several heads of churches and civil society actors. The latest visit was one month ago, at the beginning of June, for the enthronement of His Beatitude Mor Aphrem Ignatius II in Beirut. One of the main missions of the WCC is to accompany its member churches and Christians who are living in severe and dramatic situations. In this accompaniment, we are also resourced and informed by the member churches and the wide network of partners. In some places in the region, there is clear evidence of targeting Christians, Christian communities, churches and church institutions. The situation is becoming extremely difficult for many people especially in Syria and Iraq. There is a great fear as the war in Syria has spilled over into neighbouring Iraq, where Christians may find themselves obliged, once more, to leave their homes.

45. For Syria, we have been facilitating inter-communal dialogue, mainly aiming at encouraging common humanitarian actions that maintain the social fabric. The WCC also called for two major meetings for Christian leaders from Syria and the wider ecumenical family in order to respond to two important challenges: the first one addressed the issue of the military strike that was threatening Syria, following a chemical attack by the regular army on civilian population in the suburbs of Damascus; and, the second sent an important message to all parties to the conflict ahead of the Geneva II talks. In early June, we participated in an ecumenical and international consultation on the crisis in Syria, at the invitation of HH Karekin II, the Catholicos of All Armenians. Looking at the present crisis in light of Armenian history and the genocide which we will commemorate next year, we received significant perspectives of solidarity with the victims of today.

Israel and Palestine

46. The WCC has always considered that the situation in Israel and Palestine is too strong for a divided church to counter and there needs to be combined efforts and initiatives to be sure all the churches can walk together on the pilgrimage journey of justice and peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. Through the last two years the WCC has developed and strengthened its relations and contacts with many Jewish organizations and partners working for peace and justice in Israel and Palestine. Since its establishment in June 2007, the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum's (PIEF) network has highlighted the WCC's general policy condemning the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the creation of settlements in occupied territories in clear violation of international law. Many of the PIEF's seventy partners have

challenged consumer practices and reviewed their investment policies in order to make sure that the activities of the companies they hold shares with are not linked to illegal activities in the occupation or to settlements. The decision by the Presbyterian Church (USA) during its assembly in June is one concrete example.

47. The core group of the PIEF designed some guidelines for the advocacy work, and implemented a common plan of action:

- Every year, through the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel (WWPPI) activity, nearly one hundred events take place in more than twenty countries worldwide, involving churches, congregations, civil society actors, etc. in prayer, advocacy and education.
- The Jerusalem Inter-church Center (JIC), which is joint venture between the Heads of Churches, the MECC and the WCC, is a vital ecumenical instrument that brings the voice and the concerns of Palestinian Christians to the wide ecumenical family and to the world.
- The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is one of the key programmes in the WCC that incarnates concrete signs of solidarity with all those, in Israel/Palestine who are working towards ending the Israeli occupation and for justice and peace.
- The WCC has also initiated and organized theological conferences, convened discussions and ecumenical conversations on specific topics related to burning issues in the region, especially ones related to the Christian presence and witness in the midst of the Arab revolutions.

V. Equipping the Call - Strategic Plan 2014-2017

48. I have tried here to articulate the two-fold call that has been given to us. Let me now say a few words about considerations which will help us live out the call: a strategic plan to be discussed together in this meeting that will offer direction by prioritizing and focusing our work. Such planning must occur with a good understanding of the current financial context in which we must work.

49. Right after the assembly, I invited the staff leadership group to begin to reflect on the implications for the direction of the Council in the coming period. I reminded them of the advice coming from the pre-assembly programme evaluation team that the Council needs to develop clear strategic objectives which allows proper planning and evaluation of its work. I also repeated my reflections in my report to the previous central committee that time has come for another methodological strategy in order “to combine the programme work, the church relations work and the work of the general secretariat even more than today so that the WCC works as one organization with our priorities” (Report of the General Secretary to the Central Committee 2012, paragraph 90d). Such an integrated approach may help the Council become more effective and above all to be a Council that is operating as a fellowship of churches.

50. The reflection in the staff leadership group and later in all staff meetings has led to a proposed direction of the Council’s life and work that is guided by five strategic objectives: 1) strengthening the fellowship, 2) witnessing together; 3) encouraging spirituality, reflection and ecumenical formation; 4) building trust and understanding; and 5) inspiring and innovative communication. These objectives are strongly inter-related with a guiding vision that in today’s world we need to respond to God’s call for unity by being a fellowship of churches that is prepared to witness together for peace and justice. As such the life and work of the Council becomes an expression of the assembly’s invitation for a pilgrimage of justice and peace.

