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## Report of the Communications Committee

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### Transformation and the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

The WCC is a fellowship of churches. This fellowship has invited a pilgrimage of justice and peace that can lead to transformation in a variety of contexts. This transformation can occur when we visit the wounds and name the injustices. This truth-telling can be told through the sharing of stories born out of the fellowship's solidarity, courage and witnessing.

*"But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." (Eph. 4:15-16)*

Such truth-telling and sharing of stories also can create risk and fear while leading to a vision of transforming the injustices, peace and life. The Report of the Reference Group of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (June 24, 2016) states: "Pilgrimage takes us to the places where Christ is present, alongside those suffering. Yes, pilgrimage is the way of the cross...It can and will be transformed into a way of joy and celebration, as we walk together as churches, not for our own sake, but for the sake of the world."

### Key Messages

#### Programmatic

Communication is an important thread that runs through all the work of the World Council of Churches, especially the programmatic work. Members of the communications committee met with the moderator of the programme committee, and several mutual areas of concern were identified.

#### Impact assessment

It is difficult to assess the impact of programme work when the mechanisms of assessment do not include a comparison of where a community stands before the programme, and a follow-up review. We received the strategic planning document from programme committee and affirm the direction of the planning process. We observed a gap in how we report stories that had impact.

#### Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace can be difficult to understand. The language and tools we use to communicate the pilgrimage need to create the impression that it invites action. Being able to say *why* the pilgrimage is important and relevant to particular contexts can increase its visibility and engagement.

#### Capacity building

The WCC is a fellowship of churches, and as such is a fellowship of people with skills and interests who are able to help with communicating the pilgrimage. Identifying key people interested in each programmatic area who could directly receive and circulate information and resources to those who really care about the issue could effectively build stronger regard for the WCC. The Bossey alumni, member church communications staff and central committee members themselves could all play an important role here.

## Communications Committee

### Strategy → framework

The communications committee reviewed the revised communication strategy (GEN COM 02) and observed that it might be better understood as a framework. This allows a more strategic document to be created.

### Governance

Documents and governance communications should reflect an integrated picture of the WCC and its programmatic initiatives. There is a changing landscape of how we conduct business of WCC. One of the ways that we can have more effective engagement is by providing resources in a more timely manner and in a more user-friendly format, for example, providing executive summaries, the purpose for the document and the agenda for which it's intended.

### Fellowship

The central committee and its related committees reflect the fellowship of the member churches. The communications committee would like to encourage more support for the central committee members. For example, making language more approachable, especially for those who may be unfamiliar with ecumenical terminology; providing orientation and accompaniment for new members and recognising a possible need for pastoral support.

## Recommendations

The communication committee **recommends** that the central committee:

- 1) **Adopt** the communications framework (GEN COM 02 rev) as the basis for the development of a communication strategy.
- 2) **Encourage** WCC bodies and staff to work with the member churches to identify key people within our structures who can assist within the communications framework and strategy; and provide training and support.
- 3) **Request** the executive committee should work with all units to create an assessment tool to determine outcomes and impact that inform stories of transformation that demonstrate accountability/transparency and enable effective and difference making storytelling. Such storytelling can convey our travel on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.
- 4) **Request** executive committee and staff to develop a more user-friendly format of governance documents, that includes an executive summary, and should be received no less than three months in advance of the meeting.
- 5) **Request** the integration of new central committee members and encouragement of the fellowship may be furthered in building on initiatives such as the buddy mentoring programme.

**APPROVED**