51. I have shared these reflections with the WCC executive committee in February, with some of the consultative bodies and the ecumenical partners in the past few months. Their input has helped my colleagues and me elaborate the strategic plan further and to present it to you for further discussion and approval.

VI. Our Financial Means and Challenges

52. The Council is grateful for the financial and non-financial support from its member churches and ecumenical partners, and for the commitment expressed in this way. To do what are called to do, we must have resources!

53. In 2013, the Council's total income, including assembly contributions, was CHF 31 million, CHF 1 million higher than in 2012. In addition, the assembly benefited from an estimated contribution in-kind of at least USD 2.5 million from the Korean churches, not included in our total income results. Thanks to the support of member churches and other partners who responded generously to fund-raising appeals even in late summer 2013, the assembly fund closed with a small credit balance in 2013.

54. As we look to the strategy for 2014 to 2017 the current financial context does give cause for concern and challenges us to be both realistic and creative. There are many examples of creativity within the staff community and amongst our partners which give us the confidence necessary to pursue the Council's objectives. The approach to fund-raising through a consortium of faith-based organisations is one such example, resulting in two new funding agreements for 2013 to 2015; and another is our first experiences with webinars, which may provide a new cost-effective working method for some projects.

55. The Council is a fellowship of member churches and at the heart of our financial strategy for sustainability lie our membership contributions. They are vital to the Council. The membership contributions demonstrate the commitment of member churches to the Council's mission, and to each other, in the commitment to "move together". In 2014, following its adoption by executive committee in February, a new membership plan has been launched which aims to meet the contributions level of CHF 4.2 million achieved in 2012 and then increase that total by 2%-5% per year. Each of you as central committee members has a role to play in the success of this campaign.

56. Programme contributions received from our ecumenical partners represent 80% of total programme income. While total contributions declined by 35% between 2007 and 2011, there was relative stability in 2012 and 2013. The relationships between the Council and its ecumenical partners are founded on a long history of common objectives and trust, based on outcomes achieved and accountability, and our continued close collaboration is fundamental to our income development strategy. In recent years, the Council has benefited from new sources of funding due to a growing understanding that the WCC has a capacity to make a significant contribution to peace and justice. More prospective partners understand the huge potential of the WCC's approach, facilitating joint efforts of churches worldwide through programmes which translate Christian faith into action with a measurable impact.

57. The active involvement of member churches in planning and participating in the programme work is a particular strength of the WCC, and it is your engagement which makes the organisation attractive for additional fundraising opportunities. Another key to success in accessing new funding sources will also be your active participation in fund-raising initiatives for the Council. The finance policy committee will be considering terms of reference for a fund-raising reference group to be formed in the coming months – which will include experts from within the constituency and external advisors. I encourage you to consider suggesting experts from your churches and organisations, to be named as members of this fundraising reference group.

58. The governing bodies and leadership share responsibility, at different levels, with regard to stewardship and accountability in the application of membership and programme contributions to the achievement of its objectives. It is not the objective of the Council to report surpluses and to accumulate reserves but to use resources wisely. However, as part of a strategy for sustainability, the Council requires general reserves, for which a target and limit should be set or reconfirmed by this central committee. At 31 December, the Council held CHF 6 million in general reserves, backed by deposits, falling slightly short of the target of CHF 7.5 million.

59. To steward the Council's assets means to care for and develop them on the basis of a vision for the future. Maintenance alone is not sufficient. Investment of CHF 7 million in the conference facilities of the Ecumenical Institute in 2011 has provided superb facilities. Deficit results have been reported for their first two years of operation however we have witnessed a marked growth in use of those facilities and an improvement in the operating results for the first months in 2014. Initiatives to encourage use of the facilities have met with some success, while the institute's primary focus continues to be ecumenical formation, in the form of both academic courses and seminars, for which new initiatives are proposed for this cycle of work.

60. The development of the Ecumenical Centre estate is a major project which offers new opportunities as well as it will necessarily involve certain risks to be managed. The Council's first objective in developing the site remains that of generating sales to reimburse the loan of CHF 24 million required to secure the staff pensions; other objectives are to own new buildings which will generate an income stream of at least CHF 3 million; and to own a new Ecumenical Centre designed to fit our needs, including a renovated main building and chapel.

61. Following consultation with professional advisers, the Council selected Implemia Development SA as its long-term partner in the project, signing a development agreement in May 2012. The first stage of the project was successfully concluded when in October 2013, following the architects' competition, the jury unanimously selected Green Village as the winning design for the site. The next stage involves approval of an area development plan by the town planning department in early 2016, before implementation can begin. There are risks of delay in this process but we remain convinced that this is the correct course and we are confident of the outcome.

62. For the building project, and for our programmatic activities, it will remain essential to review and reassess our financial situation regularly, through timely reports and monitoring. A strategy for sustainability is based on understanding our current situation, moving forward with creativity and vision, while remaining vigilant, and ready to adapt plans as necessary in the interest of the organisation.

VII. An Empty Chair

63. I return to my meeting with Gil Won Ok. In parting, she gave me a significant and thought provoking gift, a beautiful sculpture. In this sculpture, a young woman sits on one chair; the other chair is empty. Or free. For me, for you. A place to sit down and show that there is a real accompaniment: a real listening, a real involvement, a real learning, a real solidarity, a real fellowship, a real unity in our humanity and in our spirituality. We are called to share, to tell, and to come and listen.

64. Maybe the empty chair is also needed as we move ahead on our pilgrimage of justice and peace. A place to pause and restore our energy and reflect on our calling. A place to stop in order to listen and accompany those along the way.

65. A meeting of the Central Committee should offer such a chair for you for these purposes.

66. I thank the moderator, Dr Agnes Aboum, and the two vice-moderators, HE Metropolitan Prof Dr Gennadios of Sassima, and Bishop Mary Ann Swenson for their support and very constructive cooperation leading the executive committee and the preparations of this central committee.

67. I also thank all the colleagues who have been resuming work after the assembly after well-deserved rest. Some of them are to finish their service for the council this year, some of them to go into new phases of their work, and some have new tasks. Let me again say that I appreciate the work all colleagues have done and continue to do, that I admire their work related to the assembly. I look forward to see how those of us who continue in this work, can fill our roles in a new era of the work of the council – with the clear guidance and inspiration of this central committee.

68. Only together we can respond to the two calls and the prophetic mandate we have, with our shortcomings and our abilities, striving to be truly human and truly spiritual, in the name of the God of life.

Appendix: Building Project (attached separately)

FOR INFORMATION

Original

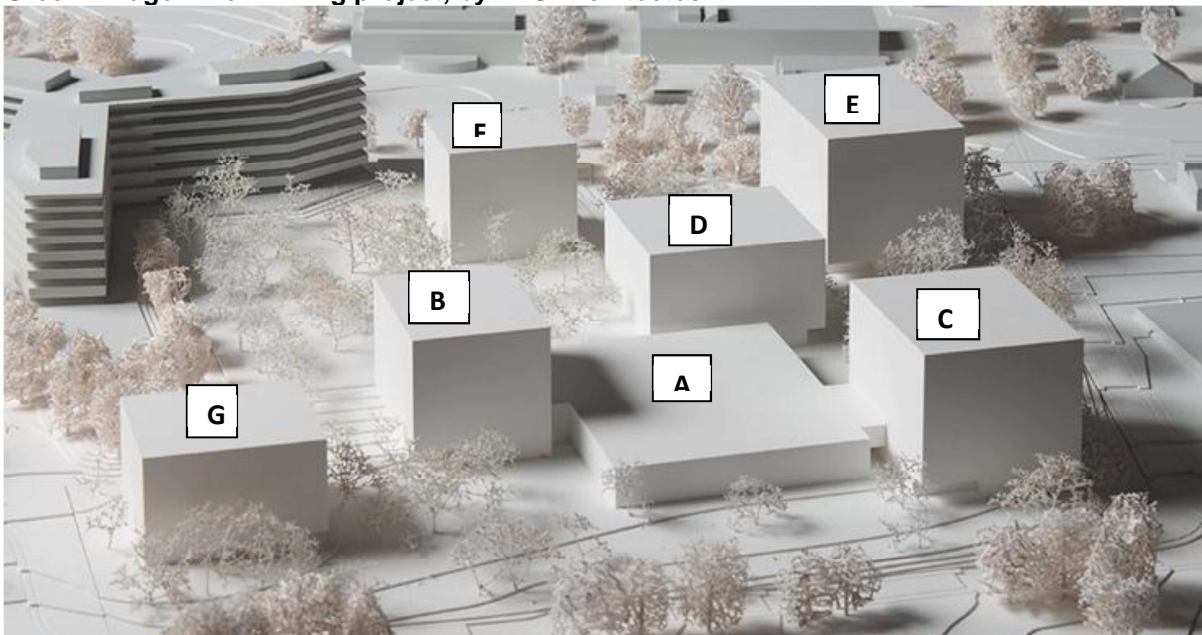
Report of the General Secretary - Building Development Appendix

Update on the WCC building development project

In October 2013, WCC and its development partner, *Implenia*, the leading Swiss construction company, announced the project “Green Village”, designed by the Swiss firm *LRS architectes Sàrl* as winner of the architectural competition launched in June 2013. The project proposes six buildings around the renovated centre, set in a landscaped park. The *Promenade de la Paix* (peace walkway), designed by the Geneva Canton, is to cross the site.

A new neighbouring building, also designed under a separate project by *LRS architectes*, which will house offices of the *Global Fund*, is to be constructed just behind the Ecumenical Centre, and appears in the picture below.

Green Village: The winning project, by LRS Architectes



- A:** Offices and Chapel 4,246 m²
 - B:** Ecumenical Centre offices 7,972 m²
 - C:** Offices for WCC’s tenants 11,612 m²
 - D:** Offices and commercial area 9,376 m²
 - E:** Offices 14,860 m²
 - F:** Apartments 6,469 m²
 - G:** Hotel-residence 7,176 m²
- Underground parking: 684 spaces

Project timeline

Project phase 2

Mid-July 2014 Deliver the Area Development Plan (ADP)
January 2016 Approval of ADP

Project phase 3

December 2016 Building permits

Project phases 4 and 5

November 2016	Define financial objectives of each building, as preparation for the investor selection process
December 2016	Launch invitation to tender for investors, for sale of building(s)

Project phase 6

December 2018	Delivery of first building
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Principal events and work conducted from January 2014 to date

On 9 February 2014, the Canton of Geneva agreed by referendum to increase the minimal density ratio to 1.8 for all new plans in the “development zone 3”, with exception of development sites of heritage or environmental value. *LRS architectes* have worked on the approach for optimisation of *Green Village*, to take account of the new limit, while respecting the original design, and relevant construction regulations.

It was determined that the approach with different departments of the State should be consultative during the process of the development of ADP. *Implenia* and *LRS architectes* have met regularly with state representatives in the department of town planning, and on transport and environmental matters with the objective of taking account of their views and recommendations while preparing the ADP. The ADP defines the volumes of the buildings, their gross floor surface, the layout of the estate, including access, car parks, paths and energy requirements. Technical challenges, such as the optimal positioning of car parks, and definition of emergency services’ access requirements, have also been addressed in working sessions with the architects.

In accordance with requirements for a project of this dimension, studies by specialised consultants have been conducted on the environmental impact of the project, the impact on traffic, and on the energy concept. These three studies are in the process of finalisation and need to be delivered to the authorities with the ADP in mid-July.

Results of the impact study on traffic are likely to be scrutinised, since the *Global Fund* project in the same district has been halted, even after the approval of their ADP, following administrative judicial proceedings opened by a local residents’ group objecting to the volume of increased traffic implied by the development. The *Global Fund* project has been delayed by more than a year at this stage, and WCC follows with concern, and also in the hope that a negotiated outcome for the *Global Fund* may indicate how WCC might approach the concerns of its neighbours related to traffic.

Attentive to its own environmental footprint in this respect, WCC is now participating with LWF and ACT Alliance in a commuting study led by the Canton and the Swiss Permanent Mission to the UN, with the objective of developing a mobility plan to improve the organisations’ ecological profile for transport.

To meet construction regulations concerning distance between buildings and the limits of plots, an exchange of easement rights will be required with State of Geneva, owner of the neighbouring plot, to optimise position of buildings on both plots. It is envisaged that these exchanges can be negotiated during the coming months.

Next steps

LRS architectes is now finalising the *Area Development Plan (ADP)*, which must to be submitted for approval by the various state departments of urban planning, including those concerned with construction regulations, transport, environment, heritage and landscaping. It is estimated optimistically that 18 months may be required to complete this work, resulting in the approval of the ADP.

In parallel during this period, there will be discussion with potentially interested investors. A number of parties have expressed interest in the project, and presentations and follow-up meetings will be made in anticipation of approval of the ADP, when the next phase of the project can be launched.



Report of the General Secretary - Travels and Meetings

Appendix: Meetings and visits

General Secretary Visits and Meetings from 5 February 2014 to 2 July 2014

TRAVEL:

DATE	PLACE	PURPOSE
November 9, 2013	Busan, Korea	Visit Sansung Church
November 9-11, 2013	Seoul, Korea	Visit churches: Kyundong Presbyterian Church Yoido Full Gospel Church Myungsung Presbyterian Church Meet with Rev. Chang Sang, WCC President for Asia Visit NCKK and meet with GS
November 12-14, 2013	Oslo, Norway	Meetings with Church of Norway and Ministry of Culture
November 21, 2013	Vienna, Austria	Religions for Peace Assembly – key note speaker
December 9-12, 2013	Johannesburg, South Africa	Attended funeral and events in honour of Nelson Mandela
January 11-13, 2014	Hannover, Germany	WCRC Installation Service, Visit EKD
January 22-24, 2014	Davos, Switzerland	World Economic Forum
January 27, 2014	Kongsberg, Norway	Church of Norway Conference
February 16-20, 2014	Iran: Teheran, Qum, Isfahan	Official/delegation WCC visit to Iran – church visits and meetings with government officials and others. Participate in dialogue between the Center for Interreligious Dialogue and World Council of Churches
March 7, 2014	Vatican City, Rome	Audience with Pope Francis and meetings with PCPCU (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity)
March 14, 2014	Berlin, Germany	Congress on Just Growth! Social Dimensions of Global Transformation

March 30-April 1, 2014	Järvenpää and Helsinki, Finland	Partnership Consultation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland; Meeting with Minister for Foreign Affairs Erkki Tuomioja (together with Bishop Simo Peura and Rev. Kimmo Kääriäinen) Meeting with Archbishop Kari Mäkinen (together with Rev Junge, Bishop Peura, Rev. Kääriäinen and Rev. Mika Pajunen)
April 2-3, 2014	Oslo, Norway	Visit Church of Norway and Ministry of Foreign Affairs
April 4-9, 2014	Seoul, Korea	Official WCC delegation/visit to Korea member churches
April 24, 2014	Amsterdam, Netherlands	Address Synod of Protestant Church in the Netherlands and public lecture at the Free University
April 24-May 1, 2014	Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo	Official visit/delegation to DRC member churches; attend Forum of DRC member churches; high level talks with Kimbanguist Church
May 2-3, 2014	Juba, South Sudan	High level solidarity visit to churches in South Sudan to support peace talks
May 31-June 2, 2014	Beirut, Lebanon	Enthronement ceremony of His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II as Syriac Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All East, and Supreme Head of the Universal Syriac Orthodox Church
June 2-4, 2014	Nairobi, Kenya	WCC Consultation on Conciliar Ecumenism
June 10-13, 2014	Etchmiadzin, Armenia	International Consultation on The Crisis in Syria: Challenges for Faith Communities
June 14-15, 2014	Uppsala, Sweden	Ceremonies – Archbishop Anders Wejryd lay down his staff and service of receiving Antje Jackelén as Archbishop

VISITS/REPRESENTATIONS IN GENEVA

DATE	PLACE	PURPOSE
November 19-20, 2013	Ecumenical Centre	Meeting of Church World Communions
November 26, 2013	World Council of Churches	Courtesy visit of Greek Ambassador to the UN and Greek government Secretary for Religious Affairs
December 13-14, 2013	Ecumenical Centre	First meeting of new WCC central committee leadership
December 16, 2013	Ecumenical Centre chapel	Memorial service in honour of Nelson Mandela, joint ceremony with South Africa Mission
December 15, 2013	Palais des Nations	Meeting with I. Brahiimi, UN Special Envoy to Syria

December 17, 2013	Palais des Nations	Memorial ceremony for Nelson Mandela
December 17, 2013	Ecumenical Centre	WCC and Implenia – award ceremony for architectural competition development of the Ecumenical Centre
January 10, 2014	World Council of Churches	Visit of Archbishop Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations
January 10, 2014	World Council of Churches	Visit of Antiochian Metropolitan for France and Switzerland, Mgr. Ignatius
January 14, 2014	Crown Plaza Hotel, Geneva	Meeting with HH Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia
January 14, 2014	Hotel Warwick, Geneva	Planning meeting with general secretaries of WCRC, LFW and CWM for Financial Architecture meeting
January 15-17, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Ecumenical Consultation on Syria
January 17, 2014	World Council of Churches	Courtesy visit of Edward Peters, Executive Vice President and Rainer Gude, Chargé de Mission for International Geneva - Initiatives of Change International
January 19, 2014	English speaking Lutheran Church in Geneva	Attend service and preach
January 20, 2014	Palais des Nations	Meeting with I. Brahiimi, UN Special Envoy to Syria
January 20, 2014	St Nicolas de Flüe Church	Interreligious Service for Peace, deliver greetings
January 21, 2014	World Council of Churches	WCC staff celebratory lunch
January 29, 2014	World Council of Churches	Norwegian Ambassador to Switzerland courtesy call
January 29, 2014	Palais des Nations	Diplomatic Club New Year Reception
January 30, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Visit of Rev. V. Filschl, general secretary Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary
February 13, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Archbishop Dr. Joris Vercammen, Prof. Dr Peter-Ben Smit, and Franz Segbers of Old Catholics
February 14, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Delegation from the Syrian National Coalition
February 21, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Meeting with James Laing and colleagues - Council of Lutheran Churches of the UK
March 5, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Mr Wegner, Représentant permanent adjoint, French Mission to the UN
March 11, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Visit of Adriana Perez, wife of one of the Cuban 5 accompanied by Cuba Mission staff
March 13, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Visit of Prof. Cui Wantian, Christian Chinese entrepreneur
March 17, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Visit of M. Olivier Fleury and colleagues, Jeunesse en Mission

March 19, 2014	La Pastorale, Geneva	Expert Seminar on Indigenous Peoples
March 20, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Visit of M. Colson and M. Stern - World Jewish Congress
March 24, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Visit of J. Borgen
March 24, 2014	Hôtel de Ville, Geneva	WCC, LWF and ACT-Alliance general secretaries meeting with M. François Longchamps, President of Geneva government
March 26, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Einar Tjelle, Norway Mission
April 23, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Visit of Chinese Christian entrepreneurs
May 6, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Visit of Church of Sweden Bishops
May 6, 2014	Near Vevey (Switzerland)	Dinner with Lausanne Movement
May 7, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	EKD Delegation
May 8-9, 2014	Ecumenical Institute Bossey	WCC Round Table
May 13, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	European Council of Religious Leaders
May 14, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Visit of delegation of Armenians in Geneva
May 14, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Jeremy Worthen, head of the Christian Unity Department Church of England
May 16, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Rev. Dr. John Samuel Raj, Principal of The United Theological College, Bangalore, India
May 20-21, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Meeting of the WCC Leadership of the central committee
May 22, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Ecumenical Pharmaceutical network representatives
May 22, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Jørn Lemvik, secretary general of Digni, Norway
May 27, 2014	Swiss Mission to the UN	Meeting of GS of LWF, ACT-A and WCC with Swiss Ambassador to the UN, Alexandre Fassel
May 28, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Meeting with Christopher L. Buck - Chargé d'Affaires a.i. - U.S. Delegation to the Conference on Disarmament
June 2, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	In GS absence, DGS met with Alejandro Iaccarino, human rights defender from Argentina and alternative economy businessman
June 5, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	Visit of Robert Welsh, Ecumenical Officer and President of the Council on Christian Unity for the Disciples of Christ
June 12, 2014	Ecumenical Centre	In GS absence, DGS met M. M. Nicolas Hulot, Special Envoy of the French President for the protection of the planet. M. Hulot was accompanied by Mme Stephanie Lux, from his office at the Presidency and M. Philippe Ramet, Environment Counselor at the Permanent Mission of France at the UN in Geneva.
June 18, 2014	Ecumenical Institute - Château de Bossey	Met with representatives of the Korean comfort women